

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers

October 2016



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THEY RETURN TO HAUNT US EVERY AUTUMN...

...descending on our rails from the trees... leaving a slimy substance behind, the very presence of which strikes fear in the hearts of our train crews and customers!







When one of our trains attempts to speed up or slow down during your commute, the gelatinous "slime" created by dead autumn leaves can result in a condition known as "slip slide" — causing the wheels to slip or slide along the rails.

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 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 (which other railroads throughout the region experience as well).

Changes we have enacted 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 have a state-of-the-art wheel true facility in Harmon that can cut both wheels on a train car's 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 similar facility in New Haven to support our M8 Fleet.

Many of you may notice that under extreme slip-slide conditions, we now 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 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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Creepy... Crawly... Ooozy!

No, CCO doesn't stand for that!

It stands for our new 65,000-sq.-foot Component Change-Out Shop (CCO).

After almost 10 years of planning, design and construction, the New Haven-based facility to maintain our M8 fleet is open for business.

The shop was conceptualized in 2007 after we knew the new train cars would be delivered. The M8 railcars are of modular design which allows for the replacement of components, a process that is easier than piecemeal repairs, so the vehicle can go back in service quicker — and we can provide you with better service.

Scheduled maintenance and the running repair of various systems, such as auxiliary power, propulsion, air conditioning, and power collection, will be performed in the new building.

Components include such parts as the entire AC unit on top of the train car; or the train car's base—the moving section on the bottom of the car (see photos). Unique to the new space are such innovations as car hoists which will lift the cars for better ergonomics during maintenance, and 360-degree car-rotator lifts.

The structure will support Metro-North's Reliability Centered Maintenance (RCM) — planned component maintenance — as well as the 5, 10 and 15-year Federal Railroad Administration mandated tasks.

Federally mandated tasks include the 92-day and annual inspection and testing requirements of air brake pressure, cab signal systems, event recorders and safety, along with the rebuilding of air brake valves and brake components.

The RCM tasks of replacing suspension and propulsion components, Pantographs, HVAC systems, and wheel sets are performed during their assigned 5/10/15-year cycle as well.

Clean utilitarian lines frame the shop's four-story exterior and are accented with metal facing and a red trim along the roofline, echoing the silver and red exteriors of the M8s.

Commissioned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and designed with input from Metro-North engineers and department heads, the shop can welcome up to six M8 car pairs and three single cars at a time.

On the main floor there is a full-sized parts inventory storage area and a motorized parts conveyor system. Mechanics can access electronic kiosks where they can order parts, then pick them up at an inventory control point.



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WebTicket RIP...

Monthly WebTickets will no longer be available after October 25.

All other types of WebTickets will no longer be available after November 30.

Customers are advised to use the following alternatives to purchase their tickets:

- **MTA eTix®**, the mobile ticketing app that lets you purchase tickets directly on your smartphone or mobile device.,
- Metro-North Ticket Machines or Ticket Windows.
- **Mail & Ride**, the monthly ticket by mail service.



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Like Magic: My MTA Alerts® Lets You Match Service Alerts to The Times You Travel!



The MTA has upgraded and rebranded your Email & Text Alert subscription service!

It is now called **My MTA Alerts®**, and it lets you request service information at specific times of the day within 30-minute intervals based on when you travel.

For example, if you commute to and from work on weekdays between 7 AM and 8 AM and 5 PM and 6 PM, with **My MTA Alerts®** you can easily set your account to receive alerts only during those times.

It is recommended that subscribers extend the alerts time frame to shortly before and shortly after their normal travel times to ensure the receipt of all necessary notifications.

Simply create or log into your existing account, select the edit button located to the right of Alert and Advisory Preferences and pick when to receive alerts.

You also have the option to put alerts on hold at any time during vacations or extended times you do not use the MTA network.

Other enhancements to My MTA Alerts® include:

- **Full detailed text messages.** Truncated text messages have been eliminated. Now customers can see the full details of a text alert on your mobile phone by clicking on "View More."
- **Unlimited Subscriptions.** Once you establish a primary account using an email or cell phone number, you can add as many subscriptions as you want. Many customers like this so they can set up alerts for anyone in their family based on the lines and routes they use. All email addresses and mobile numbers are listed in the same place for easy editing.
- **Security.** To protect your privacy, My MTA Alerts® requires a two-step verification process before a My MTA Alert® account is activated. Once you create the account, you will be taken to My MTA Alerts® Subscription Activating Pending page. A confirmation number will be sent to the email or mobile number associated with the account. Enter the confirmation number you receive from your email or text and then click Submit. You can then begin to set up your account preferences.



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Short of Flying In On a Broom...

The fastest way to get the **43rd Annual New York City Village Halloween Parade** is to take **Metro-North**.

Avoid the horror of traffic, tolls and trying to find a parking space! Enjoy watching thousands of ghouls, goblins, witches, and warlocks haunt the parade route from 6th Avenue North of Spring Street to 16th Street from 7 PM – 10:30 PM. There are convenient subway connections to the route from Grand Central Terminal.



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Don't Be Afraid To Speak Up!

Remember:
New Yorkers Keep New York Safe.
If You See Something, Say Something!

Whenever you are on your train or an MTA bus or subway, be on the lookout for:

- unattended packages
- suspicious behavior
- people in bulky or inappropriate clothing
- exposed wiring or other irregularities
- anyone tampering with surveillance cameras or entering unauthorized areas

If you see something, say something.

As soon as you notice any potential danger, tell a cop or MTA employee, or call **888-NYC-SAFE** (888-692-7233).

Thousands of New Yorkers have already done their part. And you can too. That's how New Yorkers keep New York safe.



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Get in the Pagan Spirit...

...and get whisked away on one of our discount Farm Fresh Getaways this Halloween season. (After all, it is known as Harvest season too!)



Farm Fresh Poughkeepsie Wine, Meats & Ice Cream
(Saturday – Sunday, October 22 – 23)

Get whisked away for a day-long celebration of the fall harvest of wine, meats and local cheese when you step on the **Dutchess County Farm Fresh Link bus** at Poughkeepsie Station.

At your first stop, explore the charming **Village of Millbrook**, known for its rolling hills and horse farms, eateries, gift shops and antique stores. Our next stop is **Clinton Vineyards**, award-winning producer of fine wines, champagnes and hand-crafted dessert wines, where



you'll tour the vineyards and enjoy the spectacular landscape and a wine tasting including champagnes, white wine, dessert wine and their world famous cassis. The tasting will be held in the historic 1850s barn which houses the wine-making facility.

Farm Fresh Poughkeepsie Wine & Cheese (Saturday – Sunday, October 29 – 30)

Your first stop is **Sprout Creek Farm**, a model of sustainable agriculture, also known for its artisanal cheeses lovingly produced by a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America.



Next we again stop at the charming Village of Millbrook! (See above.) And then it is on to wine tasting and scenic views at one of the Hudson Valley's premier wineries, Millbrook Vineyards & Winery.

See full details on all our Getaways packages.

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Safety Rule of the Issue

You've heard the legend of the ghost train... It appears suddenly along the tracks, whisking some poor, unsuspecting soul away to who knows where.

The legend is true—not the ghost part, of course: Just the part about trains seeming to appear quickly out of nowhere.

That is why you should always stay off our tracks and use only designated walkways or roadway crossings to get to our stations or cross our tracks. **And never walk, run, cycle, or drive around a lowered crossing gate!**



Remember: Electric trains are relatively quiet, so chances are you won't hear one coming, and an approaching train is always closer, moving faster than you think. And they can't stop as quickly as a car.

Ghosts are nothing to fear... but trains are. We bring you these reminders not to scare you, but to remind you that your safety is our first priority.

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Courtesy Corner



There's evil, and then there's "evil!"

Casting spells over a cauldron.... Sticking pins in voodoo dolls... Posting that unflattering picture of your "bestie" on Snapchat and denying you did when it magically disappears...

These are all "minor league evil." Things we consider truly evil include:

- Putting your feet or your bag up on a seat, so that another person can't sit there.
- Leaving your trash behind when you exit the train for someone else to pick up.
- Talking on your phone in a Quiet Car. (*What kind of depraved soul would do that?*)

With ghosts, goblins, and demons of all kinds said to be roaming about this time of year, we urge you to resist being truly evil.

It's the courteous thing to do!

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