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Amtrak Statement: Aligning Services to Current Travel Needs

August 17, 2020

Most Daily Long-Distance Services to be Changed to Tri-Weekly

“We are sharing with customers our new schedules for reduced Long Distance train frequencies that are planned to go into effect this October. Making these new schedules available now will help customers plan for future trips and adjust existing trips impacted by these changes. These

reductions in frequencies are a result of the dramatic reduction in travel demand due to the Coronavirus pandemic and follow steps we've already had to make across our other services lines across our network," said Stephen Gardner, Amtrak Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operating and Commercial Officer. "We are committed to assessing the travel needs continuously and to restoring service levels when appropriate.

"We regret the impact of these planned changes on our customers, employees, and communities across the nation and we hope to restore some or all of this service back to daily in 2021. But, with ridership down by 80 percent and more and Federal funding levels for Amtrak unclear for Fiscal Year 2021, we must take appropriate steps to align all of our service levels with current demand."

A Passenger Service Notice regarding these changes is posted on [Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com).

Additional information, including metrics to restore daily service, is also posted on [Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com).

Background:

Due to COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting decrease in travel demand, most Amtrak long distance routes will operate tri-weekly beginning this October. Amtrak had previously reduced service frequencies on both the Northeast Corridor and on the state-sponsored routes due to low ridership. Long distance routes have operated without major changes due to federal CARES Act funding that expires on Sept. 30, 2020.

Those routes changing from daily service to tri-weekly are: [*California Zephyr*](#), [*Capitol Limited*](#), [*City of New Orleans*](#), [*Coast Starlight*](#), [*Crescent*](#), [*Empire Builder*](#), [*Lake Shore Limited*](#), [*Palmetto*](#), [*Southwest Chief*](#) and [*Texas Eagle*](#).

The Amtrak [*Auto Train*](#) is unaffected by this action as its bookings have outpaced other long distance routes. The [*Silver Meteor*](#) and [*Silver Star*](#) will continue to operate a combined daily service between New York City and Miami, as they have since July 6, 2020. There are no changes for the [*Cardinal*](#) and [*Sunset Limited*](#), which will continue to operate tri-weekly service

The new schedules are now in place. All Amtrak reservation systems have been updated, including Amtrak.com, the Amtrak app and the Amtrak contact center.

Impacted customers with existing reservations are actively being re-accommodated by the Amtrak customer care team and will be offered the ability to rebook to a different day or receive a complete refund without penalty.

The new schedule is designed to retain as many customer connecting opportunities as possible. To preserve east-west and west-east connections, the long-distance hub in Chicago will offer arrivals and departures primarily on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On average, more than 75% of connecting market opportunities will remain available on dates when tri-weekly service is offered

The new schedule reflects day-of-week changes only. All stations along the route will be served on days in which Amtrak service is offered. All scheduled departure/arrival times will be maintained. Customers will continue to have the option to book coach or a [private room](#).

Customers traveling the *Coast Starlight*, *Lake Shore Limited* and *Palmetto* will also have the option to book in Business Class. Any other changes to days of station operation or to Amtrak employment levels will be provided on a later date.

For More Information

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