



# London 2012 Olympics: Fire alert halts Heathrow Express as airport deals with record arrivals ahead of Games



**Jonathan Prynne**, Consumer Business Editor

26 July 2012

The Heathrow Express rail link to central London was suspended today on the busiest day in the airport's history.

Tens of thousands of passengers arriving at the airport for the Olympics on were told to seek "alternative transport arrangements" because of a fire next to the line.

Normal service later resumed on the service.

As well as the Heathrow Express service to Paddington, two other operators, Heathrow Connect and First Great Western, halted trains following the fire at West Ealing.

One passenger Laura Jack tweeted "Fire at Ealing Broadway, sat there for 20 minutes w no indication when we might depart."

The suspension means that thousands of extra passengers will be forced to use the only viable alternative, the Piccadilly Line, to make their way into London.

Olympic arrivals include athletes, media and Olympic sponsors arriving ahead of tomorrow's opening ceremony.

The first of three waves of corporate hospitality visitors got underway today with one official sponsor, Visa, bring in 15,000 guests for the Games.

The majority of around 100 world leaders began to fly in today – many using Luton or Stansted as private jets and charters are banned for the Games at Heathrow.

Trains were suspended earlier due to the alert at a disused platform at West Ealing. Normal service later resumed.

Transport chiefs were braced for the most challenging day of the Olympics so far with unprecedented passenger numbers and Heathrow and road closures bringing large parts of central London to a standstill

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Heathrow airport said operations were running smoothly today with the arrival of a record 125,000 passengers – including 2,000 Olympic officials. Yesterday the Public and Commercial Services union called off a strike of immigration workers at the airport where an extra 5000 staff have been deployed to deal with Olympic visitors.

Olympic arrivals include athletes, media and Olympic sponsors arriving ahead of tomorrow's opening ceremony.

The first of three waves of corporate hospitality visitors got underway today with one official sponsor, Visa, bring in 15,000 guests for the Games.

The majority of around 100 world leaders began to fly in today – many using Luton or Stansted as private jets and charters are banned for the Games at Heathrow.

Londoners were today urged to avoid making unnecessary journeys by watching the Olympic torch relay in the local area.

There were rolling roads closures from rush hour as the torch makes its way into central London, visiting nine boroughs .

In the busiest day for the torch, there were rolling road closures in the morning rush in Camden and Islington – the first of eight boroughs on today's torch route as it winds into central London, finishing at Hyde Park.

Transport for London commissioner Peter Hendy said "Traffic levels yesterday were around 13.5 per cent lower than they would normally be at this time of year, due to motorists heeding our advice about avoiding driving in central London, near venues or on and around the ORN. Londoners have yet again proved how sensible they are, and I'd like to thank them for their help in reducing traffic in London – which is now truly an Olympic city.

"As the Olympic Torch makes its way through central London today roads and stations along the route will be exceptionally busy and spectators should stay local and find a viewing point that is close to home or work. There is no point driving to see the Torch as there won't be any parking. Take public transport, walk or cycle instead."

Roads also came under further pressure as the VIP lanes Olympic caused major tailbacks along routes into central London – particularly the A4, M4, A12 and A13.

Transport chiefs face a critical 48 hours managing tomorrow's crowds along the torch as it passes along the River Thames on its final day towards the opening ceremony.

At the weekend there will be mass day-long road closures for the road cycling races between Westminster and Surrey Hills.

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david12d 15 hours ago

Well I never! So, this stupidity and the Piccadilly disruption and the Overground nonsense. Why, oh why, didn't Paris win this 'Hope, Skip and Jump' expensive futility?

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-1

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**Joe Rumford** 21 hours ago

Never mind avoiding making unnecessary journeys, many people are being forced to leave their homes to make way for the Olympics. I watched the following documentary and it changed my views completely.

[http://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/rule-britannia/the-vice-guide-to-the-olympics-part-1](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/rule-britannia/the-vice-guide-to-the-olympics-part-1)

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-1



**AGrumpyGit** 22 hours ago

"Londoners were today urged to avoid making unnecessary journeys by watching the Olympic torch relay in the local area"

So we get to pay for it, now we're being "encouraged" not to clog up the roads and public transport to watch it! I'll just watch it on TV instead.

Reply

+3



**Anony Mouse** 22 hours ago

Despite the TfL website saying all was fine, Canary Wharf tube station was also shut this morning around 9-9.30am due to a fire alert.

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+2



**Anonymous** 19 hours ago

Ah well next time we could leave it open and toast a few numpties....

Reply

[2 replies](#)

+1



**Anonymous** 18 hours ago

Numpties, you will probaly find, are too thick to toast. They usually need a good roasting

+1



**Anonymous** 18 hours ago

Oh bother, I should realy learn how to spell 'roasting'

-1



**Anonymous** 16 hours ago

Funny thing is Canary Wharf Station like others on JLE are not fitted with fire distinguishers given they way they were built!!

Reply

+1



**Anonymous** 22 hours ago

So still no sign of Boris doing his job and taking charge of transport!!!

Only Ken can keep them moving again..

Goes to show how vital that link to South West Trains lines is - Shame petrolhead Hammond cancelled it because if idle motorists having to wait at level crossings...best answer is to close crossings and let local councils pay for bridges/tunnels!!!

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[2 replies](#)

-2

**Anonymous** 20 hours ago

Er, so Boris was responsible for the line side fire? What is Livingstone? A fireman all of a sudden??

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**Anonymous** 16 hours ago

Well that would still leave London with more firemen that Brian Coleman was planning to do!!

+1

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