

RhB service reductions

The Rhaetian Railway (RhB) enjoyed an unprecedented level of demand last year, a situation that has continued into the early part of 2024. At the same time, the company is struggling with a shortage of train drivers. Although the RhB is employing more drivers than ever before, and despite the roll-out of numerous recruitment measures in recent months, current staffing levels remain insufficient to cover all the company's needs. In a bid to avoid overloading its drivers any further, and to prevent short-notice train cancellations, the RhB has decided to make selective adjustments to its services in consultation with the federal and cantonal authorities. The adjustments come into effect on 11 March 2024 and are reflected in the online timetable.

RhB Director Renato Fasciati and Chairman of the Board Mario Cavigelli announced the shortage of train drivers at the end-of-year press conference mid-December 2023 and stated their intention to take decisive action. The situation is by no means new, and in fact has worsened in recent months. This is despite a raft of measures introduced by a task force set up in spring of last year, which included a beefed-up recruitment drive, an increase in the number of training places, the hiring of external train drivers and the reassignment of duties to other groups of workers. Despite all these measures, the RhB is currently short of some 15 train drivers out of a pool of around 280. This is attributable, among other things, to higher capacity requirements owing to an expansion in services and the acquisition of more trains, a shortage of qualified train drivers, and increases staff turnover, sick leave and long-term absences. The shortage of drives will improve once the aforementioned measures start to take effect. This, however, will not happen overnight – training takes time, and course places are limited. The RhB currently has 24 drivers undergoing training. The number will rise to 38 as of 1 February 2024, and 47 as of 1 March 2024. No fewer than 59 are scheduled for July 2024.

A very difficult but necessary decision

To protect its employees, avoid short-notice cancellations and offer passengers planning certainty, the RhB has decided to make further cuts to the hours worked by drivers by making selective adjustments to services. This has been done in consultation with the authorities and taking into account the number of passengers affected, operational feasibility, and the availability of alternative means of transport such as rail replacement buses. The RhB has now received approval from Switzerland's Federal Office of Transport to make selective adjustments to services from 11 March until the annual timetable change next December. RhB Director Renato Fasciati: "The decision to adjust services is very difficult but necessary. The RhB very

much regrets this exceptional situation and is doing everything it can to improve things as quickly as possible by taking action on a number of fronts.” Circumstances permitting, normal service may be resumed sooner than December.

Bus instead of train, alterations to the stopping policy and some special trains paused

Across the network, around 3% of scheduled train services will be replaced by rail replacement buses. At off-peak times, buses will replace trains on the Chur – Arosa and Chur – Disentis/Mustér routes: there will be one train in each direction between Chur and Arosa in the morning and three bus connections in each direction in the evening. In addition, the four additional seasonal trains that run half-hourly between Chur and Arosa will be replaced by buses on weekends from May to October. On the Ilanz – Disentis/Mustér section of the Surselva line, one train in each direction will be replaced by a bus in the evening. The RhB has also decided not to offer the Ruinaulta (Rhine Gorge) Experience train in 2024.

The company’s “dividing train” concept is also being modified slightly: the RE 4 Landquart – Scuol-Tarasp service will run only as far Sagliains, where passengers will henceforth change to the R15 Pontresina – Sagliains – Scuol-Tarasp service. That said, there will be some direct connections between Landquart and Scuol-Tarasp (Landquart dep 19:50, Scuol-Tarasp dep 05:41, 07:41 and 21:41).

There will also be changes to S-Bahn services: the S1/S2 (Thusis) – Rhäzüns – Schiers will only run between Thusis and Landquart. The Malans, Seewis-Pardisla and Grüşch stops on the Landquart – Schiers section will be served by the dividing trains serving Landquart – Klosters – Davos Platz/St. Moritz/Scuol-Tarasp / Sagliains.

In the lower section between Davos and Filisur, all the connections will be served by replacement buses in the off-season (11.03.-10.05. and 28.10.-14.12.). In the summer season, most of the buses will be replaced by trains again. Off-peak connections will be served by rail replacement buses for the entire duration of the adjusted timetable (Davos Platz dep. 06:05, 07:31, 18:31, 19:31 and 20:31 / Filisur dep. 06:34, 08:04 19:04, 20:04 and 21:04). The popular vintage train is unaffected by the aforementioned changes and will continue to run twice a day in each direction between Davos Platz and Filisur from the beginning of the summer season on 11 May until 27 October (departing Davos Platz at 10:18 and 15:18, departing Filisur at 11:06 and 16:06).

All adjustments to services are reflected in the online timetable.

Overview of adjustments to services commencing 11 March 2024

Line	Service	Action taken
RE4	Landquart – Scuol-Tarasp	RE4 trains from Landquart to Scuol-Tarasp stop at Sagliains. Passengers from Landquart for Scuol-Tarasp (and vice versa) change to the R15 (Pontresina – Scuol) in Sagliains.
R16	Off-peak trains Chur – Arosa	Off-peak services before 6 am and after 8 pm operate with replacement buses.
RE6	Additional trains Chur – Arosa in the summer season	Weekends in the summer season (additional trains): one service Chur – Arosa (and vice versa) operates with replacement buses.
RE7	Off-peak trains Ilanz – Disentis/Mustér	One pair of trains in the evening will be replaced by buses.
R11	Davos – Filisur	As a rule, R11 trains will be replaced by buses. Six pairs of trains run daily in the summer season between May and October, and ten daily in the high season in July and August. The vintage train continues to run twice daily between May and October.
R27	Ruinaulta Experience train	The Ruinaulta Experience train is being withdrawn without replacement.
S1/S2	(Thusis –) Rhäzüns – Schiers	The S-Bahn trains between Thusis, Rhäzüns and Schiers will run only from and to Landquart. Passengers from/to Malans, Seewis-Pardisla, Grösch and Schiers must change in Landquart to the RE13 / RE24 Landquart – Davos / – Sagliains / – St. Moritz (and vice versa). Due to short platforms between Landquart and Schiers, it is only possible to alight from train sections to Sagliains / St. Moritz.

Overview of changes previously announced:

Service	Action taken
Full Moon trips	Full Moon trips are being withdrawn without replacement.
Steam train trips	Steam train trips are being withdrawn until the end of March 2024 at the earliest.
Landwasser Shuttle	The new Landwasser Shuttle is now being launched in summer 2025.
Sledging trains	Monday to Friday from 8 to 26 January 2024: no sledging trains between Bergün and Preda. Reduced operation of the sledging trains in February.