

southeastern

ThamesLink/



Leaves on the line. Again?

**It's no joke, but we're
on the case.**

**This autumn we'll be
clearing 50 million leaves
from the line to keep trains
running on time.**

southeasternrailway.co.uk/autumn

You wouldn't think the humble leaf could cause so much trouble. The once lush trees of spring and summer slowly fade, through shades of yellow and orange, to brown, before their leaves fall gracefully to the ground. Winds carry them towards the railway line, where the rush of air from passing trains pulls them directly onto the tracks, where they are crushed to a pulp. Leaves are made up of around

The wet mulch also messes with the electrical signals used to keep track of where all the trains are on the network. This combination of issues leads to a potentially dangerous situation, so to be on the safe side, we need to move more slowly and occasionally miss out the odd station along the route to make up time.

We know that this can be frustrating, but please bear with us. We have special leaf-busting treatment



80% water, with the rest made up of a complex combination of other substances including pectin, cellulose, and a type of fatty acid that, when compressed, have a lubricating effect.

When this happens on train tracks, it's essentially like coating them with Teflon, and the steel wheels struggle to grip the steel tracks. Braking distance can more than double, with trains taking up to 1000 metres to stop.

trains running throughout autumn that clean the rails using water jets and then apply a sand-based gel to them to help trains grip the rails.

And teams working around the clock using specialist machines to clean the railhead (the top of the rails). It's an arduous task, but trust us, we're on it and working hard to minimise disruptions to your journeys.

**50 million leaves will fall on the lines this autumn.
But we're on the case and will be clearing the
tracks to keep trains running on time.**