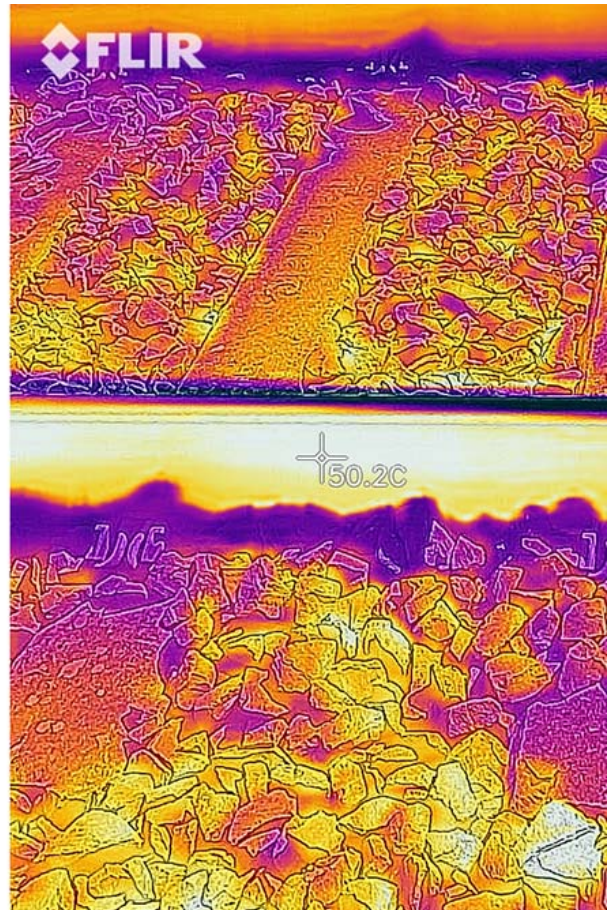


Weather stations ready for the rail-y hot weather

June 16, 2022



New modern weather stations—designed to help cut delays on the West Coast main line, and rail routes in the West Midlands and North West—are running for the first time in hot weather.

The 60 solar-power weather stations were put in place to monitor extreme conditions in real-time, ensuring staff can help keep trains moving without imposing regional speed limits.

Right now across **Network Rail's** North West and Central region they're being used to predict where the railway could be at risk of damage with temperatures forecast to be above 30°C in places tomorrow (Friday 17 June).

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The hot weather, particularly direct sunlight, can cause track temperatures to reach more than 50°C.

Steel rails absorb heat easily and tend to hover around 20 degrees above the surrounding air temperature.

Network Rail emphasises that when steel becomes very hot it expands and rails can bend, flex and, in serious cases, buckle.

By using the new technology, **Network Rail** teams are ready to respond to any issues caused by the heatwave and impose speed limits in local areas if they are needed.

The network of 25,000 volt overhead electric cables which power cables is also susceptible to the hot weather.

It can cause the steel wires to overheat and expand causing them to sag.

They can then hang too low and get caught on passing trains causing them to come down.

Railway staff are ready for this challenge on the West Coast main line south of Crewe, in the West Midlands and on the Chiltern line.

Passengers are advised to check before they travel at www.nationalrail.co.uk in case trains do need to run more slowly over the next few days.

Denise Wetton, **Network Rail's** Central route director, said: "Keeping passengers moving is always our top priority. But we want people to be prepared. If the soaring temperatures do lead to us having to put in place slower speeds for safety reasons, please bear with us our engineers work to fix the problem. It may mean some journeys take longer.

"For those who must travel by rail, we'd remind people to carry some water with them so they don't get too parched, and always check before travelling so they know exactly what to expect."

Lucy Wootton, head of the Grand Railway Collaboration, said: "With high temperatures forecast on Friday, we are encouraging passengers to plan ahead, check their journeys and carry water to help keep cool. The latest travel information is always available from National Rail Enquiries or from individual train operators."