

Audio description guide – Southern 171 Turbostar 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 171 Turbostar trains.

These diesel trains run between London Bridge and Uckfield, and our Marsh Link services between Eastbourne and Ashford International via Hastings.

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. All trains on these routes have a driver and a Conductor/On Board Supervisor onboard.

General description of 171 Turbostar trains

These are diesel operated trains, and the only diesel trains you'll find on the Southern network. They are generally formed of either three or four carriages. They are occasionally 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 three carriage train. Carriage one is at the front of the train and carriage three 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.

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. Power points and reclining seats are available in these areas. The first class sections are available to first class ticket holders only.

Carriage one (or carriage three depending on direction of travel) is designed with accessibility in mind, as it contains an accessible toilet and a designated space for wheelchair users (with a flip down seat). The majority of assisted customers will use this carriage for ease.

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. On our 171 Turbostar trains the 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 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 of both aisles, there are vertical stand poles located on either side of the aisle. Note, these stand poles start on the floor and then slowly curve towards the outside of the carriage (they're not straight floor to ceiling poles).

Within the vestibule, on either side of the external doors, you'll find door open and close panels. These are at waist height and the buttons are positioned vertically with the open button (indicated by tactile arrows facing outwards) at the top and close button (indicated by tactile arrows facing inwards) at the bottom.

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

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 (middle of the carriage). The doors are situated between sections one and two and two and three.

The carriages on these trains are independent of each other and are coupled together to form the three carriage train. You can move between carriages by going through a small lobby, accessed by a button operated door. (Note, there is a door on each side of this connecting lobby so you may have to open each door separately to navigate between carriages. The button can be located at waist height on the left of the door panel within the carriage and on the right of the door panel within the lobby.

The seating layout of these trains comprises a mix of two seaters and four seaters with a large table. All seats have folding arm rests. You will also find either one or two side facing flip down seats in the vestibule (where the doors are).

Priority seating is available throughout the carriages and is identified with a sticker ('P' in a dark blue triangle).

There is carpet throughout most of these trains accept in the accessible section where the accessible toilet is located (section three of carriage one or section one of carriage three depending on direction of travel) and in the toilets.

There are overhead racks throughout the train and there is a luggage rack for larger items available in each carriage.

Yellow handrails (with good colour contrast) are provided at the doors and on entering/exiting the aisles (as mentioned earlier), as well as throughout the train.

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 and when the train is being held at a red signal. The Conductor will also make manual announcements to keep everyone informed during the journey, particularly if there are unexpected delays.

Double-sided display screens with good colour contrast are available above the aisles at the beginning and end of section two (middle section) of the carriage. These displays scroll through information such as the next station stop, upcoming stations and what coach you're in.

Litter bins

There are litter bins situated throughout the train. The easiest ones to find are in the vestibule, on the side panel between the exterior doors and section two. Litter bins can also be found halfway along section two of the trains. They are situated between back-to-back facing seats at low level. All the litter bins on these 171 Turbostar trains are metal push flap (letterbox) style.

Accessible and standard toilets

You will find an accessible toilet in section one of carriage three and a standard toilet in section three of carriage one, (or vice versa depending on direction of travel).

To enter the accessible toilet, you will find an electric button to open the toilet door to the left of the curved sliding door. The button has a raised tactile arrow facing outwards.

Facing into the toilet, the layout is as follows:

- 11 o'clock = door open/close buttons and lock
- 2 o'clock = vanity unit
- 3 o'clock = toilet
- 4 o'clock = flush button

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

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

When each button is lit, it means it is ready to be pressed and activated.

Above the door control buttons, there are two light-up indicators. The top one is an unlocked padlock, indicating the door is unlocked. The bottom one, is a locked padlock, indicating the door is locked.

There are adjacent braille instructions to the left of the door controls/indicators.

The toilet itself is pretty standard with a lifting toilet seat and lid. There are yellow handrails available on both sides of the toilet with the one on the right 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 right.

The flush is operated by a button that has a raised 'F' on it with adjacent braille. This can be found on the wall between the liftable handrail and the toilet door.

On the vanity unit (on the same wall as the toilet paper dispenser), from left to right, you will find the soap dispenser (pull/push lever), the automatic tap (activated by sensor above the tap) and the dryer (activated by sensor above the dryer). Each control is labelled using 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 grab handle and 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 to the right of the door locking controls at waist height and the other is situated close to 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.

Standard toilet

The standard toilet is located in section one of carriage three (or section three of carriage one depending on direction of travel).

This toilet indicates (on the outside of the door above the door handle) if 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.

Facing into the cubicle, the layout is as follows:

12 o'clock = vanity unit and sink
3 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. Above the flush button is a horizontal handrail.

The toilet tissue dispenser is located on the back of the door. There is also a coat hook available either on the back of the door or on the wall behind the door.

On the vanity unit, from left to right you will find the soap dispenser (push/pull lever), the automatic tap (activated by sensor above the tap) and the dryer (activated by sensor above the dryer). Each control is labelled using 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, to the right of the vanity unit below the dryer and has a metal push flap cover.

There is no alarm to speak to the driver within the standard toilet.

Alarms to speak to the driver

Alarms for contacting the driver are available at head height to the right of the external doors throughout the carriages (above the door controls). To activate these alarms, lift the protective plastic cover upwards 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 carriage three (in the same section as the accessible toilet). These are at waist height; above the removeable 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 to the right of the door locking controls at waist height and the other is situated close to floor level below the sink and to the left of the bin. Note, there is no liftable cover on these buttons.

Emergency Door release

The emergency door release is at head height to the left of the external doors throughout all carriages (above the door controls). Green stickers indicate the four steps to open the door - step one break glass, step two pull handle, step three wait for the train to stop and step four pull doors open.

We hope you have found this 171 Turbostar guide useful, and we look forward to welcoming you on board.