

Network Rail issues warning as more than 1,000 trespass incidents recorded during COVID-19 lockdown

May 14, 2020



Newly released figures from Network Rail have revealed that trespassers disrupted vital passenger and freight services a staggering 1,024 (1) times during the first month of the Government's COVID-19 lockdown.

People relying on the railway to get to work and essential supplies to hospitals and supermarkets were hit with more than 380 hours of delay because of trespassers on the railway across Britain, with an average of 34 incidents occurring each day.

As rail services prepare to gradually increase from next week, Network Rail is urging people to stay off the tracks and not put themselves and others at risk.

Allan Spence, head of public and passenger safety for Network Rail, said: "These figures are disappointing. Trespass is often seen as a young person problem but less than a fifth of the trespass incidents recorded in lockdown involved youngsters. Adults are far more likely to be the ones putting themselves in harm's way.

“In addition to the many life-threatening dangers on the railway, trespass has a significant impact on the smooth running of rail services until the culprits can be found. It interrupts vital freight transport and delays those workers who have to travel.

“As train service levels begin to increase, it is more important than ever for people to stay off the tracks and stay safe.”

Network Rail has worked in partnership with British Transport Police on the uncompromising You vs Train campaign since 2018. Initially targeting young people and their parents, the campaign aims to educate on the devastating and wide-reaching consequences of trespass.

The campaign has proven to be a catalyst for positive behaviour change in young people, with youth trespass levels showing an encouraging decline of 30% in high priority locations (2). A new phase of the campaign targeting young adults will be launched in the summer. In the meantime, Network Rail has launched a digital media campaign reminding adults of the stark “Stay off the tracks. Stay safe” message.

Information on the dangers of railway trespass and the You vs Train campaign can be found on the [You vs Train website](#).

1. 1,024 trespass incidents occurred on Britain’s railway between Monday 23rd March and Sunday 26th April 2020.
2. The past year has seen a 30% decline in the number of recorded trespass incidents involving young people at 51 high priority locations across the rail network.

Photo credit: Network Rail