

## Audio description guide – Thameslink Class 700 trains



This audio guide is provided by Thameslink, primarily for our blind and partially sighted customers in order to provide an audio description of our Class 700 Thameslink trains.

These trains operate all Thameslink services, which generally connect north and south of the Thames. Key stations served by Thameslink include Bedford, Brighton, Cambridge, Horsham, Gatwick Airport, London St Pancras, Peterborough, Sutton and Sevenoaks.

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.

### **General description of Class 700 trains**

These modern electric trains are formed of either eight or twelve carriages. On routes where first class accommodation is available, the first-class area is at the front of the train. These trains are driver only operated. Staff known as revenue protection officers may be on board to check people are travelling with the correct ticket.

The carriages at the centre of the train, carriages four & five on an eight-car train and carriages six & seven on a twelve-car train are designed with accessibility in mind, so the majority of assisted customers use this

area as it is close to the accessible toilet and other features as described in this guide.

For ease of identification of the accessible carriages for sighted customers, the doors are denoted with large blue diagonal markings with a white wheelchair symbol.

First class accommodation is available within the lead carriage. The first-class section at the rear of the train is available to all ticket holders on these trains.

## **Boarding**

Raised boarding areas are provided at the Thameslink platforms between London St Pancras and London Bridge although ramps are available at these stations if needed. 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 external door button is located on the side of the train, at arm's length to the right of the sliding door. As the doors open, they slide outwards into a 'pocket' within the carriage unlike some of our trains where they slide outwards against the exterior of the train.

As you step into the train (the vestibule), you will find two handrails at both sides of the door opening. There is also a vertical floor to ceiling grab pole located in the centre of the carriage between the two sets of doors.

Within the vestibule, on the right side of the external doors (from within the train), you'll find door open and close panel. This is 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 right) and alarm to speak to the driver (to the left). Note, these are only available on one side of the train doors, alternating which side throughout the train. More info regarding these and how to operate can be found at the end of this guide.

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**

The general seating layout of these trains is four seats across (two seats on either side of the carriage) with a small number of side facing tip up seats in some carriages. Some seats are facing each other and some are in rows all facing the same way.

Priority seating is available next to the vestibule areas. Signage on the wall above the seat is visible but not tactile. The text reads 'Priority seat' and has an image of a pregnant person and someone with a walking stick. Some seats are in a bay or booth style, where two sets of seats face each other, and the others are airline style seats.

These spacious trains feature wide corridors with open access between each carriage. Moving through the carriages are accordion sleeves (similar to a bendy bus), there is a slight rise over these sections, and they have a short non-slip metal plate up to each of these sections. In addition to overhead racks, luggage racks for larger items are also available in each carriage.

Blue handrails (with good colour contrast) are provided at the doors (as we mentioned earlier) as well as smaller handrails located at the top corner of the headrest of each of the aisle seats, throughout the train. The colour contrast of these is not as contrasting due to the colour of the blue seating. The handrails are a lighter blue colour than the seating.

### **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, when the train is being held at a red signal and local features at some stops, for example the Emirates stadium at Finsbury Park and St Paul's Cathedral at City Thameslink. The driver may also make manual announcements to keep everyone informed during the journey, particularly if there are

unexpected delays. The announcements do not state what side the door will open on, but a two-tone sound plays on the side the doors will open.

For sighted customers, display screens with good colour contrast are available at the centre of each vestibule. These displays scroll through information such as the next station stop, upcoming stations, what coach you're in and how full each carriage is, how well the tube lines are running and the toilet location and their status.

### **Litter bins**

There are litter bins situated throughout the train. They can be found to the left of the carriage doors (or on the right of the opposite doors).

### **Accessible area layout**

The accessible area, always in the centre two carriages of the class 700 is where you will find the accessible toilet.

This area provides ample space for our disabled customers including wheelchair and mobility scooter users, with adjacent tip up seats.

### **Accessible toilet**

Each class 700 has an accessible toilet at the centre of the train. Additionally, these trains have either two or four standard toilets depending on its length.

To enter the accessible toilet, you will find two sets of toilet door controls at either side of the curved sliding door. Each button has raised tactile arrows, facing outwards to open the door and inwards to close it (the same as the carriage door open and close buttons). Braille markings are also present next to these buttons.

Facing into the toilet, the layout is as follows:

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

12 o'clock = vanity unit

3 o'clock = toilet

5 o'clock = flush button

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

- Open button
- Close button
- Lock lever (slide it to the left to lock the door and to the right to unlock the door)

Note: There is no click or audio confirmation that the door is locked or unlocked.

The toilet itself is pretty standard with a lifting toilet seat and lid. There are 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 to the right next to the soap dispenser handle (within the vanity unit).

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. There is a green sign with braille and raised lettering indicating to close the toilet lid and then push the circular flush button.

On the vanity unit (on the same wall as the toilet paper dispenser), from right to left, you will find the soap dispenser (pull lever), the automatic tap (activated by sensor above the tap) and the dryer (activated by a button found on the back wall to the left of the tap).

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 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. To operate, slide the protective cover upwards and then press the large circular button to speak to the driver awaiting their response.

### **Standard toilet**

These toilets have a circular indicator (on the outside of the door above the door handle) showing if the toilet is vacant (green indicator with raised arrows facing outwards) or occupied (red indicator with raised

arrows facing inwards). The door is opened by using the contrasting blue handle, manually sliding the door to the right.

Facing into the cubicle, the layout is as follows:

9 o'clock = vanity unit and sink

3 o'clock = toilet, flush and baby change table

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

The flush button is located behind the toilet, on the wall to the left and directly under the baby changing table (operated by a button that has a raised 'F' on it with adjacent braille).

The toilet tissue dispenser is located below the sink to the right at knee level.

On the vanity unit (on the same wall as the toilet paper dispenser), from right to left, you will find the soap dispenser (pull lever), the automatic tap (activated by a sensor above the tap) and the dryer (activated by a button found on the back wall to the left of the tap).

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 hand dryer and has a metal push flap cover.

A pull-down baby change table is located immediately above the toilet (with a braille sign to indicate to pull the table down).

The alarm to speak to the driver within the standard toilet is on the vanity unit to the right, at head height. To operate, slide the protective cover upwards and then press the large circular button to speak to the driver awaiting their response.

### **Alarms to speak to the driver**

Alarms for contacting the driver are available at head height to the left of one of the pair of doors along the carriage. To activate these alarms there are green stickers with raised and braille lettering indicating step one, to break the glass, and step two to press a button to speak to the driver (for sighted customers, a yellow indicator will be lit for all alarms).

Low level alarms are available within the accessible area, at waist height adjacent to the tip up seats, again each has a green sign, with braille markings explaining how to operate them. Unlike the door alarms these are operated by step one sliding the cover upwards and then pressing the button to speak to the driver and step two to wait for a response.

There are similar alarms within the toilets. As with the low-level alarms, these are used by sliding the cover upwards and then pressing a button to speak to the driver.

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.

The alarm within the standard toilet is on the vanity unit to the right, at head height.

### **Emergency Door release**

The emergency door release is to the right of each door at shoulder height. Green stickers indicate the four steps to open the door:

- Strike cover
- Pull lever down and wait for the train to stop
- Pull the lever fully down
- Pull open carriage doors manually.

We hope you have found this Class 700 guide useful, and we look forward to welcoming you on board.