



Improved Climate Control on the Gallery Cars

After reviewing the multitude of "cold car" emails and hearing the "it's freezing" comments at our "Meet The Management" sessions, we decided to revisit our current air flow configuration and find new ways to moderate the temperature range in the new Gallery cars.

First we used 6 cars (3 cars on the Fredericksburg line and 3 on the Manassas line) to lock in a warmer setting on the HVAC system. We monitored these cars for 4 months and found that the temperature range improved by 2 degrees. We then conducted a test program of the B-end of one car by relocating its thermostats while keeping the A-end thermostats in their original location.

The B-end increased in temperature by 2 degrees. The final solution selected was a two-pronged approach to achieve a better moderated temperature range for all Gallery cars. The first part of the solution was to relocate the thermostats to a position on top of the railing where they are better able to sense the ambient temperature inside the rail cars.

This program was completed at the end of May, 2011.

The goal is to maintain the moderated temperature range of (70-72) using the cooler/warmer switch settings in concert with relocating the thermostats. VRE will use the warmer setting until the outside ambient temperature is 94 degrees.

When the outside ambient temperature is above 94 degrees the cooler setting will be used to maintain the moderated temperature range of 70-72. Prior to the two point solution the temperature range found on the A-end was 66-69 degrees, which is cold. We concur with the e-mails and the MTM comments - the new Gallery cars are cold.

We believe the new moderated temperature range will provide most of the passengers a more comfortable ride on the VRE. We will conduct a follow up to confirm that the new moderated temperature range is achieved for the Gallery fleet. We encourage your comments to continue improvements on the VRE system.

VRE's CFO Wins Virginia Business Award

Since 2006, Virginia Business Magazine has presented yearly awards to top Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) in Virginia recognizing both outstanding achievement in financial stewardship and those whose integrity, ingenuity and dedication have led to the success of their respective Virginia-based companies or nonprofit organizations.

This year, VRE's CFO, Donna Boxer, was selected as the recipient of the CFO award for the small nonprofit/government organization category.

Ms. Boxer was selected for her superb management of VRE finances, for the arrangement of capital and grant funding which resulted in the purchase of 71 new railcars, 20 new locomotives and the sale of 91 pieces of rail equipment, and for her multiple recognitions of excellence in financial reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association for the years 2007, 2008,

and 2009 (the 2010 report is still being reviewed).

She has skillfully managed and improved the overall financial situation for VRE through her fresh and creative approaches to process changes, improved procedures and innovative techniques toward financial situations.

As a result, VRE Board members, local, state and federal officials all concur that VRE is in capable hands to undertake the rigors of procurements, implement the capital acquisition and then manage that asset on time, on budget and be fully accountable through the process.

Her role has been critical to VRE's success and VRE is proud to have Donna Boxer as a member of our team.

We hope that you will join us as we congratulate her on a job well done!

This week marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run), and the City of Manassas is gearing up for festivities.

For Manassas station VRE riders, all VRE lots will be open for VRE riders.

However, some road closures could mean some congestion on Thursday and Friday.

- Prince William St. CLOSED from Grant Ave. to the parking garage
- West St. CLOSED between Center St. and Prince William St.
- Battle St. CLOSED between Center St. and Prince William St.

The Kiss and Ride area will be moved to the intersection of Prince William and Main Streets.

For a complete list of road closures and other information, visit <http://files.manassascivilwar.org/Road-Closures.pdf>.



VRE Update is a publication of Virginia Railway Express. The newsletter is published monthly 12 times per year. Stories included are for the sole use of VRE riders. Comments and questions may be directed to VRE at gotrains@vre.org or at (703) 684-1001.

Surviving the Summer Heat

Heat advisories, ozone warning days, and humidity that can kill a good hair day in one second flat! Ahhh, summer in Virginia and D.C.

But before you decide that it's a hopeless thing to combat, think again, because there really are some strategies that you can employ that actually can take the heat off and can make a big difference in how comfortable you are as you wait on the platform or find yourself in a crowded train.

1) Your mom and doctor are right: Cool and plentiful water is your best friend during the dog days of summer. Be sure to bring along a water bottle, and consider toting it in a small, insulated bag to keep it cool. And remember, drink the water even if you don't feel thirsty, because thirst kicks in only when one percent to two percent of body weight is already lost. (Remember too that caffeine and alcoholic beverages will dehydrate you rather than hydrate you!)

2) Look into small, battery operated hand-held fans and misters sold in many drugstores and online to give yourself a cooling break. Or, carry along a washcloth so that you can wet it with your water bottle and pat your wrists, face and the back of your neck for a quick cool down.

3) Wear light-weight, light-colored and loose fitting clothing.

4) If you can't ditch your tie and jacket, consider wearing wool. Yes, we said wool. Lightweight worsted wool—one that weighs no more than eight to nine ounces per yard—is best during the summer and ultimately matters more than the color of the fabric. Some blends, such as worsted wool with cotton or mohair, or wool and linen, can also work well.

5) Ditch jackets and pants with linings, as linings trap heat in hot weather.

6) Seek shade, even if it means carrying a light umbrella or parasol to help ward off the worst of the sun's rays. Wear a hat with a wide brim.

7) Don't avoid the outdoors completely: going outdoors regularly can help build up your heat tolerance. Did you know that to prepare for summer athletics, it takes 10 to 14 days of regular exercise in the heat, slowly building up to intense workouts at the hottest times of the day, before an athlete can safely (and comfortably) work out in the heat? The same basic notion applies to just being out in the heat. If you're not used to it, you're more at risk for heat-related illness.

If you still get overheated, pay attention to what your body is telling you. The warning signs of heat exhaustion vary, but they're often hard to ignore as they may include:

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Paleness, tiredness and dizziness.

Heat stroke is more serious, with warning signs including:

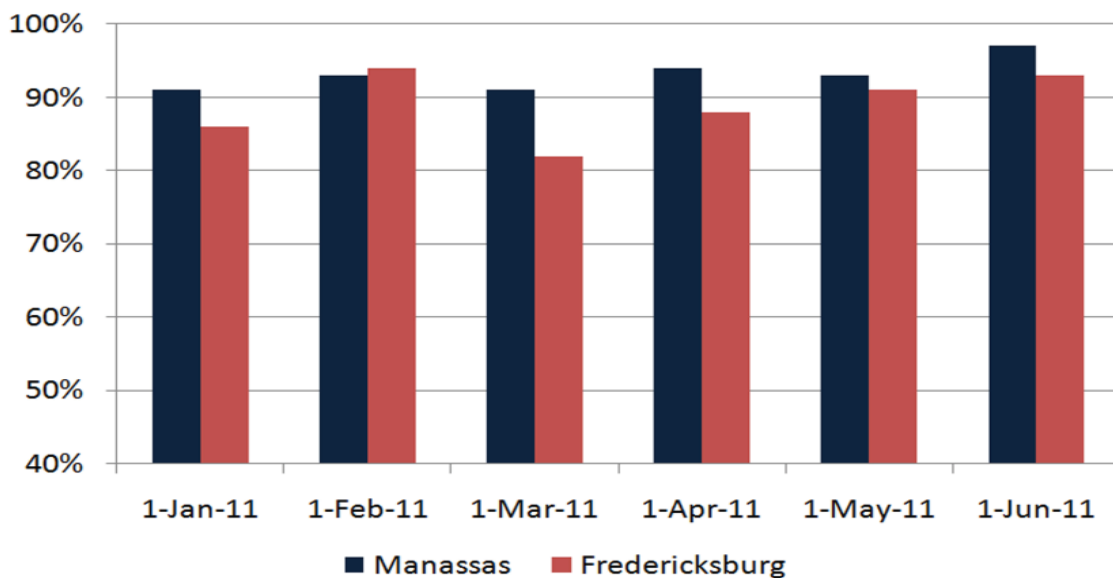
- An extremely high body temperature (above 103° Fahrenheit)
- Unconsciousness
- Dizziness, nausea and confusion
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid and strong pulse
- Throbbing headache.

The summer heat is not something to ignore, so please take precautions and don't overdo it. Our trains are air conditioned, most platforms are shaded, and the walks from train to car are not long.

So please, take it easy this summer when the mercury climbs to dangerous levels!

In June 2011, VRE will be rolling out Phase I of III of the Centralized Diagnostic System (CDS) for VRE Trains. CDS will provide VRE will real-time health monitoring, defect and troubleshooting information. CDS will enable VRE to determine equipment problems as they occur and provide the operating and mechanical teams with immediate corrective actions. The system also detects non-critical events to alert the mechanical teams of potential failures, promoting timely preventive measures. CDS is a web based system with a separate computer on each locomotive monitoring events on both the locomotive (Phase I) and passenger cars (Phase III). All of the data collected via the CDS system will be used for analysis to enhance preventive maintenance and operating practices at VRE.

On Time Performance for the Last Six Months



On-Time Performance June 2011

Fredericksburg Line

300 – 100%
 302 – 100%
 304 – 100%
 306 – 100%
 308 – 95%
 310 – 100%
 312 – 95%

301 – 100%
 303 – 91%
 305 – 73%
 307 – 91%
 309 – 86%
 311 – 86%
 313 – 91%

Overall – 93%

Manassas Line

322 – 100%
 324 – 100%
 326 – 100%
 328 – 100%
 330 – 100%
 332 – 95%
 336 – 100%
 338 – 95%

321 – 100%
 325 – 100%
 327 – 91%
 329 – 100%
 331 – 100%
 333 – 95%
 335 – 95%
 337 – 82%

Overall – 97%

*A train is considered delayed if it is more than 5 minutes later than the posted schedule into its final destination.

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About VRE Restrooms (but were afraid to ask)

Originally, the restrooms on board our trains used a holding tank toilet system. With the arrival in 2008 of the new Gallery IV rail cars manufactured by Nippon Sharyo, we switched to a Microphor biological toilet system. This system did not require bi-daily pumping of the toilet tank system as our old Legacy cars did. Instead, it allowed the effluences (liquid waste) to be degraded with micro-organism cultures. The residual effluent would then be treated and released as gray water.

Unfortunately, in the past 6½ months we have received numerous complaints concerning our biological toilets. These complaints ranged from odors to overflowing toilets. We examined the maintenance practices and found the following:

1. Our maintenance practices needed to be increased due to both the ridership increase and in order to meet the manufacturer's maintenance procedures to ensure proper functioning of the biological toilet system. VRE's maintenance personnel and the Microphor manufacturer conducted a joint inspection in March 2011 of its systems. We found three areas of maintenance practices that needed improvement: ensuring the proper levels of chorine, adding more biological culture to the toilet, and fine tuning an air pressure setting in order to better operate the flushing cycle

(proper air pressure setting and flushing cycle timing will eliminate toilet overflow).

2. To achieve proper maintenance practices, VRE had Microphor conduct training sections with the maintenance personnel. Since then, VRE and its maintenance personnel developed a better schedule for maintenance practices using Microphor's recommended maintenance. Chorine tablet levels were checked and tablets are added every 2 or 3 weeks, flushing cycle operation was checked bi-weekly, biological culture was added monthly and the annual pumping of the biological tank was performed to ensure that any debris that may be present is removed to ensure the biological operation of the tank at its optimal level of operation.

At the start of May 2011 the new maintenance practices were executed and customer complaints dropped.

VRE's maintenance crews continue to strive for perfection in all areas of service, and we are grateful to have the feedback from our ridership which allows us to keep on top of issues. If you notice any issues with our restrooms or any other mechanically related item on our trains, please let us know. Our train information forms can be found online at <http://www.vre.org/feedback/mechanicalconcerns.php>.

I'm a Blackberry. Not the kind you eat, but the kind you can't live without. Today, I was sitting on the train between the seat and the window. You see, my owner dropped me without realizing it. Now, he has emails and phone calls piling up. As I merrily chirped out the fact that messages were waiting to be answered, someone found me. I was picked up, dusted off and given to the conductor. That was my last memory because by then, I had run out of juice and turned myself off.

At VRE, we can pick up the story from here. Whether it is a blackberry, briefcase or even a set of dentures, the lost and found process is still the same. Once an item is found by the conductor or one of our cleaning crews, the item is dropped in a secure lock box. The following morning, all of the items are tagged, logged in and are sent on a train north to the VRE offices.

Since the office is not directly on the railroad tracks, this is not always an easy task. Two additional lock boxes have been set up in specific locations that are accessible to the train crews. Then a secure courier is sent to pick up the lost and found in those locations and bring them to the VRE office, where they are reviewed and matched up with missing item reports.

At this point, possible owners are notified that their item may be at VRE and for them to stop by and identify their property. In most cases, this is an efficient chain of events, and lost items are normally returned to their owner within 24-48 hours. Unfortunately, the process is not foolproof.

Sometimes an item can linger at the bottom of a lock box for a few days because it got stuck in a crack or a crevice. Other times the item is never found in the first place.

The bottom line is that the lost and found process takes time. We recommend that you label anything that you regularly bring with you on the train. Just like that black piece of luggage at baggage claim, if you have a popular item, find a way to make it stand out as yours. This will help us be sure that we have your item when we call you. Patience is always a good piece of advice. We'll work hard to get your item back to you, but sometimes we need sometime. Here are some other do's and don'ts when worrying about a lost item.



Lost and Found Dos and Don'ts

- Do report your lost item/ticket as soon as possible.
 - Do label your tickets and items that you carry regularly on the train. Ask for one of our luggage tags that you can put your business card in.
 - Do remember that the lost and found process can take a few days.
 - Do be patient – VRE's lost and found staff works diligently to return lost items to their owners, but are not responsible for the fact that the item was lost.
 - Do give as many details as possible when reporting your lost item – we have many black umbrellas.
 - Don't use your ticket holder to store other people's business cards or your FRCs. We'll end up calling the wrong person if we find your ticket, and you may need to use those FRCs if you've lost your ticket!
 - Don't assume you can go to one of our storage yards to search for the items yourself. In this security conscious climate, only authorized personnel can be at the yards.
 - Don't keep a lost item that you found and then contact VRE. Turn in all found items to the conductor so they can be reunited with their owner.
 - Don't hound a crew member about a lost item. Instead contact VRE. We'll walk you through the process.
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