

Penalty fares information

May 2021



ThamesLink/

Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Thameslink and Southern operate a Penalty Fares scheme on all the routes they operate. You must buy a valid ticket for the journey you are making before you get on any of our trains. If you do not have a valid ticket, you may have to pay a Penalty Fare of £20 or twice the applicable single fare, whichever is the greater.

Examples of when a Penalty Fare may be charged

If you:

- Travel without a valid ticket
- Are unable to produce the appropriate railcard for a discounted ticket
- Travel in First Class accommodation with a standard ticket
- Travel on a child rate ticket when aged 16 or over
- Travel beyond the destination shown on the ticket
- Fail to touch in prior to travel, or travel on a line of route on which pay as you go is not valid

Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Thameslink and Southern operate a Penalty Fares scheme on all routes and at all stations. You must buy a valid ticket before you travel.



An explanation of Penalty Fares

The need to protect revenue

Reducing the number of people who travel without a ticket is not only in the interests of us, the operator, but also in the interest of our fare-paying passengers.

Few of us want to pay more for our tickets because some people avoid paying, and the loss of income due to people travelling without tickets reduces the money available to invest in a better rail service.

What are Penalty Fares?

If a passenger gets on a train without a ticket at a station where ticket facilities are available, they may be liable to pay a Penalty Fare. The penalty is the greater of £20 or twice the applicable single fare from the station where the passenger got on the train to the next station at which the train stops. If the passenger wants to travel beyond the next station they must also pay the relevant fare from that station to their final destination.

Remember

Where the facility to do so has been provided, you must purchase a ticket before you travel.

If you cannot produce a valid ticket for inspection when required, you may have to pay a Penalty Fare (minimum £20).



Frequently asked questions

If I do not buy a ticket before travelling, is it an automatic Penalty Fare?

You are responsible for ensuring that you purchase before travelling, a ticket that is valid for your entire journey, otherwise you may have to pay a Penalty Fare. Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Thameslink and Southern are responsible for ensuring that the facility to purchase a ticket is available.

Can I pay at my destination if I am in a rush?

If you board a train without a valid ticket, then you may have to pay a Penalty Fare. If it is shown that your intention was to avoid your fare, then you may be liable to prosecution.

What methods of payment can I use to pay a Penalty Fare?

You can use cash, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Maestro or Delta. We **do not** accept Solo or Electron cards.

What if I am unable to pay the full amount of the Penalty Fare on the spot?

If you do not have the full amount, then you will be allowed to make a part payment of at least the applicable single fare; you then have 21 days to pay the remaining amount of the Penalty Fare. This can be done using the online facility on the Revenue Protection Support Services website or telephone payments centre. Details of how to do this are on the Penalty Fare notice.

Is there a right of appeal against a Penalty Fare?

If you wish to appeal against a Penalty Fare you must do this in writing within 21 days starting the day after the issue date and send it to the appeals address on the Penalty Fare notice. The appeals body adheres to an agreed Code of Practice in the assessment of all appeals. The Penalty Fares Appeals Service will consider all the facts presented to them on appeal and notify the appellant of the outcome.

What if I want to buy a season ticket and the ticket office is closed, or the machine doesn't sell the ticket I want?

Self-service ticket machines sell most weekly season and Travelcard season tickets for journeys on Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Thameslink or Southern services. Monthly season ticket holders can renew their ticket provided their details are recorded in our database. If the required destination station is not listed on the ticket machine, then please purchase a single ticket to your interchange station.

What happens if I refuse to pay the Penalty Fare?

You will receive a reminder letter advising you of the outstanding sums owed to us. If you travel on the railway with intent to avoid payment of the fare then you may be prosecuted. The current maximum penalty upon conviction is £1000 fine and/or three months imprisonment.

Why are my name and address details required if I am paying in full?

You are required by law to provide your full name and address, even if you pay the Penalty Fare in full at the time of issue.

If there is a queue at the ticket office can I board the train without a valid ticket?

No. It is your responsibility to allow yourself reasonable time to buy a ticket before travelling. Automatic self-service ticket machines are provided at all stations as an additional method of ticket purchase. Tickets can also be bought in advance of travel from ticket offices, by phone or online.

What should I do if I have forgotten my season ticket and/or photocard?

You should buy a daily ticket to cover your journey before travelling. You may subsequently apply for a refund on this daily ticket at the ticket office where you bought your season ticket. Only two such refund applications will be considered in a 12 month period and you may be charged an admin fee.

What if I discover that I have forgotten my season ticket and/or photocard once I have boarded the train?

The authorised collectors will record details of your season ticket and your name and address on a pro-forma. You will then be issued with an Authority to Travel for the single journey that you are undertaking at the time. You must send this together with a clear photocopy of your season ticket and photocard to the address shown on the Authority to Travel. Failure to return the Authority to Travel or making a false claim may lead to prosecution.

If I have a standard class ticket, in First Class, as the train is busy, will I receive a Penalty Fare?

As your ticket would not be valid in First Class accommodation you may have to pay a Penalty Fare of £20 or twice the First Class single fare (whichever is the greater) to the next stop, plus a First Class single from there to your destination. However, depending on the circumstances, you may be liable to prosecution instead. If you wish to travel First Class, then you must buy a First Class ticket or appropriate upgrade before travelling.

Do you have any questions?

For further information about Penalty Fares on Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Thameslink or Southern services please contact our Customer Relations team:

By telephone:

Gatwick Express: **0345 850 1530***

Southern Rail: **0345 127 2920***

Great Northern and Thameslink: **0345 026 4700***

By e-mail:

customerservices@gatwickexpress.com

customerservices@greatnorthernrail.com

comments@southernrailway.com

customerservices@thameslinkrailway.com

*All calls charged at national rate, calls may be recorded

Websites

Find out more online:

www.greatnorthernrail.com

www.gatwickexpress.com

www.southernrailway.com

www.thameslinkrailway.com

This leaflet is intended as a guide and should not be regarded as a complete or authoritative statement of the law or regulations.

Other train operators may have their own Penalty Fares scheme, this leaflet only covers the stations served by Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Thameslink and Southern.

The information in this leaflet was correct at the time of printing – May 2021

