

Crewkerne landslip closes railway between Salisbury and Exeter until Monday

December 6, 2023



South Western Railway (SWR) services between Salisbury and Exeter will not run until Monday morning, with the railway closed while Network Rail engineers repair a landslip at Crewkerne Tunnel.

Network Rail and SWR are asking customers not to attempt to travel between Salisbury and Exeter until Monday 11 December.

Network Rail completed inspections on Monday (4 December) evening and early the next morning, assessing the situation before engineers began to cut and remove vegetation.

Over the coming days, Network Rail's engineering team will work around the clock to excavate approximately 100 tonnes of clay, soil and vegetation from around the tunnel entrance, helping to stabilise the cutting.

Engineers will initially excavate by hand, lowering the debris to the track via chutes before it is transported away on an engineering train. A long reach excavator will also be brought in and situated on top of the tunnel, using an extra-long arm and bucket to help with the removal of the debris.

As a result, SWR is unable to run services between Salisbury and Exeter St David's and is urging customers not to attempt to travel on this route, particularly as severe flooding continues to impact the planned rail

replacement bus services.

Matt Pocock, Network Rail Wessex Route Director, said: "I would like to say how sorry we are for the disruption passengers are experiencing following a landslip at Crewkerne tunnel.

"We've experienced over 90mm of sustained heavy rain over the past 48 hours and this has resulted in movement in the earth on the cutting above the tunnel entrance which, if action isn't taken, could spill over onto the tracks and risk the safety of passenger services.

"Our team of engineers are already working extremely hard day and night and in all conditions to remove over 100 tonnes of debris and will be doing all they can so we can reopen the line and passengers can resume travelling on Monday morning."

Steve Tyler, South Western Railway's Performance and Planning Director, said: "We're really sorry that the emergency closure of Crewkerne tunnel means we won't be able to serve stations between Salisbury and Exeter St David's until Monday.

"We know how disruptive this is for customers in run up to Christmas, so our teams are examining potential ways to run an extremely limited service between Salisbury and Yeovil Junction via Westbury in the coming days. Please check our website for the latest updates."