



Railway Access Statement – Policy for Disabled People

Introduction

Epping Ongar Railway is a heritage railway running through picturesque rolling countryside. It operates between heritage stations, using both train and bus vehicles which can be up to 80 years old.

EOR aspires to maintain the highest standards in visitor comfort and satisfaction, and is a member of the Heritage Railway Association. In addition the railway will, where practicable, accommodate and aspires to meet nationally recognised standards for visitor standards and accessibility.

We attract a wide variety of visitors and look towards welcoming all sectors of society irrespective of age, gender, or any impairment whether physical, intellectual or sensory. We aim to educate and inform visitors about our transport heritage, and welcome educational and interest groups.

Our Stations

Due to the restricted space within our sites, parking is limited at both Ongar and North Weald stations. Visitors starting their journey at Ongar are recommended to use the car parks available in the town. There is very limited parking available adjacent to both stations, and blue badge holders are strongly recommended to book a parking space in advance. Disabled visitors are welcome to be dropped off at the front of either of our stations, while their carer parks the car in one of the designated parking areas.

Both Ongar and North Weald stations have male and female toilets, and both stations have a room adjacent to the ladies toilet (formally the ladies waiting rooms), which now offer a family room, including baby changing facilities.

Unfortunately due to both stations dating from 1865, neither station has toilets suitable for wheelchair users. The nearest accessible toilet at Ongar is at the car park in the town (CM5 9AB), which requires a RADAR key. In addition



there is accessible toilet accommodation available at the nearby Zinc Arts Centre (CM5 0AD; www.zincarts.org.uk). The Arts Centre has a 'Changing Places' facility which can be booked in advance.

Ongar station building offers step-free access for wheelchairs users, with level access from the pavement and lowered kerbs to the road. The station has double doors to the front and platform sides. There is a short steeper ramp between the Booking Hall and platform. Our Platform staff are happy to help with this ramp and will set out the purpose build ramp for boarding the train. The Picnic Area at Ongar is accessible from the east end of the platform, and is sloped grassed area of various gradients. The area towards the station building offers easier access. The gift shop at Ongar is accessible via a doorway with an opening width of 890mm, and staff are available to assist.

North Weald station building is approached by three steps and so the Booking Hall is not accessible to wheelchairs users, but platform staff are available to attend to customers requirements. Platform 2 is accessible from the front turning circle via a short ramp, both are asphalted. Platform 1 is accessible using the concreted path from the turning circle, crossing the railway line via DDA compliant gates (1.2m wide) and over a wooden planked crossing, then using the asphalted access ramp which has been constructed to be DDA compliant. Platform staff are available to accompany you to access Platform 1. Although there is limited wheelchair access to our Static Buffet, our friendly catering staff are always on hand to bring refreshments to you at one of the picnic tables or on-board a train standing at the station, and assist in any way possible.

Boarding & Travelling on Epping Ongar Railway

Our historic railway carriages and buses are restored to reflect their original construction and therefore access is via stepping up to board from the platform and down to alight. During the engineering works, we have re-laid the track through all our platforms to ensure the height of the coaches meets ORR



guidance and is correct as it passes the platforms. Due to the short journey time, and risk of use while in stations, there are no toilet facilities available on the train.

All our trains carry a portable ramp, which allows access to the Guard's Compartment on all trains, allowing up to six wheelchair users to travel. The Guard's Compartment on the 3CIG (diesel hauled passenger set B) was converted to be wheelchair friendly by its previous mainline operator. Ambulant disabled passengers who are sufficiently mobile are welcome to travel in any part of the train, with their wheelchairs stored in the Guards compartment. Please remember that our volunteer staff are always more than happy to help, so please do not hesitate to ask, so we can help you have an enjoyable visit.

Unfortunately due to the age, design and construction of our heritage buses, these cannot accommodate wheelchairs or bicycles, and have limited spaces for folded pushchairs.

Large Print Editions

Our website is designed to be accessible to all, offering clear fonts, and good colour contrasts between text and backgrounds and are WC3 compliant. Our documents are published online, and are designed so that these can be enlarged by the user to provide large print editions of our information.

It is our policy that a registered carer accompanying a disabled visitor can travel at the Concession rate. No charge is made for assistance dogs.

Our staff

Our staff and volunteers are by no means experts in disability access but we will do our best at all times to help facilitate your visit. We will happily answer any questions you may have to ensure that you are fully aware of what you can expect during your visit. If the physical restrictions of our historic



buildings and rolling stock cause barriers we will do all we can to overcome these safely. If you have any concerns we strongly advise you to contact us in advance of your visit so we can make sure everything is right for you and ensure that we have our most experienced staff on hand to assist.

Miscellaneous

This policy will be periodically reviewed. Any update to this will be advised through the normal communication channels and updated to our website.