

# Network Rail: Railway ready for festive season with over 95% open for business

November 15, 2021



Britain's infrastructure owner and manager, Network Rail, says it is working closely with train operating companies to cut disruption in the run up to Christmas.

Work, it says, will for the most part be carried out at night or on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

It does say, however, some routes will be affected by its 370 projects running across this period.

Passengers are urged to plan journeys in advance, and to adhere to government guidance and wear a face covering in busy indoor settings unless they are exempt.

Network Rail chief executive, Andrew Haines, said: "While some essential work is taking place to upgrade our railway over the festive period, we've worked hard with train operators to reduce the impact on passengers as far as possible so that they can spend time with their families and friends this Christmas.

"I'd like to thank the thousands of rail workers who will be working to keep services running, and those delivering upgrades to improve our railway and bring more reliable journeys to passengers in future."

Network Rail adds freight services are also playing a key role as Christmas draws near. Working with freight operators and ports, Network Rail says it has increased capacity for freight trains to run on the network, helping to move key goods such as food, drink and clothes around the country. Its figures suggest just one additional weekly Sunday service between Tilbury and Daventry will transport 4.5 million bottles of wine to supermarkets between 12 November and Christmas Day.

Engineering work taking place over Christmas has been planned months, even years, in advance. Some of the projects being delivered this Christmas and New Year period include:

- Signalling commissioning, track and HS2 works between Paddington and Slough to improve train performance. This means there will be no Heathrow Express trains to London Heathrow Airport on Boxing Day. There will also be no London Underground services to Heathrow. Passengers can use coach services from Hammersmith or Acton Town.
- Switches and crossings renewals and resignalling work between London Victoria and Streatham Common/Selhurst to improve train performance. Southern services will run to/from London Bridge between 25 December and 3 January, with no Gatwick Express service in operation. Trains to Gatwick will run from London Bridge.
- Track remodelling, signalling upgrades and work to install new overhead wires at Leeds station as part of a long-term project to bring more reliable journeys for passengers and reduce the impact of delays across the North. A reduced train service will be in place to/from Leeds between 27 December and 3 January, with some bus replacement services in operation. There will be very limited train services on 2 January.
- Northern City Line tunnel work to improve reliability and safety that will affect services between King's Cross and Finsbury Park. No services will operate between 25-26 December. Services between Moorgate and Finsbury Park will divert into King's Cross from 27-29 December as work continues to upgrade the track and signalling as part of the East Coast Digital Programme.
- Track upgrades will take place between St Pancras International and Kentish Town to bring smoother, more reliable journeys for passengers. Reduced EMR and Thameslink services will run between 27 December – 4 January.
- Switches and crossings and plain line track renewals at Bristol Parkway to improve passenger safety. CrossCountry services will not call at Bristol Parkway between 27-31 December, while some GWR services to/from Bristol Temple Meads will also be impacted.

Passengers can find out how their journeys will be affected with their train operator, via National Rail Enquiries, or by following #ChristmasRailWorks on Twitter.