

and any amounts collected under this section shall be credited directly to the Railroad Safety and Operations account of the Federal Railroad Administration and shall remain available until expended for the repair, operation, and maintenance of automated track inspection cars and equipment in connection with the automated track inspection program.

(Added Pub. L. 114-94, div. A, title XI, § 11413(a), Dec. 4, 2015, 129 Stat. 1688.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Oct. 1, 2015, see section 1003 of Pub. L. 114-94, set out as an Effective Date of 2015 Amendment note under section 5313 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

SUBCHAPTER II—PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF SAFETY

§ 20131. Restricted access to rolling equipment

The Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe regulations and issue orders that may be necessary to require that when railroad carrier employees (except train or yard crews) assigned to inspect, test, repair, or service rolling equipment have to work on, under, or between that equipment, every manually operated switch, including each crossover switch, providing access to the track on which the equipment is located is lined against movement to that track and secured by an effective locking device that can be removed only by the class or craft of employees performing the inspection, testing, repair, or service.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 872.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
20131	45:431(g) (1st sentence cl. (1)).	Oct. 16, 1970, Pub. L. 91-458, 84 Stat. 971, §202(g) (1st sentence cl. (1)); added July 8, 1976, Pub. L. 94-348, §5(b), 90 Stat. 820.

The words “within 180 days after July 8, 1976” are omitted as expired.

§ 20132. Visible markers for rear cars

(a) GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe regulations and issue orders that may be necessary to require that—

(1) the rear car of each passenger and commuter train has at least one highly visible marker that is lighted during darkness and when weather conditions restrict clear visibility; and

(2) the rear car of each freight train has highly visible markers during darkness and when weather conditions restrict clear visibility.

(b) PREEMPTION.—Notwithstanding section 20106 of this title, subsection (a) of this section does not prohibit a State from continuing in force a law, regulation, or order in effect on July 8, 1976, related to lighted markers on the rear car of a freight train except to the extent it would cause the car to be in violation of this section.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 873.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
20132(a)	45:431(g) (1st sentence cls. (2), (3)).	Oct. 16, 1970, Pub. L. 91-458, 84 Stat. 971, §202(g) (1st sentence cls. (2), (3), last sentence); added July 8, 1976, Pub. L. 94-348, §5(b), 90 Stat. 820.
20132(b)	45:431(g) (last sentence).	

In subsection (a), before clause (1), the words “within 180 days after July 8, 1976” are omitted as expired.

§ 20133. Passenger cars

(a) MINIMUM STANDARDS.—The Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe regulations establishing minimum standards for the safety of cars used by railroad carriers to transport passengers. Before prescribing such regulations, the Secretary shall consider—

- (1) the crashworthiness of the cars;
- (2) interior features (including luggage restraints, seat belts, and exposed surfaces) that may affect passenger safety;
- (3) maintenance and inspection of the cars;
- (4) emergency response procedures and equipment; and
- (5) any operating rules and conditions that directly affect safety not otherwise governed by regulations.

The Secretary may make applicable some or all of the standards established under this subsection to cars existing at the time the regulations are prescribed, as well as to new cars, and the Secretary shall explain in the rulemaking document the basis for making such standards applicable to existing cars.

(b) INITIAL AND FINAL REGULATIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall prescribe initial regulations under subsection (a) within 3 years after November 2, 1994. The initial regulations may exempt equipment used by tourist, historic, scenic, and excursion railroad carriers to transport passengers.

(2) The Secretary shall prescribe final regulations under subsection (a) within 5 years after November 2, 1994.

(c) PERSONNEL.—The Secretary may establish within the Department of Transportation 2 additional full-time equivalent positions beyond the number permitted under existing law to assist with the drafting, prescribing, and implementation of regulations under this section.

(d) CONSULTATION.—In prescribing regulations, issuing orders, and making amendments under this section, the Secretary may consult with Amtrak, public authorities operating railroad passenger service, other railroad carriers transporting passengers, organizations of passengers, and organizations of employees. A consultation is not subject to chapter 10 of title 5, but minutes of the consultation shall be placed in the public docket of the regulatory proceeding.

(Pub. L. 103-272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 873; Pub. L. 103-440, title II, §215(a), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4623; Pub. L. 104-287, §5(47), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3393; Pub. L. 117-286, §4(a)(306), Dec. 27, 2022, 136 Stat. 4339.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
20133(a)	45:431(h)(1)(A) (1st, last sentences), (B), (4).	Oct. 16, 1970, Pub. L. 91-458, 84 Stat. 971, §202(h); added Oct. 10, 1980, Pub. L. 96-423, §14, 94 Stat. 1817; Jan. 14, 1983, Pub. L. 97-468, §702(a), 96 Stat. 2579.
20133(b)	45:431(h)(1)(A) (2d, 3d sentences), (2).	
20133(c)	45:431(h)(3).	

In subsection (a), the words “within one year after January 14, 1983” and “initial” are omitted as obsolete. The text of 45:431(h)(1)(B) is omitted as executed. The words “after a hearing in accordance with subsection (b) of this section” are omitted as surplus because of section 20103(e) of the revised title.

In subsections (b) and (c), the word “subsequent” is omitted as surplus.

In subsection (c), the word “Amtrak” is substituted for “National Railroad Passenger Corporation” for consistency in this subtitle. The word “regulatory” is substituted for “rulemaking” for consistency in the revised title.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 117-286 substituted “chapter 10 of title 5,” for “the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.),”.

1996—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 104-287, §5(47)(A), substituted “November 2, 1994” for “the date of enactment of the Federal Railroad Safety Authorization Act of 1994”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 104-287, §5(47)(B), substituted “November 2, 1994” for “such date of enactment”.

1994—Pub. L. 103-440 amended section generally, substituting present provisions for provisions requiring the Secretary to take administrative action to ensure that the construction, operation, and maintenance of passenger rail equipment maximize the safety of passengers, and providing for areas of consideration and concentration, as well as consultation with Amtrak.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EMERGENCY LIGHTING

Pub. L. 117-58, div. B, title II, §22406, Nov. 15, 2021, 135 Stat. 738, provided that: “Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 15, 2021], the Secretary [of Transportation] shall initiate a rulemaking to require that all rail carriers providing intercity passenger rail transportation or commuter rail passenger transportation (as such terms are defined in section 24102 of title 49, United States Code), develop and implement periodic inspection plans to ensure that passenger equipment offered for revenue service complies with the requirements under part 238 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, including ensuring that, in the event of a loss of power, there is adequate emergency lighting available to allow passengers, crew members, and first responders—

- “(1) to see and orient themselves;
- “(2) to identify obstacles;
- “(3) to safely move throughout the rail car; and
- “(4) to evacuate safely.”

PASSENGER RAIL VEHICLE OCCUPANT PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Pub. L. 117-58, div. B, title II, §22420, Nov. 15, 2021, 135 Stat. 749, provided that:

“(a) STUDY.—The Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration shall conduct a study of the potential installation and use in new passenger rail rolling stock of passenger rail vehicle occupant protection systems that could materially improve passenger safety.

“(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Administrator shall consider minimizing the risk of secondary collisions, including estimating the costs and benefits of the new requirements, through the use of—

- “(1) occupant restraint systems;
- “(2) air bags;
- “(3) emergency window retention systems; and
- “(4) interior designs, including seats, baggage restraints, and table configurations and attachments.

“(c) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 15, 2021], the Administrator shall—

- “(1) submit a report summarizing the findings of the study conducted pursuant to subsection (a) to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives; and
- “(2) publish such report on the website of the Federal Railroad Administration.

“(d) RULEMAKING.—Following the completion of the study required under subsection (a), and after considering the costs and benefits of the proposed protection systems, the Administrator may promulgate a rule that establishes standards for the use of occupant protection systems in new passenger rail rolling stock.”

§ 20134. Grade crossings and railroad rights of way

(a) GENERAL.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary of Transportation shall maintain a coordinated effort to develop and carry out solutions to the railroad grade crossing problem and measures to protect pedestrians in densely populated areas along railroad rights of way. To carry out this subsection, the Secretary may use the authority of the Secretary under this chapter and over highway, traffic, and motor vehicle safety and over highway construction. The Secretary may purchase items of nominal value and distribute them to the public without charge as part of an educational or awareness program to accomplish the purposes of this section and of any other sections of this title related to improving the safety of highway-rail crossings and to preventing trespass on railroad rights of way, and the Secretary shall prescribe guidelines for the administration of this authority.

(b) SIGNAL SYSTEMS AND OTHER DEVICES.—Not later than June 22, 1989, the Secretary shall prescribe regulations and issue orders to ensure the safe maintenance, inspection, and testing of signal systems and devices at railroad highway grade crossings.

(c) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish demonstration projects to evaluate whether accidents and incidents involving trains would be reduced by—

- (A) reflective markers installed on the road surface or on a signal post at railroad grade crossings;
- (B) stop signs or yield signs installed at grade crossings; and
- (C) speed bumps or rumble strips installed on the road surfaces at the approaches to grade crossings.

(2) Not later than June 22, 1990, the Secretary shall submit a report on the results of the demonstration projects to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.