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OH, SUGAR! 'POWDER' FOULS UP SUBWAYS

By PHILIP MESSING and ADAM MILLER

The morning rush-hour was chaos for thousands of straphangers yesterday after suspicious-looking white powder was found at two Manhattan subway stations.

Service on the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 lines was suspended between Grand Central Station and Bowling Green shortly after 7 a.m. when the powder was discovered.

Service was restored 20 minutes later after it was determined to be sugar.

About three hours later, service was shut down on the Sixth Avenue B, D and F lines between West Fourth Street and Columbus Circle after more powder was found at the busy Herald Square station.

Transit Authority spokeswoman Marisa Baldao said trains were re-routed up Eighth Avenue for an hour and a half before cops determined the powder was harmless.

"It is really such a terrible inconvenience," straphanger Mary Ann Stevenson said as she hustled to hail a taxi at West 59th Street.

"It's very frustrating. I'm going to be so late for work," said Stevenson, 31, a paralegal from the Upper East Side.

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>
> STRAPHANGER MARY ANN STEVENSON

Allen Washington, 33, of The Bronx, watched his commute go from a normal half hour to two hours.

"It's getting ridiculous," fumed Washington.

"I know people are really scared about anthrax, but this has got to stop. It seems like there are subway delays every day. I'm getting so tired of them."

Tonya Marcos, 19, said she was stranded on a D train for 30 minutes.

"It was awful and it's gotten me crazy," she said.

But not every straphanger was complaining.

"I think it's good because, these days, you can never be too cautious," Steven Goldstein, 31, said as he waited for a B train at the Columbus Circle station.

"I'd rather be safe than sorry," he said. "I can understand the cops wanting to be extra careful."

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