

NEWS



22 August 2006

Channel Tunnel traffic resumes

Channel Tunnel traffic was fully back to normal at 16:00 (CET) today (Tuesday 22 August 2006). More than 300 trains (Eurotunnel Shuttles, freight trains and Eurostar) will once again run safely during the next 24 hours, as on every day of the year.

The traffic had been suspended yesterday (Monday 21 August) at about 13:30 (CET) after the Eurotunnel Railway Control Center detected smoke emanating from a lorry on a Truck Shuttle travelling from Folkestone to Coquelles. Traffic was partially restarted from 17:15 (CET), with backlogs being gradually reduced in the evening and throughout the night.

The Channel Tunnel's design and its safety systems limited the consequences of this incident: the fire was detected at three points a few hundreds of meters apart. The Shuttle was immediately stopped, and the 4 other trains then present in the tunnel were directed as quickly as possible towards the exit. Thanks to the service tunnel, British and French emergency services rapidly reached the area involved. The evacuation of the 34 persons onboard was immediate. The fire was swiftly brought under control, before it could spread. The higher air pressure which is maintained in the service tunnel and the powerful ventilation system enabled the smoke to be evacuated.

Meticulous inspections were carried out throughout last night, but no major deterioration of the Tunnel's fixed equipment was discovered. Eurotunnel decided nevertheless to replace a section of the catenary at the location impacted by the incident.

The Truck Shuttle which transported the vehicle at the origin of the incident was towed into France after midnight. Investigations are in progress to determine the precise causes.

" This regrettable incident and its limited consequences demonstrate the appropriateness of our safety system, declared Jean-Pierre Trotignon, Chief Operating Officer. The structure's design, its rigorous maintenance, the quality of our emergency procedures and of our equipment were all put to the test yesterday, and have come through with flying colours. I wish to salute the attentiveness, the professionalism and the commitment of our teams and the efficiency of the emergency services. By choosing to use the Channel Tunnel, Eurotunnel customers know they can trust its transport system. "

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