

# What you need to know: Rail cleanliness & hygiene: Europe

September 16, 2020

In an effort to reassure travelers that they are doing all they can to protect them against COVID-19, rail operators and train companies are implementing new and improved cleanliness and hygiene processes. This report summarizes what a selection of train companies in Europe are doing.

## High-speed operators

### Deutsche Bahn

While it claims to be doing everything possible to guarantee safe travel for passengers, Deutsche Bahn (DB) notes the most important things depend on passengers regularly washing their hands, wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distance when boarding and alighting trains, and following the hygiene guidelines at all times.<sup>1</sup> DB also recommends passengers download the Corona-Warn-App developed on behalf of the German government.

Deutsche Bahn has also put a number of effective safety measures in place on its trains, which may apply to both its high-speed ICE, intercity IC and regional train-operated services:

#### Protection

- It is mandatory to wear a face mask on all trains operated by DB.
- Passengers must wear face masks for the entire train journey, as well as at stations and stops.
- On trains, DB employees wear masks covering the mouth and nose.

#### Contactless experience and social distancing

- Where available, doors on S-Bahn trains open automatically eliminating the need to press a door button.
- Staff scan tickets or perform visual checks of digital tickets downloaded onto the DB Navigator app.
- Digital subscriptions offer commuters in Germany a fully contactless option for buying and displaying tickets.
- Passengers announcements on trains and at platforms remind travelers to use all doors when boarding and alighting trains to help maintain physical distancing.
- When booking online or via the app, an orange symbol shows if over half the seats are likely to be occupied.
- Onboard catering facilities on ICE/IC trains offer takeaways either pre-packaged or in disposable packaging. Payment can be made contactless using a debit or credit card.

#### Cleanliness and hygiene

- Trains are thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.
- Handles and surfaces around doors and at seats get extra-special treatment during cleaning.
- Hand-washing facilities in onboard toilets include disinfectant.
- DB makes sure soap and hand sanitizer dispensers are always full.

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<sup>1</sup> [Deutsche Bahn](#), Safe Travel

### Recommendations for safe travel

- Use the DB website or DB Navigator app for contactless and secure bookings.
- If possible, travel at off-peak times.
- Reserve a seat by the window if possible.
- Follow hygiene guidelines.
- Travelers on ICE/IC high-speed rail services should use Komfort Check-in to validate their ticket.

### Eurostar

With the health and wellbeing of customers and staff its main priority, Eurostar is closely following COVID-19 advice from governments and health authorities in its destination countries. It advises all customers to regularly check the latest official government information in both their country of origin and destination, particularly since special measure or quarantine rules may be applied at short notice.

### Keeping safe on board

- All passengers must wear a face mask at Eurostar stations (except during passport checks) and on board its trains. Any type of mask is suitable, as long as it effectively covers the mouth and nose.
- Passengers with a disability who can wear a mask are asked to do so, but they will not be refused travel if they can't wear one.
- All other passengers without a mask may be refused travel.
- Authorities may impose fines on travelers not wearing a mask.
- Seating plans have been changed to make sure everyone has plenty of space. Every other seat is left empty.
- To accommodate social distancing, passengers may find their coach and seat number has changed. Affected passengers receive a yellow slip advising of their new seat at the ticket gate.

### Cleanliness and hygiene

- Extra cleaning and hygiene measures have been introduced.
- Trains carry extra stocks of soap and toilet paper, and water tank levels are checked more frequently, so that passengers can wash their hands more often.
- High-frequency touch areas, such as tables, handles and grab bars, are cleaned and disinfected more often.
- The trains' onboard air conditioning systems continuously filter air, combining it with incoming fresh air. On average, the air in each coach is replaced every 15 minutes with fresh air drawn directly from outside.
- In the event of a passenger being suspected of having COVID-19, the affected areas of the train will undergo specific cleaning using specialized products following guidelines issued by national health authorities.

### Renfe

Spanish rail operator Renfe believes the struggle with COVID-19 is everyone's responsibility, and so it's important that it works together with passengers to prevent its spread and protect everyone.<sup>2</sup> Renfe's cleaning and disinfection protocols have earned it the AENOR certificate against COVID-19 for passenger transport. This covers every moment at which a passenger comes into contact with the company's services before, during and after their journey. Certification is an important step in Renfe's Secure Train Objective program, designed to offer all passengers confidence when travelling.

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<sup>2</sup> [Renfe](#), Your trust is important

### Disinfection and cleaning

- Deep and systematic cleaning of the entire train, including seats, floors, horizontal and vertical linings.
- Extraordinary extended cleaning after every five journeys.
- Use of OX VIRIN to disinfect all contact areas: door pushbuttons, armrests, seat trays, handrails etc.
- Deep cleaning of toilets, buffet cars, drivers' cabs.
- Headrests replaced on all seats before each trip.
- Cleaning and disinfection log displayed on each train.
- A team of 125 staff provides assistance at stations and ensure everything is clean.
- Increased ventilation rate inside train carriages. Air is completely renewed nine times per hour (every 7 minutes)

### At the station

- Before traveling, passengers should check possible restrictions or health-related conditions at the destination.
- Railway operator ADIF has installed temperature measurement cameras in the main terminal stations.
- Contactless payment (card or mobile) is recommended at station ticket offices.

### New boarding process

- Passengers can only access the boarding area (platform) one hour before train departure. Anyone arriving at the station earlier must wait in the concourse.
- Boarding closes 5 minutes before train departure.
- Boarding is organized, with the elderly, families and people with reduced mobility allowed on board first.
- Reminder messages and floor markers reinforce social distancing.
- Disembarking the train at the destination is managed, with passengers closest to the exits allowed off the train first.
- Once the train has arrived at the station, passengers should remain seated until those seated closest to the carriage doors have got off the train.

### Service changes

- On board catering and buffet cars are suspended.
- Bar service to the seat is suspended.
- Magazines are no longer available on board.
- Headphones are not provided.
- Club Rooms have been closed at all stations.

### What passengers can do to protect themselves

- Wearing a mask is mandatory throughout the station and during the entire journey on board the train.
- Passengers should not travel if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Arrive at the station at least 30 minutes before departure.
- Pay attention to signs, public address announcements and instructions from rail staff.
- Try not to talk to other passengers or on the phone.
- Avoid crowds, particularly on the platform and at station exits.

## SNCF

To allow passengers to travel in complete safety, SNCF has implemented and reinforced health and safety measures in stations and on board trains in accordance with government directives.<sup>3</sup>

### Mask wearing and social distancing

- Travelers not wearing a face mask will not be allowed to board the train.
- Masks are on sale in the station and in shops nearby for passengers arriving without one.
- All train agents on board wear masks to ensure everyone is protected.
- Capacity on board trains has been halved, so that each passenger has two seats instead of one.

### Hygiene and cleaning

- SNCF guarantees that passengers will be able to wash their hands on the train, in the station and at points of sale.
- Hand sanitizer is available in the station, as well as at points of sale.
- Cleaning of trains has been increased and all contact surfaces are disinfected with a virucide product a number of times each day.
- On board the train, a full disinfection and fumigation will be carried out where an infection is suspected.
- Cleaning of stations and retail units has been intensified.

### Ventilation

- High-performance ventilation systems, which meet the same standards as a surgical mask, filter and exchange air throughout the journey.
- On TGV INOUI and OUIGO high-speed rail services, the air is filtered every 3 minutes, with all air changed every 9 minutes.
- Air flows vertically, preventing droplet transmission between passengers.
- Air filters are replaced on average every 90 days, with the carriage air inlet thoroughly disinfected

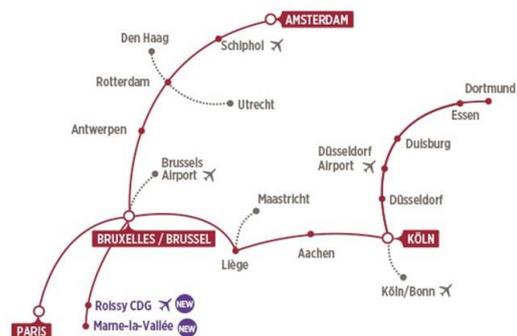
On the issues of cleaning and hygiene, SNCF attempts to reassure its passengers with a simple formula:

Ventilation + Mandatory Mask = Virtually no risk of virus transmission

## Thalys

Thalys is a high-speed rail operator with a network taking passengers directly to destinations in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany, with Amsterdam, Brussels, Cologne and Paris among the city centers on its network.

With the safety, wellbeing and health of its customers and employees are the heart of its concerns, Thalys has introduced strict health and safety measures, which apply in all its trains, on every journey, for all destinations served.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> [OUI.SNCF](#), July 27, 2020

<sup>4</sup> [Thalys](#), Responsible together

### Maximum safety

- All passengers are required to wear “general public” masks.
- Customers not wearing masks are not authorized to board Thalys trains
- Passengers are asked to avoid contact with other passengers, wash hands regularly, cough or sneeze into the elbow, use disposable wipes and tissues, and stay in their seat to limit movement during the journey.

### Reinforce hygiene

- Trains undergo a thorough cleaning and preventive disinfection routine several times a day, when in the station and in the workshop.
- Disinfection focuses on passenger areas (shelves, door handles, ventilation grills, under windows, blind bars, bin lids), sanitary facilities (toilets, washbasins, ventilation grids), surfaces (handrails, door handles, push buttons, bin lids, service telephones, glass surfaces) and the bar area (tables, push buttons, door handles, bin lids, ventilation grids under windows).

### Personnel mobilized to protect customers

- Training has raised staff awareness of COVID-19 measures.
- Staff are provided with masks.
- Should a passenger present with COVID-19 symptoms, they will be isolated by the Train Manager, while the Operations Center will coordinate a response with local health authorities.

### Trenitalia

Italian rail company Trenitalia serves long-distance routes using Intercity and high-speed Freccie trains.

To control the spread of COVID-19, Trenitalia recommends passengers:<sup>5</sup>

- Wash hands frequently with soap and clean surfaces with chlorine or alcohol-based disinfectants
- Avoid crowded places and keep a distance of at least one meter from others
- Stay at home if elderly or have a weakened immunity system
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid handshakes and sharing bottles and glasses with others
- Cover mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when sneezing or coughing
- Stay at home if displaying any ‘flu’-like symptoms

To maximize the protection of customer health, Trenitalia has also initiated measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.<sup>6</sup>

- More frequent train sanitization and disinfection
- Hand sanitizer dispensers installed on trains
- New seat booking approach guarantees compliance with the safety distances prescribed by the Health Authorities
- Welcome drink service on board Freccie trains suspended
- Freccia Lounge, Freccia Club and Sala Freccia services will be suspended at Italian stations.

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<sup>5</sup> [Trenitalia](#), Recommendations to contain the spread of coronavirus

<sup>6</sup> [Trenitalia](#), Public health protection measures

## National operators

### Netherlands

#### Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS)

NS is the principal passenger railway operator in the Netherlands. It resumed operations on July 1, 2020, implementing a number of rules on the train and at the station to keep travelers and staff safe.<sup>7</sup>

#### Rules on the train

- All travelers aged 13 years or older must wear a face mask
- Green stickers indicate where passengers can sit
- Passengers should self-scan tickets if asked to show them to a conductor
- Cleaners are giving extra attention to disinfecting contact areas, such as door handles and headrests. Extra soap and paper towels are stocked on trains equipped with a toilet

#### Rules at the station

- Stay at least 1.5 meters away from other passengers
- Keep to the right wherever possible
- Avoid touching surfaces wherever possible
- Allow four steps between yourself and others on escalators
- Lift/elevator capacity has been reduced to two persons
- Keep five paving tiles away from others when standing on the platform
- Discard rubbish in bins and not on the train
- Social distancing means there are fewer ticket machines, so passengers should buy tickets online
- Disinfection kiosks have been installed at a number of central city stations. Kiosks are located at check-in gates. Disinfection is operated by a foot pedal

### U.K.

In the U.K., in an effort to reassure business travelers about the safety of rail travel, three Arriva Rail train operators – Grand Central, CrossCountry and Chiltern Railways – have gained accreditation from the “Good To Go” scheme operated by tourism organization VisitBritain.<sup>8</sup> The three operators are now officially recognized as taking passenger health and wellbeing seriously by complying with and taking the necessary measures to meet government guidelines on COVID-19.

#### Avanti West Coast

To encourage safe travels, Avanti West Coast has taken some extra protective measures on its trains and at its stations.

#### Enhanced cleaning

- A team of six cleaners spend at least 45 minutes’ on enhanced cleaning of all trains when turning around at terminus stations – London Euston, Manchester Piccadilly, Liverpool Lime Street, Birmingham New Street, Glasgow Central, Edinburgh Waverley, Chester and Holyhead
- Extra cleaning attention is given to key touch points, such as grab handles, door buttons, tables and toilets
- As litter is collected, every surface is wiped and sanitized

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<sup>7</sup> [NS](#), Travel responsibly, July 1, 2020

<sup>8</sup> [Breaking Travel News](#), September 15, 2020

- One cleaner is dedicated to remove discarded face coverings, which are disposed of as hazardous waste
- Turnaround cleaners only board trains once most passengers have disembarked. They adhere to social distancing and wear face coverings
- A fogging machine sprays Zoono long-lasting sanitizer, killing 99.99% of viruses and bacteria on surfaces

### **On board the train**

- All customers are encouraged to book tickets before traveling
- Customers are issued seat reservations to help with social distancing. Passengers without reservations are asked to:
  - Sit at a window seat
  - Sit one person per row of four seats
  - Leave two empty rows between occupied seats
  - Sit on alternate sides of the coach
  - Avoid facing other passengers
- Standing is not permitted on any train
- Tickets are inspected visually and are not handled
- Shops are only open on Pendolino trains with protective screens and safety lines in place
- First Class at-seat food and drink services are suspended
- All customers must wear a face covering when traveling in England and Scotland, and it's recommended on Welsh routes

### **At the station**

- Ticket Office counters are fitted with temporary screens
- Posters and electronic boards remind passengers about face coverings and social distancing. Staff are on hand to provide advice.
- Card only payments
- Alternate ticket machines out of use to assist with social distancing
- Passengers should board trains as early as possible to avoid overcrowding the station
- Passengers may need to be held in waiting zones in the station. Queue management may also be used to support social distancing.
- A reservation is required to be guaranteed to board a train, made up to five minutes before scheduled departure
- Passengers are encouraged to use the entire platform length when waiting for a train
- Exit and entry only points and one way systems used to support social distancing
- First Class lounges and waiting rooms are closed until further notice
- Public toilet facilities have been reduced

### **Advice for passengers**

- Wear a face mask when traveling
- Use contactless payment
- Respect social distancing
- Follow staff guidance

### Chiltern Railways by Arriva

Chiltern Railways operates commuter and regional passenger rail services from London to destinations in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Birmingham. It has created guidance for passengers and introduced a number of measures to protect against COVID-19.<sup>9</sup>

#### Advice for passengers

- Work from home if you can, and do not travel if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Use the Chiltern Railways app or website to book tickets
- It is compulsory to wear a face covering on trains and in stations
- When possible, book journeys at quieter times to avoid overcrowding
- Use contactless payment to buy tickets
- Maintain a social distance when in stations
- Leave a row of seats clear and avoid facing other passengers when on board the train
- Keep your distancing from other people when using escalators
- Wash your hands before and after each trip and maintain a good level of hygiene

#### What Chiltern Railways is doing

- Signs at stations and on trains provide social distancing reminders
- Processes have been changed to reduce interaction between customers and staff
- Station entry and exit points have been reviewed, and queues may be introduced during busy times
- Increased station and train cleaning, with particular attention given to things people touch regularly, such as handles and handrails, which are cleaned with hospital-grade antiviral disinfectant
- Deep cleaning of stations and trains has been increased
- Amenities made available at stations and on trains to enable passengers to wash their hands. However, passengers must bring their own hand sanitizer
- Charges for using toilets at some stations have been removed
- Staff are reminded of the importance of maintaining good hand hygiene

### CrossCountry by Arriva

CrossCountry operates intercity and other long distance trains serving cities including Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle, but not London. It operates across the length and breadth of Great Britain. To help people travel with confidence, CrossCountry offers advice and has implemented a number of safety and hygiene measures.<sup>10</sup>

#### At the station

- If parking at the station, try to leave a space free between cars
- Arrive early, as one-way systems and queues at stations may add time to the journey
- A face covering is mandatory in railway stations. Failure to wear a mask risks a £3,200 maximum fine
- Maintain social distancing at all times, especially when using escalators, lifts and seating
- Carry hand sanitizer. It can be purchased on board trains

#### On the train

- Do not travel if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Avoid travel at busier times of the day

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<sup>9</sup> [Chiltern Railways](#), COVID-19 guidance, September 7, 2020

<sup>10</sup> [CrossCountry Trains](#), Travel with confidence

- Buy tickets in advance and reserve seats to help maintain social distancing and ensure travel on services with limited capacity
- Do not board a train if there are no vacant seats
- Signs on all trains remind passengers to “stay safe and stay apart” throughout the journey
- Face coverings must be worn, except when consuming food and drink
- Catering is available from a single location at the end of the train
- Carry hand sanitizer and regularly wash hands
- Additional dwell time has been added to allow passengers extra time to get on and off trains while maintaining a safe distance
- Trains are subject to enhanced cleaning, focusing on main touchpoints such as door buttons and handrails. Frequency of deep cleans has been increased.

### Grand Central by Arriva

Grand Central operates out of London’s Kings Cross station to York, Doncaster, West Yorkshire and the North East of England.

#### Booking

- Passengers need a reservation, which can be made through the Grand Central website and app
- Booking direct allows Grand Central to push important information out to travelers
- Dedicated travel pages enable passengers to find out which services are the busiest

#### On board

- Trains are cleaned more regularly, during the journey and overnight at rail depots
- Staff wear personal protective equipment
- Seat reservations enable Grand Central to manage the number of passengers per train
- Social distancing onboard means passengers should use only designated, reserved seating
- Reserved seats are allocated based on the latest social distancing advice. This means people traveling in a group may be seated separately, but they may change seats if a train is not busy
- Clean and available seats are clearly marked with “Ok to use” labels
- Hand washing facilities are available on all trains
- Signs remind passengers to wear a face mask and maintain social distance when onboard
- On board catering has been temporarily suspended; passengers are advised to bring their own refreshments

#### Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at September 16, 2020. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email [mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk](mailto:mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk) to share your thoughts.