



LIRRCC

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Riders Concerned by Penn Station Security Issues

Riders have long had questions about their safety and security in New York Penn Station and the multiple police agencies that protect the station. Two recent derailments in the station and an April 14 incident where use of a Taser by Amtrak Police led to widespread panic have raised new questions in the minds of riders about their safety in Penn Station. Statements by Amtrak Police union officials that “the last time we did a multi-agency drill was about 10 years ago” and that Amtrak Police patrol forces at Penn Station typically number only five officers further trouble riders already anxious about their personal safety. As the owner of Penn Station and lead agency responsible for the security of the station and its users, the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) demands that Amtrak take the steps necessary to ensure that the police agencies in Penn Station constitute an effective and coordinated force for the protection of the facility and its users.

“Riders must know that they are not playing ‘commuter roulette’ when they enter Penn Station. Recent incidents and comments have alarmed Penn Station users who want only to have a safe and peaceful trip” said LIRRCC Chair Mark Epstein. “Coming on the heels of Amtrak President and CEO Wick Moorman’s admission that Penn Station’s infrastructure is only in ‘fair’ condition, the April 14 incident involving use of a Taser led to sixteen injuries that had to be treated by emergency medical forces. We can only imagine the result if there had been an actual threat to riders. After a panic at JFK Airport in 2016, its operator committed to steps to better coordinate police and security agencies, and that is what must happen at Penn Station. The safety and security situation in Penn Station has to change, and Amtrak, as the owner and operator of the station, must take the lead to ensure that Penn Station is provided with appropriate levels of law enforcement and security personnel, as well as safety enhancements, to safeguard the users of Penn Station.”