

Essential upgrade works in the Severn Tunnel

June 6, 2023



Trains will be diverted or replaced by buses between Friday 9 and Sunday 18 June and on Sunday 25 June, as **Network Rail** works around the clock to renew the tracks in the Severn Tunnel.

Engineers will replace 3.2km of old track, as well as 5,200 sleepers (track supports) and 14,000 tonnes of ballast (supporting stone) over a ten-day period.

Salt-water makes for a corrosive environment inside the tunnel and track that would usually last 25 years needs to be replaced every ten. The new sleepers will be coated in tin to extend their life.

In 2022, Network Rail replaced 3km of track on the **Monmouthshire** side of the tunnel. This June, the track will be replaced on the South Gloucestershire side.

The new track will ensure continued reliable and safe journeys for passengers as well as reduce the need for emergency closures for track repair work.

Network Rail engineers will be working 24/7 over the ten days to reduce the length of the disruption.

Mark Dix, Network Rail's project manager, said: "Thank you for your patience as we carry out track

renewal in the Severn Tunnel this summer.

“Owing to the environmental conditions within the tunnel, we have an enhanced programme of track renewals, which includes replacing worn sections of track every 10 years, as opposed to every 25 years for less challenging environments. This renewal is therefore part of an ongoing maintenance schedule which is more cost effective than multiple weekend closures and vital to ensure the continued safe and reliable running of train services along this busy route.”

David Bailey, GWR’s customer service manager for South Wales, said: “These upgrades in the Severn Tunnel form part of an ongoing programme of work that will enable us to maintain services for those travelling to or from South Wales.

“We’ve been working with other train companies to provide alternatives to ensure that our customers can still complete their journeys during this engineering work.

“Customers for Newport may prefer to travel by train via Gloucester on the weekend of 10/11 June instead of a replacement bus from Bristol Parkway.”

On Friday 9 June, Monday 12 to Sunday 18 June and Sunday 25 June:

- Trains between London and South Wales will use a different route between Swindon and Newport, and will not call at Bristol Parkway
- Trains between Cardiff Central and Portsmouth Harbour will run between Bristol Parkway and Portsmouth Harbour instead
- Trains between Cardiff Central and Taunton/Penzance will run between Bristol Temple Meads and Taunton/Penzance
- No trains will stop at Patchway or Pilning
- Replacement buses are planned between Bristol Parkway Newport. Passengers who wish to avoid using a rail replacement bus can use their tickets to travel to Gloucester or Cheltenham Spa using CrossCountry or Transport for Wales services

Saturday 10 to Sunday 11 June:

- Trains between London and South Wales will be unable to use the diversionary route on this weekend, so buses will replace trains between Bristol Parkway and Cardiff Central
- Shuttle train services will run between Cardiff Central, Swansea, Carmarthen or Pembroke Dock
- No trains will stop at Patchway, Pilning, Newport or Severn Tunnel Junction
- Buses will also replace CrossCountry and Transport for Wales trains between Newport and Cardiff Central

This summer, passengers in Bristol are also advised to check before travelling as Network Rail enters an intensive phase of the construction work on Ashley Down station from Saturday 3 June to Monday 19 June. The 16-day period of work will impact local services between Filton Abbey Wood and Stapleton Road, with trains running between Filton Abbey Wood and Bristol Temple Meads unable to stop at Stapleton Road or

Lawrence Hill. However, trains running between Bristol Temple Meads and Clifton Down, Avonmouth or Severn Beach are unaffected. Passengers travelling between Filton Abbey Wood and Stapleton Road or Lawrence Hill should change trains at Bristol Temple Meads.

Network Rail advises all passengers check National [Rail Enquiries](#) or [Great Western Railway](#) before travelling.

Photo credit: Network Rail