

Subway service from upper Manhattan, Bronx disrupted by debris

BY DAN RIVOLI GRAHAM RAYMAN

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Straphangers walk in the crowded 42nd Street subway station while experiencing delays on the 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 train lines Thursday because of falling debris on the tracks at the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street. (ANTHONY DELMUNDO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS)

Furious commuters slammed the MTA Thursday morning after a 30-foot piece of the third rail's protective board came loose, slowing the commute from Upper Manhattan and the Bronx, agency officials said.

The MTA at first blamed the rush-hour mess up on "debris" on the track. There were no trains on the Nos. 1, 2 and 3 lines between W. 96th St. and W. 42nd St. because of the blockage on the tracks at W. 50th St., officials said.

"This is unacceptable," commuter Alicia Hale tweeted. "This is the morning commute — lives and jobs."

The roughly three-hour ordeal started at 7:12 a.m., when the MTA spotted “debris” on the tracks north of the 50th St. station on the No. 1 line.

The third rail cover that was lying across the tracks tripped the emergency brakes on a No. 3 train.



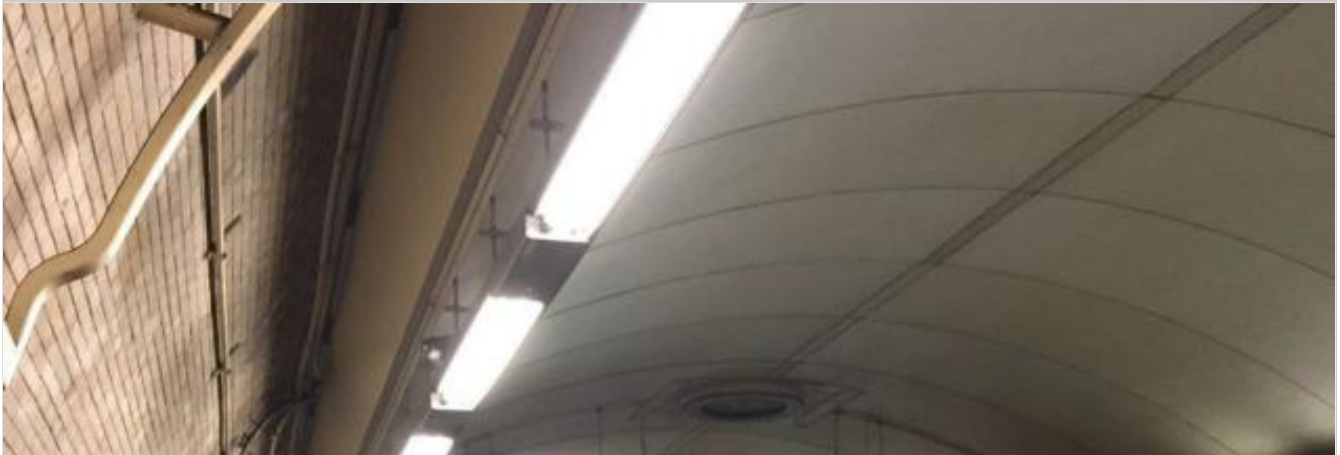
Twitter user @2MoMsNYC shared a photo of the jam-packed subway platforms. (@2MOMSNYC VIA TWITTER)

The MTA was forced to scramble service, sending No. 2 trains down No. 5 line tracks in the Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn. There were no No. 3 trains between 148th St. and 34th St.-Penn Station. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority was advising straphangers to take the A or C trains or local buses.

Meanwhile, workers cut power and crews stationed nearby responded within 15 minutes to start clearing the tracks, according to MTA Chairman Joe Lhota.

A test ran through the area, at 8:11 a.m. By 8:30 a.m., express service came back, followed by local trains at 9:30 a.m.

The MTA said in an alert that full service was back at 10 a.m. The agency also acknowledged the third rail protective board was involved, apologizing for the disruptions and overcrowding.



 **VIEW GALLERY**

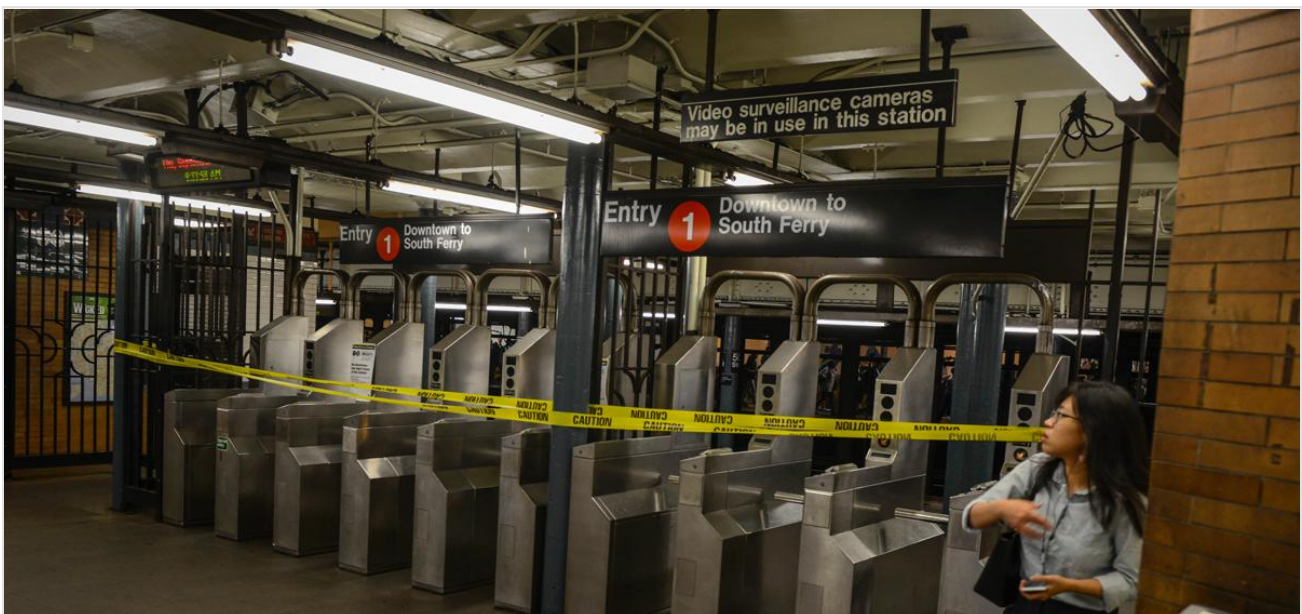
#NYCPROBLEMS: New Yorkers reveal daily struggles in hilarious photos

“We’re doing an investigation to find out exactly what happened to cause this rail covering to become ajar and come off,” Lhota told the Daily News.

Lhota defended how the agency brought service back to normal from the rush-hour madness and communications with riders.

“It’s half the time it used to take and I want to get that down even better,” he said. “Things like this used to take almost all day to fix.”

Amid the subway stall, delayed straphangers posted angry messages on Twitter.





South bound 50th Street subway station was closed to straphangers Thursday because of the debris. (ANTHONY DELMUNDO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS)

“Literally stuck at 168th Haven’t moved 3 ft in 15 min. & then another train arrived,” Twitter user That New York City Fast Pace wrote.

Another person tweeted: “Hundreds of people stuck at 168th station unable to move.”

Nicholas Sawicki wrote, “Some have life coaches. I have the @MTA to inspire me to get up each morning well before the daily breakdown.”

Navah Maynard wrote, “So glad that the @MTA raised the price of my monthly metro card.”



Brittany Coriaty tweets a photo of her morning commute on September 14, 2017. (@BRITTMOCO VIA TWITTER)

Another wrote, “You had one job @NYCTSubway.”

In a statement, the Riders Alliance, a grassroots transit advocacy group, said subway commuters are still living in the “Summer of Hell” — a phrase Gov. Cuomo coined to describe eight weeks of emergency repairs Amtrak did at Penn Station. “Once again, equipment failures led to delays, frustration and confusion for New Yorkers trying to get to work,” said Riders Alliance executive director John Raskin. “Gov. Cuomo produced a short-term plan to address delays, but he now needs to step up with a long-term plan to modernize the transit system and a reliable funding source to make it possible. If the governor doesn’t follow through on his promises to modernize the transit system, the Summer of Hell could easily become a Decade of Despair for millions of New Yorkers.”

Cuomo spokesman Jon Weinstein said the governor is focused on solutions and working with the MTA's leadership and state agencies to advance the \$843 million transit turnaround plan "as quickly as possible to stabilize the system."

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