

# Railways aim to be better prepared for winter

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Experience of recent winters has revealed opportunities for rail companies to improve the way they work together in order to be better prepared.

As part of regular routine reviews of performance, the rail industry has refined a guidance note with a new checklist, published by rail body RSSB, aimed at helping “track and train” work more closely together to keep tabs on specific tasks, roles and responsibilities ahead of the chills.

The winter can present all sorts of challenges to rail including damage to infrastructure, rolling stock, obstructions on the line as well as slippery conditions on platforms.

For the most part, the railways have proven highly resilient. However, in very rare situations, trains have become stranded, as happened in the New Forest and at Lewisham in March 2018.

While companies have traditionally had a good track record of making timely preparations for seasonal issues throughout the year, gaps in planning were identified which required closer cooperation between companies. The refreshed guidance aims to close this gap with a new checklist aimed at prompting companies to ask the right questions at the right time.

RSSB’s Director of Standards, Tom Lee said:

‘The railways put in a huge amount of effort all year round to prepare for winter. Earlier this year we oversaw increased cooperation between Network Rail and Rail Delivery Group to create a new Combined Winterisation Checklist which we published in the summer. This makes it easier for rail companies to keep track of responsibilities and key tasks, and we hope will have contributed to even better preparation ahead of this winter.’