



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

January 20, 2020

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

LIRR On-Time Performance Rises to Three Year High in 2019; Cancellations, Major Delays, Short Trains Improve by Double Digits

Improvements Follow Major Infrastructure Renewal Under LIRR: Forward Plan; LIRR Sets Industry Standard for Grade Crossing Safety and Advances Customer Information Efforts

MTA Long Island Rail Road President Phil Eng today announced that the LIRR's on-time performance increased 2 percentage points in 2019, rising to 92.4%, the best performance in three years. The LIRR recorded 44% fewer train cancellations and terminations, 29% fewer trains delayed more than 15 minutes, and 25% fewer trains operating short. Trains traveled 4.3% more miles before experiencing any type of mechanical malfunction. The improved metrics come at a time that the railroad operated 1.2% more trains to service the highest ridership reached in modern day history, 91.1 million passengers, an increase of 1.3 million from 2018's total of 89.8 million riders. These historic milestones also occurred while undertaking the largest system expansion in over 100 years and extensive state of good repair work.

The improved performance measures follow extraordinary progress under the LIRR Forward plan to identify and combat the root causes of safety risks and train delays.

"There's a renewed sense of enthusiasm at the railroad for doing everything we can to put ourselves in a stronger position to respond to Mother Nature and other external factors that affect our operations," **Eng said.** "This is about proactively hardening infrastructure to reduce the risk of failures that impact our customers. It's about challenging industry to find new ways to effectively solve longstanding problems. It's also about hard work of our employees. I thank our workforce for rising to the challenge and dedicating their full energies each and every day."

Under the LIRR Forward Plan, which was put into place in April 2018 to stabilize the systems infrastructure, the LIRR became the first railroad in the country to upgrade all its railroad crossings with flexible delineators and reflective pavement markings – virtually eliminating the number of motorists errantly turning onto tracks after mistaking them for a roadway. The railroad became the first in the world to begin using a laser to eliminate slippery autumn leaf slime from tracks, preventing many seasonal operational problems.

During 2019, the LIRR continued these strides under LIRR Forward by rebuilding 13 priority switches, including the recently replaced Nassau Switch, which is one of the most highly trafficked areas with over 200 train traverses every day. Railroad crews also repaired about 1,700 rail joints, replaced insulation of 30 switches, and 8,000 feet of overhead cable replacement, installed 14 third rail heaters, and doubled the number of wheel truing machines, to four.

Additionally, over the last 19 months there were several other measures that have been taken under Forward to improve performance. Workers fanned throughout the railroad have replaced 170,186 feet of rail, completed 225 miles of trackside vegetation clearance, added snow prevention covers to 76 switches, renewed 298 track circuits, and performed 116 miles of rail grinding. Lastly, because utility poles are at risk of falling on tracks during weather events, the LIRR worked with PSEGLI to accelerate the replacement of over 218 utility poles.

Ultrasonic and Induction Rail Safety Testing

In 2019, the LIRR completed 2,015 miles of rail safety tests performed by a Sperry Rail Car, a train car fitted with ultrasonic and induction test equipment and is designed to detect internal defects inside the running rails that are not readily visible. The amount of mileage brings up testing to four times the amount required by the FRA and doubles the frequency completed in 2018 which was 953 miles. Defects that are found during testing are corrected immediately by LIRR track maintenance workers.

Threshold Plates

The LIRR installed 3,329 new threshold plates on the M7 electric trains this past year, covering about 98% of the fleet. The replacements reduce doors being misaligned and getting stuck, resulting in delays for customers.

In 2019 the railroad also made major enhances to safety, and customer amenities.

Positive Train Control

This past year, the LIRR moved closer to completing its integration of a Positive Train Control (PTC) system into its infrastructure: PTC is a system designed to enhance railroad safety by preventing train-to-train collisions, over speed derailments, unauthorized operation of trains into work zones, and the movement of a train through a switch left in the wrong position. In 2019 PTC was activated on more than 100 miles of track, including the entire Far Rockaway, Long Beach, Oyster Bay, Port Jefferson and West Hempstead Branches. The railroad is on pace to meet full implementation by December 2020.

New M9 Rail Cars Enter Service

The LIRR's next fleet of rail cars, the M9s, built by Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc., entered passenger service Sept. 11, 2019.. The new cars incorporate and improve upon the most successful and popular features of the MTA's two recent electric car fleets, the LIRR's familiar M7s electric cars and the M8 cars serving Metro-North's New Haven Line. A total of 202 cars are expected to be put into service.

Amenities in the cars include, electrical outlets on both side of the car in each row of the seats, four to six additional seats per married pair, automatic pocket doors in between train cars that open with the press of a button, digital displays that tell riders which car they're in, and another digital display on the exterior of the front car of the train will tell passengers waiting on platforms the train's destination. Other features include energy-efficient LED lighting and increased window tint to reduce glare.

The cars are fully equipped for Positive Train Control, a major safety enhancement that will reduce the potential for human error to contribute to train-to-train collisions or derailments. They have cameras in the train engineer's cab, facing into the cab to monitor the engineer's alertness and facing forward to show the tracks ahead, and cameras in passenger area of the cars to serve as a deterrent to criminal activity.

myLIRR.org

Since January 2019, riders have been able to see exactly where their trains are, in real time, thanks to myLIRR.org. The online tool uses real-time GPS tracking to allows commuters to pull up the location of their train and see whether it's late or on time. It also provides information such as the car length of a train and whether it's diesel or electric. The tool continues be updated such as recently added arrows on trains indicating direction and the addition of blue bubbles around trains when the reported location is approximate. The web-based technology is eventually expected to be folded into MTA smartphone apps.