



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA TO ADD FOUR LINES, 20 BUSES TO SPECIAL STRIKE SERVICE

MTA will add four more lines to its emergency strike service Friday, July 29, with two more lines scheduled to operate Monday, Aug. 1, should the strike continue into a second week.

Twenty buses will begin service on portions of the following lines Friday, July 29:

Line 90 (L.A.-Sunland/Tujunga and Sylmar)

Line 130 (Artesia Boulevard)

Line 232 (Long Beach to LAX)

Line 234 (Sepulveda Boulevard)

If no settlement is reached over the weekend, another 10 buses are scheduled to go into service on the following two lines starting Monday, Aug. 1:

Line 70 (El Monte Station to Union Station via Garvey Avenue)

Line 78 (Arcadia to Union Station via Las Tunas Drive)

"We fielded 339 buses Thursday, the fourth day of the walkout led by MTA's mechanics union," said MTA Chief Executive Officer Franklin White. "We are adding 20 more Friday, July 29, on four more lines. Our plan is to have this upward trend continue gradually if the strike continues."

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The 30 additional buses will be provided by three private bus companies MTA has recently contracted with: Santa Barbara Transportation of Goleta, CA; Mark IV Charter of Los Angeles and Roesch Lines with offices in Riverside and Orange.

They join Laidlaw Transit Service and Mayflower Contract Services as private bus companies that are under contract with MTA to provide replacement buses during the strike.

White reported that 129 MTA buses driven by substitute bus operators, 70 Mayflower school buses and 140 Laidlaw school buses comprised the fleet of 339 that went into service Thursday.

On Wednesday, approximately 180,000 passengers boarded buses, with 70,000 riding Blue Line and Red Line train service.

MTA's telephone information service, now at full strength, fielded a total of 10,000 calls Wednesday. A second toll-free telephone information number was activated July 27 to assist MTA riders get bus route information. The number, (800) 8700-MTA, has recorded information regarding the bus and train lines operating during the strike, and the hours they are operating. The number received an estimated 5,000 calls on its first day.

"This new number is to supplement the (800) COMMUTE number, which is answered by one of our telephone information operators," said White. "Because of the high volume of information calls we are experiencing, we felt the addition of this second information number would help people get the information they needed without having to wait to speak with one of our representatives."

White stressed, however, that the (800) COMMUTE number (266-6883) is still available to those who have specific questions about their bus and train service. The new number also gives callers the option of requesting a telephone information operator if the recorded information is not sufficient.

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The public also may use any of the three normal MTA telephone information numbers, depending on their geographical location: (213) 626-4455, (310) 273-0910 or (818) 443-1307.

Training of non-contract employees continued in an effort to prepare them to operate MTA buses in case of a prolonged strike. Trainees are receiving up to 65 hours of instruction, including 15 classroom hours, 20 mandatory behind-the-wheel hours and up to 30 additional hours of line qualification training, in which they practice actually driving the route they will serve. All trainees are receiving state-mandated instruction, making them fully qualified to operate a public transportation vehicle.

In addition to the six new lines scheduled for implementation, the attached list is of the 30 other bus lines being served, and further specifies the portion of the line being served. The Metro Red Line and Blue Line trains also are operating. Fares are 50 cents on MTA buses and the Metro Blue Line, 25 cents on the Metro Red Line, and free on school buses provided by private companies.

"We're constantly refining this temporary schedule, adding buses as we go along," White said. "We ask the public to read their newspapers, watch their TVs and listen to their radios for updated information."

White reminded MTA riders that bus and train service will not be available on weekend days, and that service on weekdays will be from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Let me again encourage carpooling and ridesharing whenever possible, and that employers consider shifting working hours to help alleviate congestion," White said.

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