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MTA Announces Increased Mask Enforcement Throughout the System

MTA

Updated September 22, 2021 4:45 p.m.

 Mask Blitz Phase 2

Customers Refusing to Wear Masks Are Subject to Receive a Summons

Authority Ramped Up Mask Education and Distribution

Efforts Immediately Following Labor Day as More Riders Returned to School and Offices

25,000 Free Masks Handed Out During Phase One of “Mask Blitz” During Last Two Weeks

[See Video From Today’s News Conference](#)

[See Photos From Today’s News Conference](#)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is advising customers that beginning Thursday, September 23, MTA officers will be stepping up mask enforcement throughout the system and those who do not comply with mask requirements will be more likely to face a \$50 fine. Mask-wearing is a federal requirement on trains, buses and paratransit vehicles.

Following Labor Day, the MTA began on a [blitz of mask distribution](#), with MTA staff and police officers strategically stationed at subway and railroad hubs, and bus terminals, distributing tens of thousands of free masks to unmasked riders. This continues an approach established in September 2020, when the MTA implemented a \$50 fine to help increase mask compliance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The goal of heightened enforcement is to increase mask usage across all agencies, and to return to 2020 and early 2021 compliance levels where nearly 100% of riders wore masks onboard subways, buses, commuter railroads and paratransit vehicles. Since the \$50 fine was implemented on September 14, 2020, MTA police officers have had over 88,000 positive encounters with customers. This has included the distribution of more than 50,000 free masks overall, 25,000 in the two weeks since the blitz began on September 7.

“Promoting mask usage is an important component to protecting one another,” **said Patrick Warren, MTA Chief Safety Officer.** “To support the use of masks we have provided tens of millions of free masks to customers, complemented by a robust communication endeavor. These efforts have seen mask usage recently rise on buses and trains. This next phase of our blitz will reinforce that wearing a mask is not optional. Vaccinated or not, you must wear a mask when traveling on public transit.”

“Our officers have surged into major hubs to remind riders to wear their mask, and have handed out 25,000 free masks in just two weeks,” **said Joseph McGrann, Acting Chief of the MTA Police Department.**

“In the coming weeks officers will step up enforcement efforts on commuter rails and work with our partners at the NYPD for the subway and bus system. The message is clear, wear a mask. Riders who are still not getting this message will now see the cost associated with that thinking.”

Since the mask blitz began at key transit hubs, mask usage has increased. Latest surveys show that mask compliance onboard buses is approximately 94%, 87% on subways, 92% on the LIRR and 95% on Metro-North.

To date the MTA has made 11.1 million masks available for customers. Through the Authority’s trailblazing Mask Force, which launched in July 2020, more than 800,000 free masks have been distributed to customers.

Free masks remain available for any customer that forgets a mask at subway station booths and onboard commuter railroad trains. Distribution efforts continue to be complemented with digital messaging and

announcements in stations.

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