

Risk Assessment Guidance

For Educational Visits



Risk Assessment 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 or disability. We want your visit to be enjoyable and rewarding.

Please remember at all times that you are visiting a historic setting. Before your visit you will undoubtedly need to carry out your own risk assessment focusing on the particular requirements of your 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. The Mid Hants Railway Ltd “Watercress Line” (MHR) does not accept liability for any omissions to this list. Actions are recommendations only and must be adapted / amended by group organisers to reflect the needs of their group.

A risk assessment document is **only valid** if completed by the teacher/ group leader. You will need to consider all aspects of the day including travel to and from the railway.

Groups should be supervised by a sufficient number of responsible adults throughout their visit, in line with the requirements of your LEA Policy. The minimum supervisory ratio is 1-10.

We offer 2 complimentary travel tickets to allow you to ensure that you are familiar with the Railway and its risks.

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.

What steps will be taken 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. All our stations and trains have first aid kits.

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.

Making Sense of Risk Assessment

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	<i>Historic Railway Setting</i>	<i>Hazards associated with any historic setting</i>	<i>No running at any time. Adult supervision at all times.</i>
Yard Areas	Restoration, maintenance and engineering activities	Hazards commensurate with a working area	Group leaders must obtain permission from MHR staff before commencing a 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 unguided visits to shed areas 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 Raised rails and rail furniture	Trip, fall, twist or sprain ankle	

Area Name	Potential Hazard	Risk	Action
Yard Areas cont.	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.
	Moving vehicles Railway stock being shunted	Struck by moving vehicle	MHR staff will notify group of any stock movements. Group leaders to wear Hi-Vis at all times whilst in yard area. No unguided visits to shed area.
Toilets	Heritage fittings Low level sinks Hot water Wet floors	Bumps, slips and scald	Adult supervision at all times.
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
	Struck by train arriving at or departing from station Struck by doors opening onto platform	Bumps, bruises, fractures, blow to head or body	Keep away from edge of platform Keep away from engines / trucks / coaches
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 bark surface Splinters Contact with animal /bird droppings	Trips and falls Biological hazards	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.
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	Adult supervision at all times. Refresh safety briefing. No leaning out of windows.
		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 load noises Whistles Discharges of steam or water	Startle young or nervous passengers	Brief all pupils before visit.

Remember this risk assessment has been provided for reference purposes only. The group leader/ teacher must complete their own risk assessment, taking in to consideration the needs and nature of the group.

Supervision and behaviour

As all areas of the Mid Hants Railway is open to the public, 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.

Staff

Staff (both paid and volunteers), working directly with students, have undergone a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure.

Advice on dress

You will be visiting a Heritage Railway site – please advise your group to wear suitable footwear and washable clothing. Heels and Open-toed sandals are inadvisable. Trainers, wellington boots, or walking boots are ideal.

If you are picnicking at Ropley we would advise that you bring raincoats or hats and sun cream according to the weather.

We are happy to advise group leaders who are planning or booking a visit.

If you have any queries please contact the Education Officer or Reservations Manager by:

- Telephone: 01962 733810

- Email:

Education Officer education@watercressline.co.uk

Reservations Manager reservations@watercressline.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you on your visit.

