

Police warning following a rise in dangerous incidents of obstruction – Wessex line

March 26, 2020



Officers from British Transport Police have issued a firm warning following a number of dangerous incidents of obstruction on the Wessex route.

These incidents have all involved objects either being thrown or placed on the train line, causing significant disruption to services and posing serious danger to passengers.

In the last month, several bikes, a bin and even washing machine parts have been recovered from the line at stations including Pokesdown, Shepperton, Addlestone, Strawberry Hill and Pooley Green.

They have amounted to nearly 4,000 minutes of delays and around £250,000 in cost to the industry.

Inspector Andy Jackson said: "It is frankly unbelievable that someone would think it is sensible to throw or place an object on live railway tracks. They are placing not only themselves in serious danger by doing so,

but everyone who uses the train to travel on this line.

“As well as the clear hazards, these incidents have a seriously detrimental impact on the industry, causing staggering cost and major delays for passengers.

“Obstructing trains and endangering the safety of others in this way is a serious crime and offences like this are, and will continue to be, fully investigated by us so we can identify those responsible and take action.

“Now the schools are closing, I’d urge parents and carers who live nearby to check where their children are playing. Please speak to them about the risks of the railway so we can keep everyone safe in the coming weeks.

“We are committed to working closely with our colleagues at Network Rail and South Western Railway to reduce this sort of offending and ensure a safe and secure journey for all.”

David Smith, Network Rail’s director of safety for Wessex, said: “It is incredibly reckless and irresponsible to throw or put anything onto the railway.

“Not only is it extremely dangerous to everyone on the train, it delays services and costs the industry millions each year, money which could be better spent on investing in the railway.

“Trespassers are also risking their own life as the line carries 750-Volts – easily enough to kill you or cause life-changing injuries.

“We will continue to work with the British Transport Police and train operators to reduce these sorts of incidents and when it does happen, bring services back to normal as quickly as possible.”

A spokesperson for South Western Railway said: “The safety of our customers and colleagues is of paramount importance for the operation of the railway.

“Anyone placing items onto the tracks endangers the lives of the thousands of customers who use our services everyday as well as the hundreds of railway workers who work tirelessly to keep everyone moving.

“We’d urge anyone with any information to get in touch with British Transport Police.”