

## **Signal Statute: 49 U.S.C. 20501, et seq.**

### **§ 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.

### **§ 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.

### **§ 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--

**(1)** when the carrier files with the Secretary a request for the amendment or change and the Secretary approves the request; or

**(2)** on the Secretary's own initiative for good cause shown.

### **§ 20504. Inspection, testing, and investigation**

**(a) Systems in use.--(1)** The Secretary of Transportation may--

- (A) inspect and test a signal system used by a railroad carrier; and
- (B) decide whether the system is in safe operating condition.

(2) In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may employ only an individual who--

- (A) has no interest in a patented article required to be used on or with a signal system; and
- (B) has no financial interest in a railroad carrier or in a concern dealing in railroad supplies.

**(b) Systems submitted for investigation and testing.**--The Secretary may investigate, test, and report on the use of and need for a signal system, without cost to the United States Government, when the system is submitted in completed shape for investigation and testing.

#### **§ 20505. Reports of malfunctions and accidents**

In the way and to the extent required by the Secretary of Transportation, a railroad carrier shall report to the Secretary a failure of a signal system to function as intended. If the failure results in an accident or incident causing injury to an individual or property that is required to be reported under regulations prescribed by the Secretary, the carrier owning or maintaining the signal system shall report to the Secretary immediately in writing the fact of the accident or incident.