

Audio description guide – Southern 377 Electrostar trains



This audio guide is provided by Govia Thameslink Railway, primarily for our blind and partially sighted customers in order to provide an audio description of our Southern 377 Electrostar trains.

These trains make up a large proportion of our Southern fleet and can be found across many parts of the network, from London Bridge to Epsom, Portsmouth to Victoria and everywhere in between.

The class 377 Electrostar trains have been modified over the years, and we continue to have a mix of the older and later builds operating across our network. It's not obvious what build of train you'll be travelling on, so we've described any important differences between the older and more recent builds, mainly in the accessible areas and toilets, in the relevant sections of this guide.

We want everyone to be able to confidently use our services and station colleagues are ready to provide assistance boarding and alighting our trains, including offering sighted guide assistance. On most routes within the London 'metro' area, these trains are driver only operated. Elsewhere on the Southern network, they have onboard staff.

General description of 377 Electrostar trains

These electrically operated trains can consist of either three, four or five carriages. They are sometimes joined to form trains of up to 12 carriages in length. For example, a 12 carriage train will be formed of three x four carriage trains.

For the purposes of this guide, we've described a four carriage train. Carriage one is at the front of the train and carriage four at the rear (depending on the direction of travel). Each carriage has two sets of doors splitting the carriage into three sections. Section one will be at the front of the carriage, section two in the middle and section three at the rear of the carriage.

On routes where first class accommodation is available, the first class section is located in the first and/or last carriage of the train. Sometimes there may be a button operated sliding door to enter/exit the first class section. The first class sections are available to first class ticket holders only.

On the earlier builds of the 377 Electrostar trains, the accessible carriage will either be the second or third carriage of the four carriages (depending on direction of travel). On the more recently built 377 Electrostars, it can be found in the third carriage of the five carriages. The majority of assisted customers will be shown to the accessible carriage.

Boarding

Wherever you are boarding, our well-trained station staff are there to assist you, and they can also check and confirm the status of the onboard toilets, including the accessible toilet. The on-board supervisor (OBS) or Conductor will be able to assist you on and off the train if the station is unstaffed.

The external door button is located on the left sliding door, just to the left of the centre opening. As the doors open, they slide outwards against the exterior of the train, unlike some other types of trains where the doors open into a 'pocket' within the carriage.

As you step into the train (the vestibule), you will find two handrails at both sides of the door opening. At the entrance to both aisles, there are vertical stand poles located on either side of the aisle.

Within the vestibule, on the left side of the external doors (and sometimes also on the right depending on the train build), you'll find door open and close panels. The buttons are positioned vertically with the open button at the top (indicated by tactile arrows facing outwards) and close button at the bottom (indicated by tactile arrows facing inwards).

Above these door open/close buttons you'll find the emergency door release (on the left of the door) and alarm to speak to the driver (on the right of the door).

When the train is ready to leave, the doors are closed by the driver, and you will hear a beeping alarm also known as a 'hustle alarm' as they start closing.

Note: If you are assisted onto the train and decide to move to another part of the train during your journey, please return to the original carriage so staff at the destination station can easily find you to assist you off the train.

Internal layout

As mentioned previously, each carriage is split into three sections. Sections one and three (front and rear of the carriage) are shorter in length than section two (the middle of the carriage). The external doors are situated between sections one and two, and two and three.

You can move between carriages by going through a small coupling lobby, accessed by button operated doors. The button is located at waist height on the right of the door panel within the carriage. Pressing this button opens both the entrance and exit sliding doors for this lobby. Note: the floor in this lobby is in narrow strips and can move up and down as the train moves.

Some carriages have four seats across the aisle (split two/two), and some may have five seats across the aisle (split three/two). You will find that some banks of four seats facing each other have a full or reduced size table. Seats with banks of six seats facing each other have a reduced size table. There are some seats in rows all facing the same way and they may have a flip down table. Note, some seats have pull down arm rests.

In some sections, the first row of seats are Priority seats. These are marked with a sticker ('P' in a dark blue triangle).

There are single or double sockets (with USBs) by each bank of seats, on the external wall, positioned below table height.

There is carpet throughout most of these carriages except in the accessible section, the toilets and in the connecting lobby between the carriages.

There are overhead racks throughout the train and there is a luggage rack for larger items available in some carriages, at either end of the middle section, near to the doors. Note, in the accessible section of the carriage, there are only overhead racks above the small seating area.

Handrails with good colour contrast are provided at the doors and on entering/exiting the aisles, as well as throughout the train. There are also grab handles at the top/or side of each aisle seat.

Audio/visual announcements

Automated audio information is available throughout the train. You will hear automated announcements regarding the stops the train is making such as the next station and end destination of the train. The driver or onboard staff will also make manual announcements to keep everyone informed during the journey, particularly if there are unexpected delays.

Display screens with good colour contrast are available at both ends of each carriage. These displays provide the next station stop and the end destination.

In addition, usually on the left of the coupling lobby at each end of the carriage, there are Customer Information LCD screens. These may be displaying four QR codes, one for each of the following – Live map, Live departure board, Station information and Digital timetables but will also show adverts.

Litter bins

There are thin litter bins within each vestibule area. They can be found to the left of the carriage doors (sometimes alternating which side throughout the train).

Accessible area layout

The accessible carriage is either the second or third carriage of the four carriages. On the more recently built 377 Electrostars, it can be found in the third carriage of the five carriages.

The accessible area has an accessible toilet and ample space for our disabled customers including wheelchair and mobility scooter users, with adjacent tip up seats.

The accessible toilet will either be in the first or third section of the carriage (depending on the direction of travel). The accessible area for wheelchair users is in the same section, but on the more recently built 377 Electrostars this can be found at the beginning of section two of the carriage.

Accessible toilet

To enter the accessible toilet, there is an electric button to open the toilet door, always on the left of the curved sliding door and on some builds, on the right. The button has a raised tactile arrow facing outwards.

From the door, the layout is as follows:

11 o'clock = door open/close buttons and lock

2 o'clock = vanity unit

5 o'clock = toilet

Behind the toilet (either directly or to the left - door side) is the flush button.

Accessible toilet - door control panels

The door open and close electric buttons are at waist height and are positioned vertically. The three controls from top to bottom are:

- Lock button
 - Note: There is an audible click when you press the lock button.
- Close button
- Open button

Above the door control buttons, there are two light-up indicators. The top one is an unlocked padlock, indicating the door is unlocked (green in colour). The bottom one, is a locked padlock, indicating the door is locked (red in colour). When each electric button is lit, it means it is ready to be pressed and activated. There are braille instructions above and below each of the door controls/indicators.

Please note, there are some variations in the door control panels depending on the build of the train. Sometimes there is an open/close button on the left and lock button on the right (both buttons have raised

letters on them – D for door and L for lock). On the more recently built 377 Electrostars, there is an open button on the left, manual swing lock in the middle and close button on the right (again, the open and close buttons have tactile arrows facing in or out similar to the other open and close buttons found at the main carriage doors).

The toilet itself is pretty standard with a lifting toilet seat and lid. There are handrails (with good colour contrast) available on both sides of the toilet with the one on the left of the toilet (between the toilet and the door) being one that can be raised if more space is required. When sat on the toilet, the toilet tissue dispenser is located on the vanity unit on the right of the toilet.

The flush is operated by a button that has a raised 'F' on it with braille at the top of the button.

On the vanity unit (on the same wall as the toilet paper dispenser), there are three dispensers. The middle one is always the water (activated by either a sensor or push button above the tap). On each side is either the dryer (activated by a sensor or push button above the dryer) or soap dispenser (push button or pull lever), depending on the train build. Note, if the dispensers are push button operated, the soap comes out in the centre above the sink (not directly below the button). Each control is labelled with braille. On the tap there is a braille sign with raised lettering stating that the water is not drinkable.

The waste bin is located to the right of the sink below the toilet paper and grab handle. It has a metal push flap cover.

Also available in the accessible toilet is a baby changing table, this is located on the wall behind the toilet. When the toilet seat, lid and adjacent handrail are lowered, the table can be pulled downward over the toilet ready for use. If the table is down when you enter the toilet, you can just lift it upwards folding it away against the wall.

Within the accessible toilet there are two alarms for contacting the driver. One is situated on the wall opposite the toilet at waist height, and the other is situated close to the floor level below the sink and to the left of the bin. To operate, press the large circular button to speak to the driver

and await their response (note, some alarm buttons may have a cover which needs lifting first).

Standard toilet

The standard toilet on the earlier built 377 Electrostars is located in carriages two or three (the opposite carriage to where the accessible toilet is located). On the more recently built 377 Electrostars, it is located in carriages two or four (depending on the direction of travel).

On the outside of the door above the door handle is an indicator as to whether the toilet is vacant (either stating 'vacant' or a green indicator) or occupied (either stating 'engaged' or a red indicator). The door opens inwards using a manual handle. There is a small lip up into the toilet cubicle. Note, the cubicle is very small.

From the door, the layout is as follows:

11 o'clock = vanity unit and sink

9 o'clock = toilet and flush button.

After you have closed the door there is a manual twist lock (turned anticlockwise to lock and clockwise to unlock).

The flush button is located behind the toilet, to the right of the toilet lid stopper and is operated by a button that has a raised 'F' on it.

Depending on the train build, the toilet tissue dispenser is located either to the right or left (when sat on the toilet). There may be a coat hook(s) on the wall.

On the vanity unit, there are three dispensers. The middle one is always the water (activated by either a sensor or push button above the tap). On each side is either the dryer (activated by a sensor or push button above the dryer) or soap dispenser (push button or pull lever), depending on the train build. Note, if the dispensers are push button operated, the soap comes out in the centre above the sink (not directly below the button). Each control is labelled with braille. On the tap there is a braille sign with raised lettering stating that the water is not drinkable.

The waste bin is located at knee level, below the sink.

The alarm to speak to the driver within the standard toilet is to the right of the vanity unit, opposite the door.

Alarms to speak to the driver

Alarms for contacting the driver are available to the right of the external doors throughout the carriages. To activate these alarms, lift the protective plastic cover away from the alarm and press the large circular button to speak to the driver and await their response.

Low level alarms are available within the accessible area of the carriage. These are located in a case on the wall that needs unlocking by a staff member. They are at waist height; above the flip down table (in the seating area). These are operated by pressing the large circular button to speak to the driver. Note, there is no plastic cover on these alarm buttons.

Within the accessible toilet there are two alarms for contacting the driver. One is situated on the wall opposite the toilet at waist height and the other is situated close to floor level below the sink and to the left of the bin. Note, some may have a cover which needs lifting first.

The alarm within the standard toilet is to the right of the vanity unit, opposite the door.

Emergency Door release

The emergency door release is to the left of the external doors throughout all carriages (above the door controls). Green stickers indicate the steps to open the door - step one pull handle, step two wait for the train to stop and step three pull doors open. Note, sometimes there will be a cover on the door release as the first step, before pulling the handle.

We hope you have found this 377 Electrostar guide useful, and we look forward to welcoming you on board.