

Inclement Weather

Amtrak response to winter weather



Nationwide Rail Network

Amtrak operates a nationwide rail network:

- Serving more than 500 destinations in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces on more than 21,300 route miles throughout the Amtrak national network
- Working 24/7 around-the-clock to ensure reliable service and safety during inclement weather

Actively Monitoring Storms

Our 24-hour Consolidated National Operations Center (CNOC), Train Control Centers and Emergency Management personnel are:

- Monitoring the latest weather conditions 24/7.
- Assessing the state of the railroad and related infrastructure in real-time.
- Coordinating any necessary response, with assistance from a private weather forecasting firm.
- Working closely with other railroads that own and maintain tracks and other systems or stations used by Amtrak.

If inclement weather conditions compel Amtrak to operate a modified schedule of service, customers are encouraged to:

- Self-modify reservations via the **Amtrak app** or **Amtrak.com** (or call 800-USA-RAIL)
- Visit [Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com) or download the Amtrak app for the latest information on train status
- Subscribe to delay alerts for any train via email or text message at [Amtrak.com/DelayAlerts](https://www.amtrak.com/DelayAlerts)
- Follow [@AmtrakNECAAlerts](https://twitter.com/AmtrakNECAAlerts) and [@AmtrakAlerts](https://twitter.com/AmtrakAlerts) on X for real-time service information on Amtrak trains in the NEC and across the country

Additional Staffing

Mechanical, Engineering and Operations forces mobilize additional crews to ensure safe and efficient operation of the railroad. Additional staff are pre-positioned to respond should a need arise. As always, our goal is to ensure passenger safety and comfort while keeping trains moving and minimizing delays, so our employees work as quickly and safely as possible.

Inclement Weather Preparations

CNOC personnel monitor weather conditions and assess the impact to Amtrak operations. The Chicago facility is one of five Amtrak dispatching offices that controls 2,500 trains with nearly 900,000 daily passengers.



Equipment Positioning

To respond to potential problems more quickly, diesel locomotives and on-track maintenance equipment

are strategically positioned. If downed trees or branches disable the overhead electrical system, diesel power can help move trains when it is safe to do so, and on-track equipment can be dispatched to make any necessary infrastructure repairs. During heavy snow, Amtrak uses jet-powered blowers to clear snow, ice and other debris off tracks. The blowers are positioned in areas with typically heavy snowfall such as the Northeast Corridor (NEC), Albany, N.Y., and Chicago.



Host Railroads And Partner Assistance

In areas where tracks are not owned or maintained by Amtrak, we rely on help from our railroad partners during inclement weather. In anticipation of a storm, host railroad partners can deploy a variety of preparation efforts including:

- Stationing repair crews.
- Staging equipment and maintenance materials in strategic areas to address electric traction and signal problems.
- Removing critical equipment from low-lying points.
- Conducting inspection patrols during and after a storm to identify damage and assess risk of further damage.

Switch Heater Inspections

To ensure track switches are working properly during inclement weather, Amtrak inspects switch heaters in affected areas to make sure they are in good working order, including:

- Activating switch heaters

- Lubricating the switches
- Treating them with anti-freeze agents

Catenary wire inspections and repair Amtrak trains running along the Northeast and Harrisburg Line corridors are powered by overhead electrical wires called a catenary system, which provides power to trains. Dramatic swings in temperature (both hot and cold) can cause catenary wires to expand and contract, which can affect the tension that supports them. Large tension swings can sometimes cause components in the catenary system to malfunction. Amtrak deploys forces to patrol the wires and inspect trains to identify any issues before they escalate. To make repairs to catenary wire, Amtrak crews use a specialized maintenance vehicle called a Catenary Car.

Amtrak-Owned Property

Amtrak implements additional efforts along the right-of-way on Amtrak-owned property including:

- Northeast Corridor (between Washington, D.C., and Boston)
- Harrisburg Line in Pennsylvania
- Empire Line in New York
- Springfield Line in Connecticut and Massachusetts
- Michigan Line, including a portion in Indiana

Some of those additional efforts along Amtrak-owned property can include tree-trimming. Amtrak engages in a year-round, tree-trimming program to proactively minimize downed trees and branches along the right-of way, which can damage the catenary system or prevent safe passage of trains. During inclement weather, independent contractors are also on standby to quickly respond to clear downed trees or branches along the right-of way.