

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers



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The Return of the Slime

It's not the cousin of "The Blob."

We are talking about the slimy substance left by crushed leaves on our rails that gets even more slippery after it rains.

It is the main cause of a condition we call "slip-slide,"

which creates minor delays to your service throughout the autumn and into the end of the year.



This gelatinous "slime"

can cause a train's wheels to slip or slide along the rails as it attempts to speed up or slow down.

In severe cases the train will automatically make an emergency stop, because the on-board computer system perceives "slip-sliding" as the train not slowing down when it should.

And, to our horror, this slip-sliding during braking also creates flat spots on the train's wheels, forcing us to take much-needed equipment out of service for repairs.

Over the past several years, we have taken a very proactive approach to combating this problem (*none of which involve magical spells and incantations or garlic.*)

Actions we have taken include:

- **Instructing our engineers to report slippery conditions immediately** to our Operations Control Center. (We have also provided additional training in how to operate through these "slippery" areas.)
- **Enhancing our computerized train-tracking system** to allow for automatic reporting of slip-slide incidents and conditions, enabling us to take corrective action more quickly.
- **Installing a Wheel Impact Load Detector (WILD)** across all four tracks in the Park Avenue Tunnel. This monitors for wheel flats that may have developed during operation and allows us to identify and prioritize wheels for repair.
- **Installing a tandem Wheel Truing Lathe in Harmon Shop.** We built a state-of-the-art wheel true facility in Harmon that can cut both wheels on a truck simultaneously. This allows for proper wheel diameter matching and also helps us return cars to service more quickly so we have enough cars available for our customers. The Connecticut Department of Transportation has built a second identical facility in New Haven to support our new M8 Fleet.

Under extreme slip-slide conditions, you will notice that we reduce speeds through problem areas. While this may result in a slight delay to your service, it ensures safe operation of our trains and also prevents a greater delay because of wheel damage. And no flat spots on train wheels also means we can operate at regular speeds in non-problem areas, and we don't need to take the equipment out of service to repair it.

We have also stepped up our efforts to keep our right of way as "leaf free" as possible. (This is no small feat given the number of trees that line our tracks.) We use high pressure rail washers and rail scrubbers to remove crushed leaf residue from the tracks. And on-board "sanders" on our diesel trains automatically drop sand on our tracks to help improve traction and reduce wheel slippage when it begins to occur.

We please ask that you keep in mind that while we can reduce the incidents of slippery rail, we cannot eliminate them. We will continue our efforts to try to minimize any delays and inconvenience slippery rail may create for you this autumn. And, as always, we appreciate your patience.

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Hop on Board...

No, not on your broom!



We want you to hop onboard a Metro-North train, and then hit the road with [Zipcar](#) to explore the Hudson Valley and beyond. (*Beyond being in this realm, of course...*).

With the wave of a wand, we've expanded our Ride2Drive, which makes Zipcars available at select Metro-North stations.

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| ● Poughkeepsie | ● Spring Valley | ● Port Chester |
| ● Beacon | ● Pearl River | ● Harrison |
| ● Peekskill | | ● Mamaroneck |
| ● Tarrytown | ● Southeast | ● Pelham |
| ● Irvington | ● North White Plains | ● Mt. Vernon East |
| | ● Woodlawn | |

We've added four more stations on this side of the river — **Southeast** on our Harlem Line, and **Irvington**, **Tarrytown** and **Peekskill** on our Hudson Line. And we've added two stations West of Hudson — **Spring Valley** and **Pearl River** on the Pascack Valley Line.

If you [join Zipcar](#), you can now access a total of 26 vehicles at 15 Metro-North stations. (They are also available at **North White Plains** and **Woodlawn** on the Harlem Line, **Poughkeepsie** and **Beacon** on the Hudson Line, and **Port Chester**, **Harrison**, **Mamaroneck**, **Pelham** and **Mount Vernon East** on the New Haven Line.

And the expansion of the Ride2Drive program

brings new Hudson Valley getaway packages all within easy reach from select stations via Zipcar (*because you need someplace to drive to!*).

Metro-North
Ride2Drive™



Zipcars are parked in dedicated, clearly marked parking spaces

at Metro-North stations, and they are available for reservation by the hour or the day. Each Zipcar reservation includes gas, insurance, maintenance and 180 miles of driving per day.

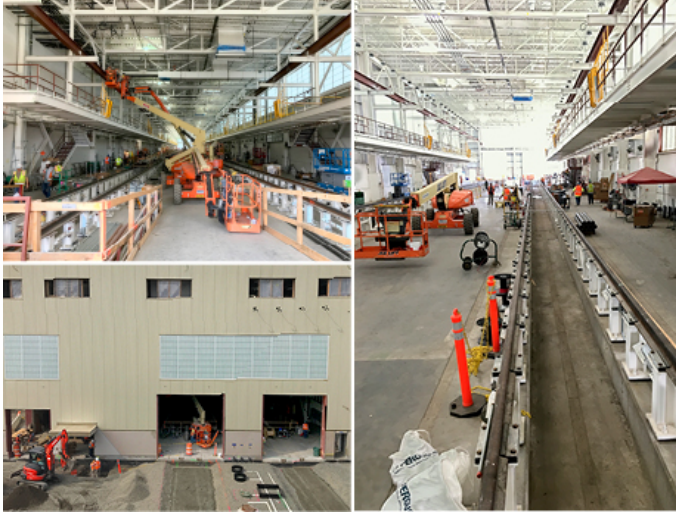
Burying the Past In Harmon...

...well, maybe not really burying it.

But the Harmon Shop Replacement Program ...

...continues moving the remnants of the old Croton-Harmon Shop into the modern age with new buildings, equipment and efficiencies.

The current phase of the modernization of our largest maintenance facility includes the construction of a brand-new **Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) Shop** and **Consist Shop Facility (CSF)**.



Once completed, the new Consist Shop

— built from the bones of a demolished section of Harmon's Main Shop — will be a double-ended, two track facility capable of housing two 10-car train consists.

At approximately 973 feet (that's longer than two-and-a-half regulation size NFL football fields), the shop will feature undercarriage access and overhead crane coverage for component change-outs.

The EMU Shop

will feature a brand-new machine shop, welding shop, wheel and axle shop, fabrication shop, storage area and more.

Along with the new facilities, our crews will also have the "tools of the trade" to match. Inside the **Wheel and Axle Shop**, two new, 600-ton wheel presses will be available, along with a wheel boring machine, axle lathe, magnetic particle inspection machine and three 5-ton bridge cranes.

Currently, construction crews are in the midst of installing on-site utilities including water, sewer, power and sanitary, as well as electrical, mechanical and industrial equipment for each respective facility.



And let's not forget:

while the Replacement Program takes place, the show must still go on at Harmon. After all, the campus is home to approximately 500 Maintenance of Equipment workers poised to keep our fleet up-and-running.

Though the Harmon Shop Replacement Program aims at improving our fleet and our employees' work environment, you — our customers — will also benefit from these crucial improvements.

Providing better facilities allows us to better maintain its fleet, which leads to a highly reliable service!

Safety Rule of the Issue

Look for the ghostly glow...

PREPAREDNESS STARTS WITH YOU



If your train's power goes out, backup lighting & glow-in-the-dark signs identify the exits!

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All Treats, No Tricks!

That's our discount Getaway packages in a nutshell!

Plus, you don't have to wear a costume to save on rail fare and admission to some of the region's most "enchanted" attractions. Here are some examples of our "spellbinding" offers.

So Baaaaaad, it's Good!

Calling all lamb and llama lovers! No, we're *not* inviting you to a barbecue... We are going to **whisk you from Poughkeepsie Station to the New York State Sheep and Wool Festival** (Saturday & Sunday, October 21 & 22) at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck for a day filled with fiber, food and fun for all ages. Sample local eats, attend knitting and crochet workshops, observe cooking demos, peruse their wine pavilion and make some new woolly four-legged friends.



Getting there is easy. Take the Hudson Line to Poughkeepsie Station where a shuttle will meet the train arriving at Poughkeepsie at 10:44 AM

Travel Through History...

without the help of mysterious worm holes in time!

There is no better way to experience the sweep of America's history than with our **West Point Tour package** (Year round).

It is the perfect introduction to this historic



landmark. Enjoy a guided overview tracing the beginning of West Point in 1778 during the Revolutionary War to

Getting there is easy. Take the Hudson Line to Peekskill Station.

Say Boo at the Zoo..

but please don't scare the giraffes!

Weekends through October the **Bronx Zoo** honors such Halloween traditions as pumpkin carvings, costume parades, hayrides, seasonal food and beer, and much more at **"Boo at the Zoo!"**

Plus this world-famous wildlife park boasts more than 6,000 animals across a sprawling

265 acres. Award-winning exhibits allow guests the chance to experience the wonder of wildlife in naturalistic settings and meet exotic, endangered animals from around the globe.



Be mesmerized by our entire list of discount getaways

Courtesy Corner



And you thought zombies were bad!

The truth is, they don't leave anything behind when they are done eating. (*Not even a stray big toe!*)

But some of you, well... there are remnants of bagels, partially drained coffee cups, decimated newspapers and other unmentionable horrors left in your wake when you leave the train.



So we urge you to be more "zombie-like," and leave a clean seat for the next person traveling in your place. Take all your "remains" with you when you exit the train, and dispose of them in the proper receptacle (*also known as garbage coffins*).

It's the courteous thing to do.

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