

Risk Assessment Guidance for Educational Visits

Guidance for your visit to the Watercress Line

Introduction

The Mid Hants Railway Ltd “Watercress Line” (MHR) encourages visits by groups, including groups of children, regardless of physical or mental ability. We want your visit to be enjoyable and rewarding please contact the Education Officer by email: education@watercressline.co.uk for more information. We are happy to advise group leaders who are planning or booking a visit.

Please remember this guidance has been provided for reference purposes only. Your group leader must complete their own risk assessment, taking into consideration the needs and nature of their group.

This guidance has been designed to assist you in identifying the main safety issues you will need to consider during a visit to a heritage railway site. It does not cover risks which might be experienced in ordinary life or which could be classed as “common sense” risks (example: a child climbing on a chair and falling off).

Our guidance commences from the time that a group arrives at The Mid Hants Railway. Your LEA, Academy or School Travel Risk Assessment should be used to cover travel to and from the railway.

The Mid Hants Railway Ltd “Watercress Line” (MHR) does not accept liability for any omissions to this list. Actions are recommendations only and should be adapted or amended by group organisers to reflect the needs of their group.

Groups of children should be supervised by a sufficient number of responsible adults throughout their visit. It is our assumption that children will be supervised in line with your own local education authority or academy guidance but not withstanding this, we would expect a minimum of one adult to 10 children.

We offer 1 complimentary travel ticket / class for education groups booking train travel to allow you to visit on a running day to ensure that you are familiar with the Railway and its risks. Groups booking a Station Visit should check access arrangements with the Education and Outreach Coordinator by prior arrangement.

Regulatory Framework	MHR is regulated & inspected by Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate, part of the Office of Rail Regulation. They have approved our Operating and Safety Management System. We take necessary steps to comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992, made under the 1974 Act. More information can be obtained from our Health and Safety Manager if required.
Insurance	The MHR has in place and maintains insurance cover in respect of public and product liability a copy of the Insurance Certificate is available on request.
Staff identification	Apart from office areas, operational staff wear railway uniforms. Please be aware that engineering/ maintenance/ line side staff will be in high visibility work wear without name badges. Your Education visit staff will carry ID and will be introduced to your group at the beginning of your visit.
Security	The platform staff and on train staff are able to deal with minor security issues on site. The operational team is also trained to deal with emergency incidents that may arise.
What to do in an emergency?	Emergencies requiring immediate assistance by the emergency services will be called in the usual way by dialling 999 / 112. The group leader should inform the Station Inspector or Train Guard who will do this for you so that operational staff are fully aware of the incident. All our stations and trains have first aid kits.
Supervision and behaviour	The Mid Hants Railway is open to the public so group leaders must remain with their students at all times to supervise their behaviour, ensure their health and safety and accompany them in the event of an evacuation.
Food Safety and Hygiene	All food outlets operate in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990. They are regularly inspected by the local Environmental Health Department.

For All Hazards In the context of this guidance the following are applicable to all identified hazards:

• **Who might be affected by the hazard?**

All participants, including children, group leaders and operating staff.

• **Can the group leader put identified safety action measures in place?**

Yes. Any group leader who is mentally and physically capable of fulfilling that role should be able to put the identified safety action measures in place.

Area Name	Potential Hazard	Risk	Action
ALL AREAS	Historic Railway Setting	Hazards associated with any historic setting	No running at any time. Adult supervision at all times.
All Areas	Heritage Railway infrastructure	Cinder paths, grass areas, bridges and steps.	Advise your group to wear suitable footwear and washable clothing. Heels and open-toed sandals are inadvisable. School shoes, stout trainers, wellingtons or walking boots are ideal.
Yard Areas	Restoration, maintenance and engineering activities	Hazards commensurate with a working area	Refresh safety briefing. Group leaders must obtain permission from MHR staff before commencing self-led tour. MHR staff will notify group of specific works in progress. Group leaders to wear Hi-Vis at all times whilst in yard area. No visits to shed/workshop areas are permitted.
	Hard engine parts	Blow to head or body	Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing. No running, keep away from engines / trucks / coaches.
	Uneven ground Inset rail tracks Rails and rail furniture	Trip, fall, twist or sprain ankle	
	Open pits under engines	Fall	Pits safety fenced (whenever practicable to allow work). Adult supervision at all times. No running. Follow instructions of MHR staff as to safe areas.
Closed Yard Areas	Moving vehicles Railway stock being shunted	Struck by moving vehicle	MHR staff will close the yard in the event of any stock movements. Do not enter yard from walkways if barriers are closed.
Toilets	Heritage fittings Hot water, Wet floors, Open to public use.	Bumps, slips and scald. Unsupervised interaction with other visitors	Adult supervision at all times.

Area Name	Potential Hazard	Risk	Action
Sheds / workshops/ viewing galleries	Viewing platforms	Fall off or up/down stairs	Adult supervision at all times. Limit numbers if necessary. Group leaders to assess suitability for their group.
	Machine noise Welding Engineering environment	Sudden loud noise Dust/grit/oil/ grease	No unguided visits to sheds or workshop areas except to viewing galleries. MHR staff will advise of current level of activity. Pupils reminded not to touch or lean on equipment or vehicles. Group leaders to assess suitability for their group.
<i>Entry to viewing galleries may be restricted by operational requirements or the processes being carried out.</i>			
Station platforms	Fall from platform to line	Bumps, bruises, fractures	Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing. No running. Keep away from edge of platform. Keep away from engines / trucks / coaches.
	Struck by train arriving at or departing from station Struck by doors opening onto platform	Bumps, bruises, fractures, blow to head or body	
Arriving for your visit	Crossing Car Park area for access	Car movements and parked vehicles	Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing. No running.
Waiting for trains to arrive	Gap between carriage and Platform	Slip or fall from platform	Stay clear of platform edge. Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing.
Picnic Areas	Wooden picnic benches Contact with animal /bird droppings	Splinters Biological hazards	Areas are checked regularly by MHR staff. Any defect should be reported to MHR platform staff. Wash hands before eating.
	Grass banks Uneven surfaces	Trips and falls	Pupils should be supervised at all times. Organisers should ensure that members of their party with mobility difficulties are appropriately accompanied.

Area Name	Potential Hazard	Risk	Action
Play equipment	Fall onto safety surface Splinters	Trips and falls	Areas are checked regularly by MHR staff. Any defect should be reported to MHR platform staff. Pupils should be supervised and numbers limited to ensure safe play.
Moving around the site	Separation from group	Distressed	Group leader should identify station staff to pupils. Group leader should designate a safe meeting point. Check all pupils in the group have boarded / alighted from trains by head count.
Train Travel	Gap between carriage and Platform	Slip or fall from train to platform. Slip or fall between carriage and platform	Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing. Warn of gap and hand down smaller/ less able children as required. Group leaders to supervise boarding and alighting.
	Leaning out of carriage windows	Smuts / grit in eyes	Do not lean out of windows. Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing
		Hit by passing line side objects or other trains	
	External Slam doors on carriages and internal doors	Trap hands /fingers	Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing. Group leaders to supervise boarding and alighting.
	Unexpected stops	Bumps and falls	Pupils to remain seated.
All areas	Sudden loud noises Whistles Discharges of steam or water	Startle young or nervous passengers	Brief all pupils before visit.

Group leaders should decide in advance how to divide responsibilities if a visit is curtailed in the event of an emergency. In this context it is helpful if a single person is appointed to be in charge of the whole group.

This applies to adult groups as well as children.

We look forward to seeing you on your visit

Email: education@watercressline.co.uk for any further questions or more information