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SEPTA Prepares for Slippery Rail Season

Riders Asked to Plan for Possible Delays on Regional Rail

PHILADELPHIA (October 14, 2021) – SEPTA is preparing for slippery rail season, and the Authority is asking Regional Rail customers to plan for possible delays.

Slippery rail is a condition that occurs when falling leaves, crushed by passing rail vehicles, deposit a residue on the tracks. This coating decreases the friction of a train's wheels, creating slippery rails. When this happens, travel speeds are reduced to maintain safe operations, especially on inclines and declines, and when vehicles approach station platform areas.

“Getting our riders to their destination without delays or inconvenience is important, but the safety of our customers and employees always takes precedence,” said SEPTA CEO/General Manager Leslie S. Richards.

SEPTA takes a proactive approach to battling slippery rails, deploying personnel during overnight hours to clean the tracks. A combination of water and gel is used to remove oily deposits from the tracks, and crews use high-pressure washing equipment to blast away leaves and their residue. In addition, sand is spread on the tracks to help increase traction.

Slippery rail season typically runs from late October through mid-December. Customers are most likely to experience delays during wet and windy weather.

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