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V train baffles straphangers – and Rudy

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The new V train, set to roll into Queens and Manhattan subway stations today, seems to have taken some New Yorkers — even Mayor Giuliani — by surprise.

The new train — to run weekdays from 6 a.m. to midnight between 71st Ave in Forest Hills, Queens and Second Ave. on the lower East Side — is intended to relieve overcrowding on the E and F trains.

The new line will bring changes to the G and F routes, meaning a big adjustment for some passengers.

Riders at the 53rd St. and Lexington stop, for example, were baffled by the sudden absence of the F train, which ceased serving that station yesterday.

"I didn't know anything about the V train," said Donna Samaski, 53, of Manhattan, who was trying in vain to switch to the F from the E train. "I came here looking for the F and now I don't know where to go."

Samaski was not alone in her confusion.

"The V train? What is the V train?" Giuliani replied when asked about the newest addition to the city's subway map. "I guess I'll need to look into it."

Even riders who were aware of the new train were taken aback by changes that went into effect yesterday: The F changed routes yesterday, even though the V doesn't debut until today.

Transit Authority officials defended its advertising campaign for the latest alteration to the subway system.

"We've had brochures, newspaper ads and have had posters up in the stations and trains affected by the switch," said TA spokesman James Anyansi. "We've gotten the word out."

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