

MILEPOSTS

A Newsletter for MTA Metro-North Railroad Customers June 2016

- Hurricane Season ▪ Track Inspection ▪ Walk Bridge ▪ Quiet Cars
- Secure Your Monthly Ticket ▪ Getaways ▪ Safety Rule ▪
- Courtesy Corner ▪

'Tis the Season!



Hurricane Season officially runs from June 1 to November 30, with the New York metropolitan region most vulnerable to its effects from August 1 through October.

It's the only season where you don't have to buy cards or gifts, or get together with relatives (*unless they are seeking temporary shelter at your place...*).

Instead of good cheer, this time of year brings significant coastal storms that can impact the region at any time. High winds, heavy rains, and dangerous lightning can result in flooding, mudslides, fallen trees, and downed power lines along our right-of-way.

We can't stop the weather's worst from happening, but we can control our team's response to it. In the event of a hurricane or severe storm, we have several operating plans at the ready, depending on the weather's impact.

As with "Superstorm Sandy," we will take appropriate steps before, during and after a hurricane. That may include shutting down the railroad before a storm's arrival. If the weather and the damage associated with it are severe enough, our only options may be to reduce or suspend train service temporarily on a line or line segment.



When the storm is over, we know you want us to return to regular service immediately, and we will do our best to recover quickly. Please keep in mind that sometimes getting back to normal requires some time. We may need to make repairs to our tracks, signal and power systems, or train cars due to storm damage. We may also need to reposition employees and equipment to begin running service again.

To help you prepare for hurricane season, we recommend the following:

- Sign up for [Metro-North email/text alerts](#).
- Check www.mta.info/mnr for updates. If severe weather requires us to change service, we will post that information on our website. (*Also be sure to keep a current timetable handy. It will give you a frame of reference for train departure times if you don't have power to your computer.*)
- Download the [Metro-North Train Time App](#) for real-time train status and schedule information.
- Listen to radio and television news. During any storm or emergency, we are in touch with the news media, giving updates on the status of our train service.

• Call our Customer Information Center at 511 (in Connecticut call 877-690-5114). They will also have a message giving you the current status of our service.

[Back to Top](#)

IT'S NOT A "T" REX, BUT A GREX

From end to end, Metro-North Railroad covers 750 total miles of track. *(That sure is a lot of track!)*

To keep your service running optimally and in compliance with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) mandates, we conduct system-wide track inspections on an annual basis using highly sophisticated equipment.

Track inspection is a massive undertaking that involves comprehensive testing and analysis of the track and its components. This includes inspecting the steel rail, wood ties and concrete ties along with switches and joint bars, and track geometry.

So how do we go about inspecting all of those elements of all those miles of track?

We use specialized task-related equipment, including Georgetown Rail Equipment Company's (GREX) patented Aurora track inspection truck, a device provided by Mermec, and cars provided by Sperry Railroad Service.



Here's how it works:

The GREX is a truck—one that looks like it should be traveling along the road but is equipped to drive along the rails. *(So don't get nervous if you should see it on our tracks in your travels!)*

It uses two precision lenses and a laser to pinpoint where ties are breaking down, and then assigns a condition rating to help determine the severity of the degradation.

GREX technology helps us look for flaws—such as cracks, plate-cutting and rail seat abrasion.

The equipment also examines rail-end batter to reveal high-impact areas which can lead to a weakened track structure and a potentially failed joint.

The GREX uses a scanner to measure around the rail to gauge differences in rail height.

The equipment is so precise it can calibrate joint bar measurements to within two-hundredths of an inch!

GREX technology does not replace any previous inspections or protocols; it enhances our rail inspection program. Based on the data we receive, we can direct our efforts to address actual conditions..

Track geometry is another critical component of maintaining track safety.

That's why we bolt something called the "**Mermec**" onto one of our train cars to measure a variety of geometric parameters, including the position, curvature, alignment, smoothness and the cross level of the two running rails.

A Mermec-equipped car uses a series of sensors to create a profile of the track being inspected.

We also enlist Sperry Rail Service car to detect internal flaws, defects and metal fatigue in rails.

The Sperry car travels over our rails measuring them using ultrasonic and magnetic induction systems.

The GREX is currently traveling all main line tracks in New York and Connecticut, as well as the tracks in the Grand Central Terminal train shed. Weather permitting, it should have traversed our entire territory by late June. *(Scans cannot be conducted when it is raining or soon after because the lasers pick up the water in addition to the track.)*

Our Mermec-equipped car and the Sperry Rail Car are deployed at various times throughout the year.

And as you may have read in past issues of *Mileposts*, we recently completed a massive two-year, system-wide track work initiative that involved replacing nearly 100,000 ties, laying 16.5 miles of continuous welded rail, rebuilding 88 switches, renewing and/or upgrading 32 railroad crossings, and performing 2,905 welds on joints that connect stretches of track with one another. ([And more work is going on this summer!](#))

The ultimate goal is to provide you with a safer, smoother, more reliable ride!

[Back to Top](#)

Walk Online!

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has launched a [new website for the replacement of Walk Bridge](#) as part of its ongoing effort to keep those of you who take the New Haven Line (*and everyone else, too*) informed of the progress of this critical project in Norwalk.



The new website — www.walkbridgect.com

— provides current project information, including meeting notices and construction updates. While construction of the Walk Bridge is not scheduled to begin until mid-2018, CTDOT is planning to complete three advance construction projects that are necessary before the bridge replacement project begins.

The 120-year-old bridge carries four tracks of the New Haven Line over the Norwalk River. It swings open and closed to accommodate commercial and recreational marine traffic on the river below. When it fails to close properly — as has happened in recent years — it can cause major disruptions to rail service in the Northeast Corridor.

CTDOT is undertaking the replacement of the Walk Bridge to provide safe, reliable rail service, and enhance Connecticut's transportation system, now and for the future.

As one of the oldest movable bridges on the New Haven Line, replacement of the Walk Bridge has long been recognized as a priority to maintain critical rail service on the New Haven Line—the nation's busiest commuter rail line.

Design of the new Walk Bridge is still in the preliminary stages and the project team is evaluating construction impacts. The overall goal is to minimize disruption in the area and to reduce the duration of construction.

[Back to Top](#)

Twice As Quiet

You may have noticed that Quiet Cars® are now available on every weekday train — peak and off-peak — thanks to the expansion of our popular "**Quiet CALMmute**" program.

- On all weekday **inbound trains**, the **last two cars** are designated Quiet Cars®.
- On all weekday **outbound trains**, the **first two cars** are designated Quiet Cars®.

Look for the Quiet Car® signage identifying the cars (see art below).

If you are traveling in a Quiet Car® you should:

- Not use your cell phone.
- Disable sound features on computers & other electronic devices.
- Conduct conversations in a "quiet" voice.
- Listen to music at a volume that will not be audible from your headphones so that it cannot be heard by fellow passengers.

You should not ride in Quiet Cars® if you do not want to follow these rules.

To spread and reinforce the message about Metro-North's Quiet Cars®, conductors will hand out on an "as needed basis" specially designed "Shhhhhh" cards that explain the rules of

etiquette in English and Spanish.

Weekend trains are not included in the Quiet Cars® program.

PLEASE NOTE: All regular announcements will continue to be made in the designated Quiet Cars®. For those of you who wish to travel in our Quiet Car®, we say enjoy the "CALMmute." For more information, call Metro-North Customer Service at 511 (in CT, 877-690-5114).



Customers Traveling In This Quiet Car® Should:

Quiet Car® is the registered service mark of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and is being used by permission.



NOT USE cell phones



DISABLE SOUND on electronic devices



Use headphones at a **LOW VOLUME**, which cannot be heard by others



Speak in a **SUBDUED** voice

[Back to Top](#)

Sign on the Dotted Line!

Please remember to always sign the front of your Monthly Ticket to protect it in the event it is lost or stolen, and misused. (See photo below.) Also keep in mind that Monthly Tickets are non-transferrable.



[Back to Top](#)

The Play's the Thing...



Just ask Hamlet. He should know... You can hear that line and many more memorable quotes at the **Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival** (now through September 4).

Enjoy a picnic on the magnificent grounds of Boscobel and then enter the theater tent for a magical night of theater. Three Shakespeare plays will run in repertory: *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It* and *Macbeth*. In addition, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's Conservatory Company will present *So Please You* in August. **You'll save 20% by using code RIDEMETRO16** when purchasing tickets for Sunday through Friday, June & August, and Saturdays in July only.

Shakespeare's not your thing? Then unleash your inner

"Khaleesi" and tame the famous Dragon Coaster at **Rye Playland** (open May 7 – September 5). It's New York's great family amusement park! There are more than 50 major and Kiddyland rides and attractions; a beach, pool, and pier on Long Island Sound; lake boating, entertainment, fireworks, lots of great food, and much more. Rye Playland offers the best in family fun. Our package for adults, seniors and children 5–11 includes a rides admission; package for children 3–4 includes a Kiddyland admission.



[See full details on all our Getaways packages.](#)

Safety Rule of the Issue

Evacuations don't happen often on Metro-North. But if you were on a train involved in an incident, would you know what to do?

Getting out of our trains in the rare event of an emergency is a safe and simple process. [Learn what to do now.](#)

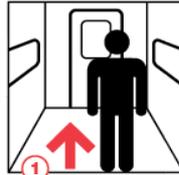
Evacuation Instructions



Listen for directions from authorized personnel.



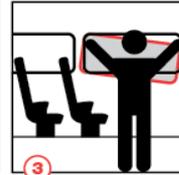
Remain inside train if possible. If not...



Go to next car through end doors. If unable...



Open side door and go out. If unable...



Go out emergency windows.

Courtesy Corner



Dogs... they've inspired countless singers and songwriters.

Elvis lovingly called you a "Hound Dog" (and so did Big Mama Thorton)... the Baja Men continually wondered who let the dogs out... and Iggy Pop just wanted to be your dog...

Yet there is one pair of "dogs" that inspired no lyrical love, and for good reason. We're talking about your feet, out of their shoes on a hot summer day, propped up on our train seats.

No one wants to see them, or worse, smell them. And they don't need a seat of their own, no matter how tired they may be.

So please remember to keep your shoes on and your "dogs" off our seats while traveling on our trains!

It's the courteous thing to do (*and sure to be a "hit" with your fellow commuters*).



ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE?



Become an MTA Police Officer

Application Available: July 1, 2016 through August 15, 2016

Scan, click
and apply



Visit mta.info/mta/employment
to apply online.

MTA is an Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D/V



[Back to Top](#)

Published by
Corporate & Public Affairs, MTA Metro-North Railroad
420 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10170

www.mta.info

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