

METRO

MTA workers cleaning around the homeless on NYC subways

By David Meyer

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MTA employees clean and disinfect the area around a man sleeping on the Q train at the 96 St Station.

Matthew McDermott

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MTA workers were seen cleaning *around* a homeless man sprawled out on a subway car at East 96th Street on Monday — and the agency says that's just standard operating procedure despite the coronavirus pandemic.

The stunning scene came during a photo op of subway cleaning arranged by the MTA's press office, but staff said they were powerless to do anything about vagrants without cops or city outreach workers present — and officials acknowledged that's par for the course.

“We do not ask our workforce or our cleaners to engage in social services or to engage with someone who isn’t interested in moving or doesn’t want to move,” Interim Transit President Sarah Feinberg said at a separate press event over Zoom.

“Certainly we don’t ask or allow people to get into a confrontation with anyone. That is exactly what of the many problems we are trying to solve for at the moment.”

The man photographed by The Post was the only homeless person in the station at the time, MTA spokesman Tim Minton noted, claiming the issue of homeless people living on trains was “not a daytime issue for the most part.”

The MTA says overnight systemwide closures set to begin Wednesday will allow for an increased presence of cops and outreach workers to remove vagrants from the system so trains can be scrubbed.

“The Post saw first-hand how that can have an impact on the disinfecting process,” Minton said. “That is one of the reasons we need to close the system overnight in order to thoroughly and effectively disinfect.”

Starting with Wednesday’s overnight shutdown, the MTA will begin fully-disinfecting trains and buses once a day and frequently-touched surfaces at stations twice daily, officials said.

“Daytime terminal car cleaning,” as observed by The Post on Monday, involves removing trash, cleaning spills, spot-cleaning surfaces and some disinfecting whenever a train arrives at a terminal, according to Feinberg.

Overnight, empty trains in yards and terminals “will receive a more comprehensive cleaning,” she said.

The MTA is also testing multiple antimicrobial disinfectants that may be able to kill COVID-19 germs for as long as three months post-application, she said.

And next week, the agency will install miniature ultraviolet lamps on some buses and trains, which may also kill the viral bacteria, officials said.

“My promise to all New Yorkers for the duration of this pandemic: We will do everything we can, everything possible, to protect your health,” MTA Chairman Pat Foye told reporters Monday.

“We’ve never undertaken such a challenging task, and as Gov. Cuomo has said, this will be a Herculean effort.”

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