

## Driver fined and banned from HGVs after jamming lorry under railway bridge

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“The fine and the ban won’t make up for the costs of the disruption but they send a message to other drivers that it’s never worth running the risk.” That’s the message from Katie Frost, Network Rail’s route director for Sussex after a driver who jammed his HGV under a bridge carrying the Brighton Main Line through Coulsdon has been banned from driving lorries for six months as a result.

The incident on 7 July this year happened at around 2.30pm on the A237 Brighton Road, just outside Coulsdon South station. The lorry became wedged under the iron girder bridge that carries the fast lines for express trains to Gatwick Airport, Haywards Heath and Brighton. The nature of the bridge meant it had to be closed until the lorry could be removed, leaving just two tracks open for the whole Brighton Main Line.

In fact it was 8.45pm before the lorry could be removed, meaning trains were disrupted right up until the end of the day as far afield as Eastbourne in the south and Bedford and Cambridge in the north.

Network Rail’s route director for Sussex, Katie Frost, said: “Well over 400 trains and thousands of passengers from across the South were disrupted by this single error of judgement, and it brings home

how important it is for professional drivers to check the heights of their lorries and their routes before setting off.

“Network Rail seeks to recover costs for incidents like this one and we work closely with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and Metropolitan Police to tackle drivers who damage our bridges.

“The fine and the ban won’t make up for the costs of the disruption but they send a message to other drivers that it’s never worth running the risk.”

The driver appeared before the South East Traffic Commissioner in late November to receive a six-month HGV driving ban, following an earlier court appearance where he was fined a means-tested £715 and given six points on his licence for driving without due care and attention and contravening a traffic sign.

Sergeant Alex Burlison from the Commercial Vehicle Unit at the Metropolitan Police Service said: “Far too often we are deploying resources to deal with these incidents which are wholly avoidable with each collision having the potential for fatal consequences.

“These drivers are entrusted to drive some of the largest vehicles on the road and it is only right that should they be involved in a collision with infrastructure of any description that they are placed before the courts.”

*Photo credit: Network Rail*