

§ 20501. Definition

In this chapter, “signal system” means a block signal system, an interlocking, automatic train stop, train control, or cab-signal device, or a similar appliance, method, device, or system intended to promote safety in railroad operations.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 883.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 3 columns: Revised Section, Source (U.S. Code), Source (Statutes at Large). Row 1: 20501, (no source).

This section is added to eliminate the unnecessary repetition of the words used in the definition. The definition is derived from 49 App.:26(b)–(f).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

SIGNAL PROTECTION

Pub. L. 114-94, div. A, title XI, §11408, Dec. 4, 2015, 129 Stat. 1684, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 4, 2015], the Secretary [of Transportation] shall initiate a rulemaking to require that on-track safety regulations, whenever practicable and consistent with other safety requirements and operational considerations, include requiring implementation of redundant signal protection for maintenance-of-way work crews who depend on a train dispatcher to provide signal protection.

“(b) ALTERNATIVE SAFETY MEASURES.—The Secretary shall consider exempting from any final requirements of this section each segment of track for which operations are governed by a positive train control system certified under section 20157 of title 49, United States Code, or any other safety technology or practice that would achieve an equivalent or greater level of safety in providing additional signal protection.”

§ 20502. Requirements for installation and use

(a) INSTALLATION.—(1) When the Secretary of Transportation decides after an investigation that it is necessary in the public interest, the Secretary may order a railroad carrier to install, on any part of its railroad line, a signal system that complies with requirements of the Secretary. The order must allow the carrier a reasonable time to complete the installation. A carrier may discontinue or materially alter a signal system required under this paragraph only with the approval of the Secretary.

(2) A railroad carrier ordered under paragraph (1) of this subsection to install a signal system on one part of its railroad line may not be held negligent for not installing the system on any part of its line that was not included in the order. If an accident or incident occurs on a part of the line on which the signal system was not required to be installed and was not installed, the use of the system on another part of the line may not be considered in a civil action brought because of the accident or incident.

(b) USE.—A railroad carrier may allow a signal system to be used on its railroad line only when the system, including its controlling and operating appurtenances—

(1) may be operated safely without unnecessary risk of personal injury; and

(2) has been inspected and can meet any test prescribed under this chapter.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 883.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 3 columns: Revised Section, Source (U.S. Code), Source (Statutes at Large). Rows for 20502(a), 20502(b).

In this section, the words “signal system” are substituted for “block signal system, interlocking, automatic train stop, train control, and/or cab-signal devices, and/or other similar appliances, methods, and systems intended to promote the safety of railroad operation” and “such systems, devices, appliances, or methods” in 49 App.:26(b) and “any system, device, or appliance covered by this section” and “such apparatus” in 49 App.:26(e) because of the definition of “signal system” in section 20501 of the revised title.

In subsection (a)(1), the words “decides after an investigation that it is necessary in the public interest” are substituted for “after investigation, if found necessary in the public interest” for clarity. The word “specifications” is omitted as included in “requirements”. The words “The order must allow the carrier a reasonable time to complete the installation” are substituted for “such order to be issued and published a reasonable time (as determined by the Secretary) in advance of the date for its fulfillment” to eliminate unnecessary words. The words “a signal system required under this paragraph” are substituted for “That block signal systems, interlocking, automatic train stop, train control, and cab-signal devices in use on August 26, 1937, or such systems or devices hereinafter installed” to eliminate unnecessary or obsolete words and because of the definition of “signal system” in section 20501 of the revised title.

In subsection (a)(2), the words “railroad line” are substituted for “railroad” for consistency in the revised title. The word “civil” is added for consistency in the revised title and with other titles of the United States Code. The words “or incident” are added for consistency in this part.

In subsection (b), before clause (1), the words “may allow . . . only when” are substituted for “It shall be unlawful . . . unless . . . unless” for clarity. In clause (1), the words “in proper condition and” and “in the service to which it is put” are omitted as being covered by the words of the clause. The words “risk of personal injury” are substituted for “peril to life and limb” for clarity. The words “from time to time” are omitted as surplus. In clause (2), the words “prescribed under this chapter” are substituted for “in accordance with the provisions of this section” and “prescribed in the rules and regulations provided for in this section” for consistency and to eliminate unnecessary words.

§ 20503. Amending regulations and changing requirements

The Secretary of Transportation may amend a regulation or change a requirement applicable to a railroad carrier for installing, maintaining, inspecting, or repairing a signal system under this chapter—