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## Burlington County Times

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# Delays rise as NJT engineers call out despite new contract



An NJ Transit train pulls into Asbury Park. Crew and engineer callouts have increased significantly since July.

THOMAS P. COSTELLO/ASBURY PARK PRESS

#### Union leaders point to state's unwillingness to recruit, retain engineers

Olivia Liu

Asbury Park Press
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

In late July, James Siegler of Morristown stayed after hours at his office in New York City and missed the Morris and Essex train around 7:30 pm.

The next train in 30 minutes was cancelled. And then there were delays. It was almost 10 p.m. by the time he got home

"You can't do anything. If you made plans that night, it's over," he said. "Basically, you're going home and you're going to bed and then you start all over again."

Siegler has commuted by NJ Transit for nearly 35 years. He said the summer of 2025 was "slightly better" than last year's summer, where he found himself calling an Uber to get home three separate times.

While 2025 is shaping up to become the second highest year of cancellations since 2020, trailing right behind 2024, the reasons for cancellation are different. And a particular cause has stood out.

Crew and engineer callouts have increased significantly since July. On some rail lines, the lack of available crew or engineers has been the most cited reason for rail cancellations in August, according to NJ Transit notifications.

This comes despite a new contract between the transit agency and the union representing NJ Transit locomotive engineers, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. The raises for the contract will not kick in until the fall.

And while New Jersey Transit leadership blames its rank and file for failing to come to work, union leaders point to NJ Transit's unwillingness to recruit and retain engineers to maintain higher staffing.

While crew and engineer call outs have increased substantially, the two most cited reasons for cancellations across the rail system in 2025 are mechanical or equipment availability issues. In June and July of this year, there were 498 cancellations due to mechan-

ical issues and 257 cancellations due to equipment availability issues.

In 2024, Amtrak infrastructure problems plagued the rail lines that are shared with NJ Transit. When a problem occurs on an Amtrak owned route, Amtrak would be responsible for its repairs and NJ Transit rail customers would experience the delays and cancellations.

In June 2024 alone, Amtrak issues caused 63% of cancellations. In comparison, Amtrak issues were cited in 3% of cancellations in June 2025.

#### Cancelled due to earlier crew or engineer availability

In the entire year of 2023, there was one cancellation due to crew members or engineers not being availability. In 2024, there were 21 cancellations for the same reason.

But that number rose to 152 instances from January to July 2025. And then just between Aug. 1 and Aug.

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## Break in tropical storms follows Erin

Risha Inaganti

Cherry Hill Courier-Post USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

The passing of Hurricane Erin has brought a lull in the hurricane season, but the quiet and sunny days are only expected to last for a few weeks before potential storms pick up again.

August marks the middle of the hurricane season, which began June 1 and extends through Nov. 30.

Alex DaSilva, the lead hurricane expert for AccuWeather, explained to the USA TODAY that breaks in the middle of the hurricane season are fairly common. He noted that it looks like we're having one across the main Atlantic storm development region.

For New Jerseyans, that means the time to soak up the Jersey Shore sunshine is now, as DaSilva predicts storm developments to pick back up in the next two weeks.

#### **Hurricane season 2025**

There are currently no active storms and no storms expected in the next seven days for the North Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea or the Gulf of

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### Court to decide if Gloucester County can keep man's \$600,000

Joseph P. Smith

Cherry Hill Courier-Post
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

A Logan Township man is fighting the Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office over more than \$600,000 that was seized after police searching his home reported finding large amounts of suspected illegal drugs.

Court and police documents indicate that \$597,440 in cash was found in safes at the New Castle Lane residence of Mitchell Firestone. Substances found included steroids, ketamine, oxycodone, amphetamine, alprazolam and

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