

# Merseyrail announces reduction in services due to adverse weather conditions and COVID-19 timetable change

January 7, 2021



Due to forecasted adverse weather conditions affecting the railway, Merseyrail is not expecting to be able to run a train service on Friday 8 January.

People should stay at home and work from home if they can. Customers who do need to travel, for example key workers, are strongly advised to make alternative travel arrangements.

Rail replacement buses will not be in operation due to the scale of disruption, however season tickets will be accepted on Arriva, Stagecoach and Mersey Ferries.

If conditions improve, attempts will be made to run services if possible and passengers are advised to check @merseyrail on Twitter and the website regularly before travelling to a station.

Andy Heath, Managing Director at Merseyrail, said: "We have been working hard over the last few weeks to prepare the network for adverse winter weather conditions, covering the rail with anti-ice and running

trains throughout the night to keep the lines clear.

“Through previous experiences when, following the anti-icing, we incur a combination of snow, sleet and rain fall on our electrified third rail as is forecasted, this can result in a new layer of ice which electricity cannot pass through and trains are unable to operate.

“As a result of this, we believe it is highly likely that trains will not operate on Friday. We hope that this advance notice will give passengers enough time to make alternative travel arrangements.

“We will be continuously working with Network Rail to run services as soon as is safely possible and apologise for any inconvenience this will cause our passengers.”

### **COVID-19 timetable changes**

Following the announcement of national restrictions in England from 5 January, Merseyrail will be making changes to its timetables.

From Sunday 10 January services on the Southport and Hunts Cross lines will return to a 30-minute frequency Monday to Sunday.

The West Kirby and New Brighton lines will be running at a 45-minute frequency on Sundays. These lines will continue to operate every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday with a 15-minute service between Birkenhead North and Liverpool.

The timetable across the rest of the Merseyrail network continues to operate as follows:

- Ormskirk line – every 30 minutes Monday to Sunday
- Kirkby line – every 30 minutes Monday to Sunday
- Chester and Ellesmere Port lines – every 30 minutes Monday to Sunday (15-minute service between Hooton and Liverpool)

Trains will be operating as six cars wherever possible across the network.

Government issued travel advice is that passengers should only travel if they need to, and if travelling, to do so with confidence by planning ahead, avoiding busy times and routes where possible, and wearing a face covering while travelling (unless exempt). Further information on government guidance on travel can be found at <http://www.gov.uk>.

Full timetable information and COVID-19 travel advice can be found here:

<https://www.merseyrail.org/seasonal/covid-19-information.aspx>.

It is likely that there will be further amendments to the timetable and we would encourage all customers to check always before they travel. This can be done by visiting [www.merseyrail.org](http://www.merseyrail.org) or the Merseyrail Twitter

account @merseyrail for the latest information.

Andy Heath, Managing Director at Merseyrail, said: “This new period of national restrictions means less passengers travelling with us but also a significant impact on the resources we have available to run our services. As a result, we have needed to make the difficult decision to amend our timetables.

“Whilst we understand these changes may inconvenience some of our passengers, they are essential to ensure that we are able to run a safe, reliable and efficient service for those that need to travel during this challenging time.

“If you are travelling on the Merseyrail network, I’d urge you to follow government travel advice and remember to wear a face covering at all times unless exempt to help keep everyone safe.”

Photo credit: Merseyrail