

Frequently Asked Questions

O-Train Confederation Line Overhead Catenary System Safety Awareness Campaign

Q. What is the O-Train Confederation Line's Overhead Catenary System (OCS)?

- A. The Overhead Catenary System (OCS) is comprised of physical supporting structures, such as poles and overhead wires. The OCS system distributes power from Traction Power Sub Stations (TPSS)* to the vehicle through a pantograph, a device mounted on the roof of a light rail vehicle that collects power through contact with the overhead wires.

*TPSS structures are approximately four metres high by five metres wide by 15 metres long. They convert electricity from the local power sources to the voltage levels needed by the LRT vehicles.

Q. Why are the overhead wires being activated now?

- A. The Confederation Line's overhead wires are being activated so that testing can begin on the LRT vehicles.

Q. When will the overhead wires be activated? When will trains start running along the tracks?

- A. The overhead wires will go "live" in phases starting in late September or mid-October (precise date still to be confirmed), and LRT vehicle testing will begin shortly thereafter. It will involve a vehicle travelling along the corridor at varying speeds so that diverse tests can be performed on things like vehicle stability, safety and track performance.

Q. Where exactly will the overhead wires be electrified starting in September?

- A. The first stretch of the alignment to receive power will be between the Belfast Yard Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) at 805 Belfast Road and where tracks connect to the Confederation Line. Crews will then work to electrify the wires in sections starting from Blair Station and moving west to Tremblay Station.

Q. When will the rest of the alignment be electrified for testing?

- A. On-track train testing will run between Blair and Tremblay stations, and along the track leading to the Belfast Yard MSF, until spring of 2017. The remaining sections of the alignment will then be electrified in phases, with testing occurring

until the end of 2017. Starting in January 2018, testing will take place across the entire alignment until Confederation Line service begins in 2018.

Q. Will the trains be carrying any passengers while testing occurs?

- A. No, passengers will not be on board the trains during testing.

Q. How much electricity does it take to power the trains?

- A. The average voltage for the Confederation Line is 1,500 volts – which is enough to cause death. Voltages vary across the alignment depending on the load the vehicle is carrying and distance from the nearest substation.

Q. Will the trains look exactly the same as they will look once in service in 2018?

- A. Mostly. The vehicles will be pretty much fully assembled during testing, with the exception of some minor details that will be added later on (ie. radios, some side panels),

Q. What are the safety precautions residents are being asked to adhere to?

- A. All residents are being asked to adhere to the following safety precautions:
- Never try to reach the wires or throw things at them. Do not fly kites or any other airborne object near the LRT corridor. Stay clear of the corridor at all times to avoid the risk of electrocution;
 - Stay away from the tracks at all times. Since there are no at-grade crossings and the entire alignment is fenced off and secure, there is no reason for anyone to be on or near the tracks at any time; and,
 - Parents are being advised to talk to their children about rail and electrical safety, and to discourage them from going near the LRT corridor at any time.

Q. How is the City also looking out for worker safety?

- A. The City will be emailing all City Departments, as well as local utility companies and the Ottawa Heavy Construction Association, advising them of what is happening and when, and asking them to inform their employees of the following:
- Never try to reach the wires. Avoid contact with them. Be aware of them if using any equipment in the area; and
 - Stay away from the tracks at all times. If there is a job requirement to gain access to the railway corridor, this must be arranged in advance with the City's Rail Implementation Office.

Q. What is the City doing to alert the public about the dangers of the overhead wires and the LRT vehicles running along the tracks? What types of communications tools are being used?

- A. The City has a responsibility to provide safety awareness to all residents about the dangers of the electrified overhead wires and of being on or near the LRT corridor. In advance of the wires going live, the Transportation Services Department is launching an awareness campaign to inform the public about safety precautions and highlight this important milestone of the Confederation Line project.

The safety awareness campaign will include a multi-pronged approach that uses a range of tools to help deliver our messages. This includes:

- The RIO Stakeholder Relations Team personally engaging with external stakeholders (businesses, residents and schools) within a two-kilometre radius of the test track. Engagement activities include sending written notices, giving presentations and responding to inquiries as needed;
- Providing information to utility companies, the Ottawa Heavy Construction Association and all City departments in order to ensure worker safety;
- Issuing public service announcements;
- Providing members of council with communications material to help assist in spreading the word to members of the public;
- Making use of social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) to keep residents informed; and,
- Providing information to Service Ottawa/311.

Rideau Transit Group will also be installing signs adjacent to the LRT corridor to warn the public of the hazard of the live overhead wires.