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Traffic today could be worst yet

Some reopenings will ease it a bit

By JOSE MARTINEZ
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Drivers heading into Manhattan today could find themselves tangled in the worst traffic knots since terrorist attacks leveled the World Trade Center.

Traffic was lighter than normal last week because of the Jewish holidays and because some people may have been reluctant to return to work.

But by today, city and transit officials expect most people to be back at work — and back on the roads.

"We think [today] will be our toughest, roughest day," said Tom Cocola, a city Department of Transportation spokesman. "We hope those coming back had time to think about what sort of alternatives they might have."

Officials are hoping to ease the crunch by encouraging the use of public transportation and by reopening some roadways into and out of Manhattan.

The best alternative, Cocola said, is for commuters to continue relying on mass transit instead of driving into Manhattan, where vehicular access remains limited south of Canal St.

Since Sept. 11, security checkpoints and road closings have slowed drivers entering Manhattan through most East River and Hudson River crossings. Delays at the Lincoln Tunnel have, at times, stretched more than two hours.

"Mass transit, mass transit, mass transit — that's the message," Cocola said.

To ease the traffic that has been flowing over city streets and the Williamsburg and Manhattan bridges, two Brooklyn-bound lanes of the Brooklyn Bridge will reopen to cars this morning from the southbound FDR Drive.

The Holland Tunnel may reopen to New Jersey-bound traffic by this afternoon.

To ease congestion on Manhattan's West Side, 11th Ave. will continue to be two-way between 34th and 42nd streets.

Alternate-side parking rules remain suspended.

Straphangers have extra commuting options, too.

Service on the C line, which had been suspended, is set to resume today along its standard route, from 168th St. in Manhattan to Euclid Ave. in Brooklyn. The trains will skip the Chambers St. station.

On the E line, trains no longer will be steered into Brooklyn, as they had been since the disaster. The line will make its final southbound stop at Canal St.

But Transit Authority officials hope straphangers remain patient with the altered routes, which are meant to deposit commuters within "a couple of blocks" of their destination, said spokesman Al O'Leary.

"New Yorkers are resilient," O'Leary said. "They will deal with change when they understand it's not the fault of incompetence or ineptitude."

NJTransit commuters can use a bus-ferry service that will take them from Liberty State Park in Jersey City to Pier 16, near Fulton St. in lower Manhattan.

NJTransit's No. 120 buses from Bayonne and No. 134 buses from Old Bridge also will make stops at the park, along with Academy and Coach/USA Suburban buses.

There is no parking available at Liberty State Park's ferry pickup point.

NJTransit also will begin providing an extra Midtown Direct train at 8:13 a.m. from Summit, N.J., to Penn Station.

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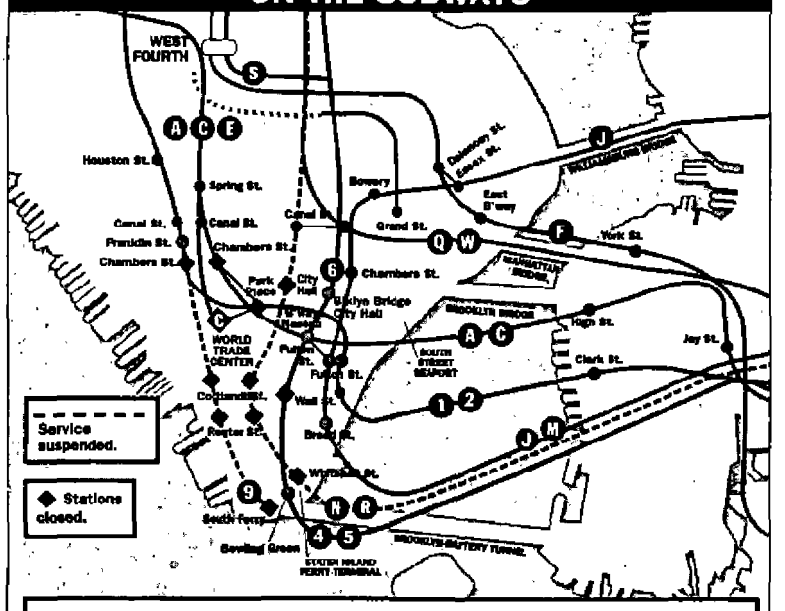
ON THE SUBWAYS



STATIONS OPEN SOUTH OF CANAL ST.

- 1: Franklin St.
- 4 & 5: Brooklyn Bridge, Fulton St. and Bowling Green
- 6: Brooklyn Bridge
- A: Fulton St. /Broadway-Nassau Sts.
- J: Broad St.

NORMAL SERVICE

B, D, F, G, L, 6, 7, Grand Central Shuttle

SERVICE CHANGES

1: Southbound now stops at Franklin St., then bypasses the stops at Chambers St. and Park Place and replaces the No. 3 line to Brooklyn, ending at New Lots Ave.

9: No service.

2 : Southbound will stop along its normal route from 241st St. in the Bronx to 96th St. in Manhattan, then make local stops between 96th and Franklin Sts., bypassing Chambers St. and Park Place and continuing its normal route in Brooklyn.

3 : Southbound will run between 148th St. and end at 14th St.

4 & 5: Skips Wall St.

A: Skips Chambers St.

C: Service from 168th St. to Euclid Ave. in Brooklyn. Skips Chambers St. and World Trade Center station.

E: Final southbound stop at Canal St.

J: Replaces R in Brooklyn. Extended from Broad St. in Manhattan to 95th St., Brooklyn.

M: Replaces N in Brooklyn. Extended from Chambers St. to Coney Island.

Q: Replaces R in Queens. Extended from 57th St. in Manhattan to Forest Hills, Queens.

W: Extended to replace N in Queens to Astoria.

FOR THE LATEST

To check on service changes, go to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Web site (www.mta.nyc.ny.us).

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