

New York to increase testing of public transit workers

October 27 2020



Bus Operator, Cathy Davis-Baker, gets a Covid test as part of an initiative by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to test its workers Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, at the Grand Avenue Bus Depot in New York. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced Tuesday it is

embarking on a first-in-the-nation testing program to test thousands of workers weekly to guard against a second wave of the coronavirus.

MTA Chairman Patrick Foye said the goal will be to test 15% of frontline workers weekly.

That would amount to roughly 6,000 bus and [subway workers](#), Transport Workers Union Local 100 President Tony Utano said in an email.

Overall, the nation's largest public transit system has more than 70,000 employees. More than 120 MTA employees have died from COVID-19 this year.

"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," Utano said.

The testing will be done at field sites, including bus depots and subway and train yards, and at several medical assessment and operational health centers. Results will be available within 24 to 48 hours.

The number of positive cases among MTA employees has ticked up slightly in recent weeks, MTA chief security officer Patrick Warren said Tuesday, though he added the number of daily cases hasn't risen above the low teens.

Subway ridership is less than one-third of what it was pre-pandemic, with bus ridership slightly better. The MTA, which also serves Connecticut and Long Island, is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on cleaning and disinfecting stations, buses and rail and subway cars, and even took the unprecedented step of shutting down overnight [subway](#) service.



Tony Utano, TWU Local 100 President, speaks during a news conference to announce MTA plans for the Covid testing of its workers Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, at the Grand Avenue Bus Depot in New York. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)



Metropolitan Transportation Authority chairman and CEO Patrick Foye gets a Covid test after a news conference to announce plans for the testing of its workers Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, at the Grand Avenue Bus Depot in New York. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)



A Medical Assistant administers a Covid test as part of plans by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to test workers Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, at the Grand Avenue Bus Depot in New York. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

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