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Press Release

July 15, 2020

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Railroads Accelerate TRACKS Safety Program with Online Education

*Metro-North's Metro-Man to Make Limited Appearances at Stations*

*Long Island Rail Road to Announce its Mask Contest Student Winners*

MTA railroad are serious about summer safety with TRACKS (Together Railroads and Communities Keeping Safe) education programs for kids and adults to practice safe behaviors at or around railroad grade crossings and tracks. TRACKS is a joint venture between the safety departments of the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad to reach out to schools, camps, day care and community groups.

Both railroads have safety ambassadors who, pre-pandemic, conducted in-person, free presentations to educate and inform organizations and groups. Metro-North even has a superhero, Metro-Man, who will make appearances this July and help Metro-North Railroad's Customer Service Department hand out masks to riders. Long Island Rail Road is offering online courses for grades Kindergarten through 8. Both railroads have accelerated their online resources to meet virtual needs since the pandemic.

"Bringing TRACKS online is another step to ensuring education continues so that motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists can learn the correct ways to stay safe when they encounter any of the 292 railroad crossings we have throughout our service territory," said **Phil Eng, President of the Long Island Rail Road**. "We're hard at work eliminating some railroad crossings in key locations, while using other innovative methods like flexible delineators and an industry-leading partnership with Waze to make dramatic improvements in grade crossing safety. Together, we can ensure that public safety is enhanced and crossing incidents can continue to dwindle so that all can remain safe no matter how they choose to get around."

"We're proud of Metro-North's TRACKS program and how it has helped the community learn about rail safety," said **Cathy Rinaldi, President of Metro-North Railroad**. "The addition of Metro-Man and online resources has really engaged younger people and led to improvements in safety around tracks and grade crossings."

Metro-North's Metro-Man made an appearance and helped Metro-North Railroad's Customer Service Department hand out masks to riders today, July 15 from 7:30 to 9 a.m. in Grand Central Terminal. He will make additional appearances on July 22 in Stamford from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and July 29 in North White Plains from 8 to 9:30 a.m.

The Long Island Rail Road has posted their weekly July schedule for Kindergarten through Grade 8 students with three different time slots on July 16, July 22 and July 28. Students must register online at <http://web.mta.info/lirr/safety/TRACKS/>

The MTA Police Department assigns two full-time police officers to the TRACKS program. The officers are responsible for performing safety presentations at schools, professional driving courses, and drivers education classes for teens and adults. They represent the MTA at community events to distribute safety literature and encourage positive relationships between police officers and the community. They also participate in Operation Lifesaver assignments at grade crossings throughout Long Island to promote safety with commuters. Other responsibilities include handling concerns related to trespassing and criminal mischief along the LIRR right of way.

In 2019, the Long Island Rail Road in conjunction with the MTA police reached approximately 125,000 people at schools, camps and community events. The Metro-North TRACKS Program has reached 373,156 people since its inception in May 2016 through grade crossing safety outreach, station outreach, and rail safety presentations at schools and events.

In addition, Metro-North Railroad has an [online coloring book](#) and [passport](#) for younger children featuring Metro-Man and his dog, TRACKS. Other kid-friendly activities include Operation Lifesaver's Sly Fox & Birdie [coloring pages](#) and [video](#). The programs also share resources with [Operation Lifesaver, Inc.](#) (OLI), a non-profit organization and nationally-recognized leader of rail safety education.

#### Student Safety Poster and Mask Contests

To reinforce the importance of wearing face coverings when riding the Long Island Rail Road, LIRR sponsored a contest for Kindergarten through Grade 12 students. Five winning designs were selected and will be announced via LIRR's social media accounts on July 17.

For the past few years, both the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad have held annual Safety Poster Contests that invite students from grades pre-K through 12 to create posters illustrating what they believe is most important about rail safety. Elementary school and middle school winners

are listed on [LIRR's TRACKS page](#). Metro-North will again launch their poster contest during Rail Safety Week in September which will coincide with events and activities for that week. To see a list of 2019 Metro-North poster winners, click [here](#).

#### **International Level Crossing Awareness Day**

Both participated in this year's [International Level Crossing Awareness Day](#) (ILCAD), an international campaign to raise awareness on grade level crossing safety, celebrated on June 11. Long Island Rail Road safety ambassadors were at railroad crossings in Bethpage and Deer Park social distancing with posters and safety literature. LIRR also promoted the event on its various social media channels. Metro-North created a designated website for ILCAD, and promoted grade crossing safety messages through its social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) reaching a total of 9,987 people during its ILCAD outreach campaign.

#### **Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Accomplishments**

The LIRR has experienced just one accidental vehicle turning onto tracks since June 2018 after launching a nation-leading program to install flexible delineators at all 294 crossings, and provide GPS alerts through Waze, warning drivers not to turn onto the tracks. As part of the LIRR Expansion Project, three of eight grade crossings have already been eliminated along the Main Line, with the rest scheduled for completion by the end of 2022.

100% of Metro-North's 103 grade crossings are represented in the Waze app. Metro-North continues its effort to install delineators at all crossings throughout New York and Connecticut.

For more information on the Long Island Rail Road's TRACKS program, click [here](#).

For more information on Metro-North Railroad's TRACKS program, click [here](#).

For even more online rail safety resources, visit Operation Lifesaver's [digital library](#).