

MTA Implements Union's Call for Expanded Testing

The MTA has agreed to implement one of TWU Local 100's top priority proposals – the testing and screening of thousands of transit workers for COVID-19 every week.

Testing is taking place at select bus depots and rail yards, NYC Transit Medical Assessment Centers, MTA Occupational Health Services facilities and Northwell Urgent Care facilities.

The goal is to test up 15% of transit workers weekly, which means that more than 6,000 bus and subway workers will be tested a week if the MTA meets its goal.

"This is exactly the type of screening program we have been asking for and it's a huge step forward in terms of protecting TWU Local 100 members from a possible second wave," TWU Local 100 President Tony Utano said. **"We will closely monitor its implementation but we're grateful our requests for testing and screening on such a scale have been heard."**

Utano first unveiled the screening proposal in May with the release of Local 100's 10-Point Plan for a Re-Opened NYC. Utano and the top officers in the Local 100 administration also have been pressing the issue in meetings with the MTA.

The on-the-job testing locations will be changed and rotated on a regular basis. The MTA will give priority to locations in hotspot and cluster zones identified by New York State.

The MTA's schedule for coronavirus testing and screening from late October through Nov. 8 includes nine different NYC Transit properties.

Members can get tested from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. – every day – at MACs 1, 3 and 5. The MTA recommends that you call and schedule an appointment in advance, but walk-ins are accepted. (See other side of flier for contact information)

Testing will be available between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the following Local 100 bus depots on over the next 10 days: Grand Ave. on Nov. 2nd; Gun Hill on Nov. 3rd; Flatbush, Nov. 4th; West Farms, Nov. 5th; Ulmer Park and JFK on Nov. 6th.

Local 100 will be publishing the dates and locations for the rest of November in the near future. Local 100 is in ongoing discussions about testing locations with the MTA as the program moves forward and expands. The MTA is posting schedules on through its Intranet portal for employees.

TESTING ON TRACK MTA to offer on-site coronavirus checkups

BY CLAYTON GUSE
NEWS TRANSIT REPORTER

Transit workers will begin to receive coronavirus tests at bus depots and subway yards across the city this week in an effort to stave off a second wave of COVID-19 among key frontline staff, MTA sources told the Daily News Monday.

The testing initiative marks the first time Metropolitan Transportation Authority employees will get widespread virus tests in their workplaces – and the program will roll out at facilities that saw high case counts in April when the pandemic peaked in New York.

Sources said testing stations will be set up at four Brooklyn bus depots, including Flatbush Depot, where four workers died of coronavirus, and Jackie Gleason Depot in Sunset Park, which saw two workers die from the disease. Bus depots in Queens and the Bronx will also get testing sites.

Two of the MTA's biggest subway yards – the

Coney Island maintenance shop and the 207th St. train yard – will also provide testing, sources said. Workers will be able to get tests during check-ups at the agency's Medical Assessment Centers, as well.

Gov. Cuomo said in a Monday news conference the state will begin to make more COVID tests available at train



Transit workers will have easy access to virus tests in bus depots and train yards in hopes of preventing a second COVID-19 wave.

Union Local 100 president Tony Utano. "We will closely monitor its implementation but we're grateful our requests for testing and screening on such a scale have been heard."

A shortage of coronavirus tests in New York throughout March and April forced MTA officials to issue significant amounts of emergency sick leave to employees who either had symptoms of the virus or believed they were exposed.

On April 7 – around the time the pandemic was at its peak in the city – 6,022 transit employees were sheltered at home. Weeks earlier,



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TWU's 10-Point Transit Plan For a Reopened New York City

The Transport Workers Union of Greater New York, Local 100, and the Transport Workers Union of America Have Jointly Announced the Union's 10-Point Plan to Enhance Transit Worker and Passenger Safety in a Reopened New York

Joint Statement by

Transport Workers Union Local 100 President Tony Utano,
And Transport Workers Union of America
International President John Samuels



"The Coronavirus has ravaged our country unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes, killing between 80,000 and 110,000 Americans. New York City has been the epicenter, and no workforce has suffered more than transit workers: more than 110 MTA employees have perished, more than 84 of them members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 who operate and maintain the bus and subway system. TWU Local 100, assisted by the TWU International, has worked with and fought with the MTA on many issues, ranging from the distribution of masks, the separation of riders from transit workers, the homeless problem in the subway and on buses, and tragically, the death benefits to the families of our fallen union brothers and sisters.

"New York State is starting to ease some pandemic restrictions. The MTA is making plans to increase bus and subway service. This crisis, however, is far from over. The danger of infection remains, and there is grave concern about a possible second major wave of infections in the fall.

"At this critical juncture, TWU Local 100 has drafted a 10-point plan for moving forward, starting with the granting of hazard pay for transit workers."

1. Hazard Pay – You simply can't expect transit workers to keep coming to work without first recognizing the sacrifices they have made, the day-to-day conditions they have labored under, and the risks they continue to face in public service. Thanks and praise are welcome, but simply are not enough.

2. Personal Protective Equipment – No mask, no work. Supplies must be stockpiled. Larger sizes available to workers.

3. Testing and Tracing – Testing of TWU Local 100 members in large numbers (testing size to be determined by an expert) with the objective of curtailing the spread of the virus by workers who are asymptomatic. Assessment of the tracing staffing and a determination if there are enough personnel assigned. Hire more if needed.

4. Temperature Checks – Expand the program so any worker can be voluntarily checked before entering the property.

5. Shields – Protective shields completely separating Bus Operators from riders. Barriers that will still allow emergency exiting should also be installed to further isolate Conductors and Train Operators from public passenger areas in the cars where the workers' cabs are located. A 6-foot no-approach zone painted on train platforms

where Conductors point to the indication board. If a rider enters the zone, Conductors should shut their window.

6. Homeless and Mentally Ill – Humane removal 24-hours a day from the system by police and social workers with referral to necessary services.

7. Reasonable Accommodations – Reasonable accommodations, or assignments, for older workers with pre-existing conditions, including posts inside subway station booths and enclosed security booths.

8. Study, Investigate and Report – Establish an independent panel of medical experts, public health officials, and other occupational health and safety experts, jointly by the union and the employer, to investigate selected by the union and the employer, to investigate and report on why so many transit workers were infected and died. There should be an interim report on how to improve worker safety with recommendations.

9. Cleaning – Mandatory and scheduled (as recommended by the expert panel) decontamination and disinfection of buses, trains, stations and workplaces. Determine how many more cleaners are needed to be hired and any additional training they may require.

10. Riders Masks – Enforcement of a facial covering rule for riders. No mask, no entry.