

Bridge strike causes chaos for Christmas cargo

November 9, 2022



Vital freight services need to travel in the 'wrong direction' through Oakham and over Foster's Bridge, which is only operating one way after it was **struck by a lorry on Saturday 5 November**.

Road users are also being warned to expect delays at the town's level crossings – and avoid them wherever they can – on Saturday 12 and Saturday 19 November.

Steve Hopkinson, East Midlands operations director for Network Rail said: "We know how busy these level crossings are and we are doing everything we can to minimise disruption. The trains are carrying vital imports to stock shop shelves ahead of Christmas. Moving that traffic to the road would add around 76 lorries per train.

"Wherever possible, we're asking drivers and pedestrians in Oakham to avoid the level crossings and to allow more time for their journeys. I am sorry for the disruption which this will cause."

Network Rail engineers are working around the clock to repair the bridge, but the extensive damage means that a significant part needs to be replaced and this could take up to three weeks.

It's affecting an important freight route, which carries container traffic between the port at Felixstowe and

the Midlands. Most of these services are being diverted via London, but essential engineering work on the Crossrail route makes the London diversion unavailable on Saturdays.

Instead, the additional seven freight trains will be safely managed the 'wrong way' along the line over the bridge. Up to 15 trains a day will also travel in the normal direction. This means that the level crossing barriers will be down for much longer than usual and people should choose an alternative route wherever possible.