

Network Rail issues Easter safety warning as CCTV catches shocking misuse of level crossings

March 27, 2024



Network Rail has released a [compilation of CCTV footage](#) showing vehicles and a pedestrian misusing level crossings in Worcestershire and the West Midlands.

It released the near miss footage as a safety warning to others during the busy Easter holiday period, adding that those caught on camera had risked their lives by trying to force their way through the crossings.

The three separate incidents all took place in March this year. Network Rail added that it sees many more examples of dangerous behaviour across the region.

In order the three clips show:

- 18 March 2024 – a van ignoring the signals and lowering barriers, ripping down the level crossing barrier and dragging it across the crossing (Blakedown level crossing, Worcestershire).
- 13 March 2024 – a pedestrian forcing their way through the closed barriers (Hartleybury level crossing, Worcestershire).

- 4 March 2024 – a car ignoring the signals and crossing the other side of the road to quickly dodge the closing barriers (Langley Green level crossing, West Midlands).
- 60 cases of misuse have been either reported by train drivers or caught on hidden cameras in the Midlands region since January 2024, with four of those considered ‘near misses’ involving pedestrians.

Over the last 12 months, there have been 225 reported cases of misuse with 27 of these classed as ‘near misses’.

In the run up to the Easter holidays, Network Rail has seen an increase in the number of incidents being reported with a large number involving children and young people.

Level crossing managers from Network Rail have issued a letter to local schools to highlight the dangers and implications of railway misuse, and to seek the support of parents, guardians and the local community to help address the issues.

Natalie Stretton, Head of Operational Risk for Network Rail’s Central route, said: “There’s never any excuse for the kind of reckless behaviour you see in this video. Many people, especially young people, fail to understand the danger they put themselves and others in when they make the choice to ignore the safety rules.

“Typically we see incidents of misuse and acts of crime rise in April due to the better weather and lighter nights, and I’d like to use this video as a reminder to anyone who uses level crossings to do so safely.

“No matter how well you think you know a crossing, all users must obey the rules around using level crossings every time they use it. It just really isn’t worth the risk.”

After releasing the video, Network Rail has reissued its guidance on how to use level crossings safely. People should:

- Concentrate – it’s easy to get distracted, especially by phones, music and conversation.
- Always follow signs and instructions displayed at level crossings.
- Check both ways before crossing – if there is a train coming, don’t cross.
- Understand the warnings (lights, barriers, alarms). Visit level crossings for pedestrians to find out more.
- Cross quickly, keeping children close and dogs on a lead.

As well as visiting schools, Network Rail level crossing safety teams will be holding safety awareness days at the following crossings to directly warn people of the dangers on the railway, hand out leaflets and explain to passers by how to safely use the level crossings:

- 2 April 2024 – Charlemont Road footpath crossing in West Bromwich
- 15 April 24 – Bicester London Road

- 21 May 24 – Stoke Mandeville (No 17) in Aylesbury
- 18 June 24 – Henwick in Worcester

For more information and resources on how to use all types of level crossings safely, visit www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/level-crossing-safety/

Network Rail's 'Beware the Bubble' safety campaign can also be accessed here: www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/railway-safety-campaigns/beware-the-bubble/