

Pedestrians spotted trespassing on the railway at Dawlish

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Network Rail is urging people to follow the designated diversion route when walking between Dawlish Warren and Dawlish following several recent incidents of trespassing on the railway.

Network Rail has recently received a number of reports of small groups of people who had been spotted trespassing on the railway just east of Dawlish station, at Coastguard breakwater.

In one instance two individuals ignored all safety advice and illegally trespassed on the railway underneath Coastguard footbridge, crossing the live railway tracks and climbing up onto Dawlish station platform 2 before departing the station. This irresponsible and highly dangerous behaviour was witnessed by station staff who remonstrated with the couple for their own safety.

Another occurrence involved a group of three people bypassing the safety fencing at the perimeter of the new sea wall construction site at Coastguard breakwater, continuing their journey via climbing over construction equipment and walking through the working construction site, putting both themselves and railway workers at risk.

In a further instance, a train driver reported having to stop the train due to members of the public walking along the railway between Dawlish Warren and Dawlish in the path of the oncoming train.

The safety of passengers, railway workers and the public remain a primary focus for Network Rail and in response to these recent trespassing instances, additional fencing has been installed to prevent further instances of this behaviour.

Network Rail would like to reiterate the dangers of trespassing and urges people travelling between Dawlish and Dawlish Warren via the coastal path to follow the official diversion route via Rockstone footbridge and Exeter Road.

Alison Kramer, Community safety manager for Network Rail's Western route, said: "It is shocking to see this blatant disregard for their own and other people's safety.

"We appreciate some of our construction work can sometimes mean a diversion route needs to be put in place and this may cause disruption. However, these diversions and protective fencing are there to ensure people are kept safe and it is really disappointing to see this being so willingly disregarded by children, putting themselves in danger.

"We urge parents to educate their children about the severe consequences of illegally trespassing on the railway and encourage members of the public to report any trespassing incidents they witness."

British Transport Police Embedded Inspector, Darren Burridge, said: "Each year, hundreds of people take risks on and around the railway. Trespassing can have serious, life-changing consequences for the individual, their loved ones and the wider community.

"We are continuing to proactively patrol the railway network across the country. Safety is our number one priority and we're working with Network Rail to remind everyone of the importance of taking care around the railway. Please, make sure you know the rail safety basics and pass that knowledge onto your loved ones. Lead by example and stay off the tracks."

Network Rail and BTP run a hard-hitting safety campaign, You Vs Train, which highlights the devastating consequences that trespassing on the railway can have.

A new film - Parallel Lines - has been launched to get children and young people to not only think about the devastating consequences that their actions can have on them and their loved ones, but the wider, sometimes hidden harm caused to the community, in particular rail staff.

Find out more and view the new campaign film at youvstrain.co.uk

Photo credit: Network Rail