



12 December 2017

Revellers warned to “keep a clear head” around the rail network over the festive season

- 7,419 recorded alcohol-related incidents on and around the railway in 2016/17 – an increase of 17% compared with 2015/16¹
- 16% of those incidents happened over the festive period²
- Network Rail, British Transport Police and RSSB unite to encourage people to “Keep a Clear Head” on and around the railway

The festive season should be a time of year when everyone can enjoy themselves and have fun. But partygoers are being advised to take extra care as newly-released data from Network Rail, British Transport Police (BTP) and RSSB reveals a sharp increase in the number of alcohol-related incidents across the rail network during the festive period.

Of the 7,419 recorded alcohol-related incidents on or around the railway in 2016/17, 16% of those took place over the festive period – between 24 November and 2 January 2017. 21 people have been killed due to alcohol-related incidents at the platform edge and a further 91 people seriously injured over the last 10 years. Passengers boarding and alighting trains were involved in 469 alcohol-related accidents in the last five years³.

As a result Network Rail, BTP and RSSB have come together to launch their “keep a clear head” campaign warning the public to take extra care when travelling on or around the railway network, especially when they’ve been drinking alcohol.

Danger points for intoxicated passengers are:

- not heeding the warnings at level crossings
- trips and slips at the platform edge and on station stairs and escalators
- straying onto the railway tracks



Allan Spence, head of public and passenger safety at Network Rail, explains: *“Though trains are the safest way to get around, passengers and people living near the railway must always remember that it can be a dangerous place. That’s why we’re reminding the public to remain alert to those dangers whilst they’re having fun over the festive season. Taking a short cut across the tracks, chancing it at level crossings or tripping at the platform edge can, at best cause delays to your journey; at worse it can result in serious harm. Enjoy yourself but don’t let alcohol stop you or your fellow passengers from getting to where you need to be – keep a clear head.”*

Tom Lee, Director of Standards at RSSB, said: *“Travelling by train is very safe and we want everyone to have a harmless and punctual journey whilst enjoying the festive season. However, with around 469 alcohol-related incidents at the platform edge over the past 5 years, passengers and level crossing users are reminded to take care so that they get to and from their destination safely.”*

According to BTP, there is also a rise in violence at many of the busiest railway stations over the festive season, much of which is caused by excess alcohol. Between 24 November 2016 and 2 January 2017, the number of violent offences reported at railway stations across England, Scotland and Wales increased by 14% compared with the same period in 2015/16. Almost one in 10 of those offences involved alcohol.

In response, British Transport Police are stepping up patrols at railway stations across the country.

Chief Inspector John Loveless said: *“Unfortunately, during the festive season, we see a rise in public order offences and antisocial behaviour. Much of this is down to the people involved drinking too much and behaving in a way that would shock them and their family and friends if they were sober.”*

“We want everyone to get to their destination safely. Our officers will be out on the network helping people to enjoy the festivities safely and encouraging them to think about how alcohol can affect the way they behave and the effect this has on their fellow passengers.”



“If you’re using the railway to get around this Christmas, please keep a clear head. Think about what you would do and how you would behave if you were sober. There is no excuse for spoiling other people’s journeys or behaving any differently because you’ve drunk alcohol. We want you to have fun but it’s more important to get where you’re going safely.”

In response to the seasonal surge in incidents, Network Rail and BTP will be holding alcohol awareness events at Britain’s busiest rail stations in the run up to Christmas. Both organisations will also be targeting Christmas revellers in pubs and clubs near railway stations and level crossings with a reminder to ‘keep a clear head’.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors:

1. BTP recorded data for England, Scotland and Wales.
2. Alcohol-related incidents recorded over the 2016/17 festive season (24 November to 2 January 2017) made up 16% of all alcohol-related incidents recorded over the entire year.
3. Figures from RSSB
4. Figures recorded over the festive season (24 November to 2 January 2017) at railway stations in England, Scotland and Wales and compared with the same period in 2015/16 (944 crimes in the 2015/16 festive season compared with 1,079 crimes in the 2016/17 festive season). Almost one in 10 of these offences involved alcohol (8% or 85 out of 1,079 offences).

Two videos to support the campaign can be viewed here:

[Network Rail](#)
[BTP](#)

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About RSSB

Through research, analysis, and insight RSSB supports our members and stakeholders to deliver a safer, more efficient and sustainable rail system.

Our vision is to be a centre of excellence, valued by its members and stakeholders as an essential contributor to their success.

Our independent evidence based approach is built on strong technical capability, and the enabling of collaborative industry engagement for the benefit of the whole rail system

Website: www.rssb.co.uk

Twitter: [@RSSB_rail](https://twitter.com/RSSB_rail)

About BTP

British Transport Police (BTP) is the national specialist police force for the railway in England, Scotland and Wales.

Our job is to keep the travelling public and people who work on the railway safe from harm. On over 10,000 miles of track, we keep more than 6 million people and 400,000 tonnes of freight safe and secure every day.

Our police officers and staff are experts in their field. Our specialism makes us unique and a vital player in the growing rail industry, keeping us at the cutting edge of modern policing.

Website: btp.police.uk

Twitter [@btp](https://twitter.com/btp)