

# Scotland's Railway warns it cannot guarantee physical distancing at all stages of a journey

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ScotRail is urging customers to follow its five rules for safe travel, as the train operator warns customers it can't guarantee physical distancing at all stages of a journey.

While travel remains for essential journeys only, the rail operator is preparing for any potential easing in lockdown which could result in more people travelling by train. That makes physical distancing more of a challenge. Customers are reminded that, while Scotland's Railway has introduced significant measures to help, they must take personal responsibility for their travel choices.

The capacity of trains has been significantly reduced to help support physical distancing. For example, on a class 385 eight-carriage train, operating between Edinburgh and Glasgow, the normal capacity is more than 500, but is reduced to less than 80 to allow for a two metre distance to be adhered to.

From Monday (15 June), hand sanitiser units will be in place at the busiest stations throughout the country to help customers follow the Scottish Government guidance.

The busiest stations have floor markings and other signs to outline a safe distance of two metres, while

some station facilities such as waiting rooms are closed.

Platform markings and guidance at ticket vending machines is supporting station announcements and messages on customer information screens, to help essential travellers during their journey.

And to help with physical distancing, and as part of the effort to keep key workers moving, ScotRail is adding more services to the timetable from Monday, 15 June.

The extra services will deliver even more options for travel, increasing the number of services from 47 per cent of a normal timetable to 60 per cent, and delivering 70 per cent of the normal number of seats.

Some trains will be longer, with more seats for customers delivering more capacity and helping people to maintain a safe physical distance, but the operator is asking customers to take personal responsibility to follow the five rules:

- Do not travel if you feel unwell or have a temperature.
- Travel away from the main commuting times (0700 – 0900 and 1600 – 1830) wherever possible, as trains will be busiest around then. The earliest and latest trains serve key workers, like NHS and care home staff.
- If you think it's not safe to board a train, don't do it and wait for another service.
- Wear a face mask or covering and, where possible, maintain physical distancing.
- Be patient. You might not be able to board your first choice of train, as physical distancing means most seats need to be left empty.

Customers can expect an increase in the time it takes to buy a ticket at a station and board a train, and there may be occasions over the coming months when boarding their normal train may not be possible in busier times. Buying tickets in advance through the ScotRail app or website will reduce waiting time for customers.

David Simpson, ScotRail Operations Director, said: "Since the start of this pandemic, our staff across Scotland's Railway have done a fantastic job. We are incredibly proud of their efforts to help customers travel safely.

"Providing hand sanitiser is the latest measure to keep people safe, but our message to customers remains the same: people should only travel if it is essential.

"For those who do travel, Scotland's Railway cannot guarantee physical distancing at all stages of a journey because we only have a limited amount of capacity. That's why following our five rules for travel is vital, particularly on face coverings. We need everyone to take personal responsibility for their travel choices.

"There have been changes to our daily routine in everything we do, and the railway is no different."

Robert Sampson, Transport Focus, said: "The proposed changes in Phase 2 of easing lockdown will inevitably result in more people travelling and the increase in more trains is welcome.

“We want people to have the information they need to travel with confidence – or to choose not to. The measures that ScotRail propose will allow passengers to make that informed choice.”

*Photo credit: ScotRail*