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Metro-North: It Could Get Crowded Through Friday, Shorter Trains Than Normal This Week

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Train riders should anticipate shorter trains than normal this week, with the potential for crowded conditions and delays, Metro-North announced.

Here's most of a [Metro-North announcement](#) on its website. The announcement was also emailed at 4:25 p.m., Wednesday:

The extended period of light drizzly rain on Dec. 5, coupled with the ongoing late-season fall of leaves created extremely slippery rail conditions, which resulted in damage to train wheels during braking.

Cars with wheels that are damaged beyond FRA safety limits must be removed from service, resulting in a short-term reduction in the number of available rail cars.

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Although a common problem every autumn throughout the Northeast, yesterday's weather created a perfect storm for a condition known as slip-slide, as light misty rain mixed water with leaves that had fallen and continue to fall throughout the region.

The action coated rails with a mess of wet, crushed leaves that exudes a slippery natural combination of cellulose and pectin. This slippery leaf slime poses no danger to customers or crew members, but causes train delays as train wheels lose traction against the rails.

As trains attempting to stop momentarily slip along the rails, the movement of stopped steel wheel along the steel rails causes wheels to develop flat spots. Train cars with flat spots must immediately be taken out of service for repairs, leading to trains that are shorter than normal, with the potential for crowding to develop.

Our equipment maintenance forces will be busy throughout the week working to build back our fleet sizes to full strength.

Last night Metro-North placed 30 extra personnel on the main floor of Grand Central Terminal to assist with customer information, and will continue extra staffing until the situation is resolved.

See also

From Metro-North:

- [Metro-North's efforts to combat slip-slide](#)
- [A video of Metro-North's leaf-fighting train](#)

From Jim Cameron's transportation column:

- [One of the Slipperiest Substances Known to Man or Computers on the Train Tracks: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Nov. 19)