

# **New York City Transit Riders Council**

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## ***SURVEY SHOWS SUBWAY SIGNAGE IS BETTER, BUT FAR FROM PERFECT***

The New York City Transit Riders Council (TRC) today released the results of a survey of subway station signs that shows that signage has improved over the last ten years, but still can be misleading or confusing to riders, especially visitors and others unfamiliar with the system.

The Council checked signs at 100 randomly selected stations throughout the city, and found something wrong at 82 of them. Station entrances fared the worst, with 37.2% of the 363 entrances surveyed having at least one signage problem. This poor performance is largely due to the large number of entrances without colored globes, which is a problem particularly at elevated stations. Mezzanines and passageways failed the test 25.3% of the time, 29.0% of tracks failed, and 17.0% of turnstile areas failed. In addition, at those stations where transfers can be made between lines, 20.5% of the time the platforms did not have correct transfer signage.

The TRC first evaluated signage in 1987, and determined that signage at subway entrances was terribly inadequate. For example, 49.7% of the entrances surveyed in 1987 did not have colored globes indicating whether the entrance was full-time or part-time. This year, the TRC found that the percentage of entrances missing globes was down to 22.0%. Although this represents a substantial improvement, the Council feels that New York City Transit can do better.

The Council held its press conference at the 86th Street station on the "B" and "C" lines, which was a prime example of incorrect signage when the survey was conducted. Each of the station's entrances listed a different collection of subway lines, one including the "CC" and the "K" routes, which were discontinued over a decade ago. In the turnstile area, a sign listing the subway lines was obscured by the new turnstiles and showed the "B" in a blue circle, even though the route's color is orange. At the platform level, some platform-edge signs were badly defaced, and they all listed the hours for the "B" train as "weekdays," without any explanation of the actual hours of operation. Prior to the Council's press conference, New York City Transit corrected all the signs at the station.

Transit Riders Council Chairman Andrew Albert called on New York City Transit to do more to bring its signage up to standards: "Transit should get credit for improving signage since our last survey, but they still have a long way to go. In many cases we

found newly installed signs that had errors, and we also found signs that had been updated with decals, but the decals had peeled off. Unless Transit makes sure the signs are accurate in the first place, and unless they maintain them, signs will never reach a state of good repair." Mr. Albert also noted that NYC Transit needs to provide more information to its customers. "Words like 'weekdays' and 'late nights' are confusing to riders. They need to know when, exactly, the last B train leaves 86th Street."

Copies of the full report are available upon request.

The TRC was created in 1981 by the New York State Legislature to represent the interests of subway and bus riders. The 15 volunteer members are appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Mayor (5) the Public Advocate (5), and the Borough Presidents (1 each).