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Clearances on Railroads With Reference to Overhead and Side Structures and Parallel Tracks

Part I

Definitions

Sec. 16-140-1. Definitions

For the purposes of these regulations, definitions as hereinafter prescribed will govern.

(1) "Height of a freight car" is the distance between the top of the rail and the top of the running board.

(2) "Side of a freight car" is that part of appurtenance of a car at the maximum distance measured at right angles from the center line of the car.

(3) "Width of a freight car" is twice the distance from the center line to the side of the car as defined herein.

(4) "Overhead clearance" is the normal distance from the plane of the top of the rails to a structure or obstruction above.

(5) "Side clearance" is the shortest distance from the center line of track to a structure or obstruction at the side of track.

(6) "Main track" is a track on which the authorized speed of trains is in excess of thirty miles per hour.

Part II

Overhead Clearances

Sec. 16-140-2. All tracks

The minimum overhead clearance above all railroad tracks shall be twenty-two feet, six inches.

(Effective April 2, 1973)

Sec. 16-140-3.

Repealed April 2, 1973.

Sec. 16-140-4.

Repealed, April 2, 1973.

Sec. 16-140-5. Tracks entering buildings

The overhead clearance above the top of the rail of such tracks located at the entrance and inside of buildings shall not be less than eighteen feet. All cars, trains, motors, engines or other equipment shall be brought to a stop before entering such buildings.

Sec. 16-140-6. Side tracks

On all tracks except main line, passing siding or yard tracks, the minimum overhead clearance may be reduced to not less than sixteen feet six inches, provided all trains on such tracks shall come to a full stop before passing under a structure erected pursuant to this section, and provided the railroad company shall issue an operating rule forbidding any train employee or other employee from getting upon or working upon the roof of any railway car, caboose or locomotive of a train on such tracks when passing under a structure erected pursuant to this section.

Sec. 16-140-7. Equipment for electric operation excepted

The clearance provided in this part shall not apply to the electric wires, signals and equipment required over present and future tracks for the operation of trains by electric energy, provided the carriers concerned shall promulgate and enforce rules to comply with an order promulgated by the public service commission of New York and concurred in by this commission which prohibits any employee from being on the top of cars while they are being operated under lower clearances than provided in this section.

Part III

Side Clearances

Sec. 16-140-8. Applicability

Minimum side clearances from the center line of tangent railroad tracks except as hereinafter prescribed, shall be as shown below.

(Effective April 2, 1973)

Sec. 16-140-9. Minimum clearance, generally

All structures and obstructions above the top of the rail except those hereinafter specifically mentioned shall have a minimum side clearance of eight feet six inches.

Sec. 16-140-10. Platforms

(a) Side clearances at platforms, except platforms adjacent to main line or passing tracks, four feet or less above the top of the rail may be reduced to six feet six inches on one side of such tracks only where a full clearance of eight feet, six inches is maintained on the opposite side of the track, or the track center distance to an adjacent track is not less than fourteen feet.

(b) Platforms four feet six inches or less above the top of the rail, when used principally for loading or unloading refrigerator cars, shall be constructed at least eight feet from the center line of track.

(c) Platforms previously constructed at less than the clearance herein prescribed may be extended at such existing clearance, unless extension is in connection with the reconstruction of the original platform.

(d) Low passenger platforms not over eight inches above the top of the rail shall not be less than five feet two inches from the center line of track.

(e) High level passenger platforms not over four feet two inches above the plane of the top of the rails on the adjacent track shall not be less than five feet seven inches from the center line of the track.

(Effective April 2, 1973)

Sec. 16-140-11. Tracks entering buildings

Side clearances, other than for platforms, on sidings only, at entrances to and inside of warehouse and industrial buildings shall be not less than eight feet from the center line of track.

Sec. 16-140-12. Switch boxes and equipment

Switch boxes, switch operating mechanism and accessories necessary for the control and operation of signals and interlockers four inches or less above the top rail shall be not less than three feet from the center line of track.

Sec. 16-140-13. Signal and switch stands

The center of signal and switch stands three feet or less above the top of the rail and located between tracks, when not practicable to provide clearances otherwise prescribed in these regulations, shall be not less than six feet from the center line of track.

Sec. 16-140-14. Bridges of main line tracks

The side clearances for through bridges carrying main line tracks may be decreased to the extent defined by a line extending vertically one foot and five feet nine inches laterally from the center line of track, then diagonally to a point three feet nine inches vertically above the top of the rail and six feet six inches laterally from the center line of track, then horizontally for a distance one foot six inches at a height of three feet nine inches above the top of the rail to a point eight feet from the center line of track, then vertically to conform with other sections of these regulations.

Sec. 16-140-15. Tunnels; water and oil columns

Tunnels, water columns and oil columns shall be not less than eight feet from the center line of track.

Sec. 16-140-16. Miscellaneous obstructions

The clearances for (a) water barrel platforms and refuge platforms on bridges and trestles not provided with walkways, (b) handrails, (c) water barrels, (d) water columns, (e) oil columns, (f) cattle guards and (g) stock chutes, when all or portions thereof are four feet or less above the top of the rail, may be decreased to the extent defined by a line extending diagonally upward from a point level with the top of the rail and five feet distant laterally from the center line of track to a point four feet above the top of the rail and eight feet distant laterally from the center line of track; provided the minimum clearance for handrails and water barrels on bridges with walkways shall be seven feet nine inches, and provided the minimum clearance for fences of cattle guards shall be six feet nine inches.

Sec. 16-140-17. Exception re handrails and water barrels

The lesser clearances authorized in section 16-140-16 of these regulations, provided for handrails and water barrels, shall not be applicable to through bridges where the work of trainmen or yardmen requires them to be upon the decks of such bridges for the purpose of coupling and uncoupling cars in the performance of switching service on a switching lead.

Sec. 16-140-18. Exception re mail cranes

The side clearances specified herein shall not apply to mail cranes during such time as the arms of such mail cranes are supporting a mail sack for delivery, provided the top arm is not then higher than ten feet eight inches above the top of the rail and neither arm extends within six feet five inches from the center line of track.

Sec. 16-140-19. Exception re fences

Side clearances specified herein shall not apply to intertrack fences located on the center line between tracks.

Sec. 16-140-20. Curve tracks

All minimum side clearances prescribed in this part are for tangent tracks. Structures adjacent to curve tracks shall have an additional minimum side clearance compensating for the curvature.

Part IV

Overhead and Side Clearances

Sec. 16-140-21. Decrease of clearances

The overhead and side clearances prescribed in these regulations may be decreased to the extent of a line extending diagonally downward from a point four feet from the center line of the track and twenty-two feet six inches above the top of the rail to a point eight feet six inches from the center line of the track at fourteen feet above the top of the rail. These clearances also apply to tracks located at entrances to and inside buildings.

(Effective April 2, 1973)

Sec. 16-140-21a. Exceptions

Structures or projects constructed or approved prior to the effective date of this regulation may be maintained and extended at the existing or approved clearances.

(Effective April 2, 1973)

Sec. 16-140-22. Canopies over freight platforms

Canopies over freight platforms may be constructed not less than four feet from the center line of track, provided: (a) The height of such canopies shall be at least seventeen feet six inches above the top of the rail, and (b) (1) minimum horizontal clearance of eight feet six inches shall be maintained between the center line of track and any structure on the side of the track opposite the canopy, or (2) minimum horizontal clearance of fourteen feet shall be maintained from the center line of track to the center line of adjacent track.

Part V

Clearance Between Parallel Tracks

Sec. 16-140-23. Main line and yard tracks, generally

The minimum distance between the center lines of parallel main line tracks shall be not less than thirteen feet and for yard tracks not less than fourteen feet, except as hereinafter provided.

Sec. 16-140-24. Tracks adjacent to main line or passing tracks

The center line of any track, except a main track or a passing track, parallel and adjacent to a main track or a passing track, shall be at least fifteen feet from the center line of such main track or passing track; provided, where a passing track is adjacent to and at least fifteen feet distant from the main track, any other track may be constructed adjacent to such passing track with clearance of not less than fourteen feet.

Sec. 16-140-25. Ladder tracks

The center line of any ladder track, constructed parallel to any other adjacent track, shall have a clearance of not less than eighteen feet from the center line of such other track, except that parallel ladder tracks shall have a clearance of not less than nineteen feet center line to center line.

Sec. 16-140-26. Team, house and industry tracks

The minimum distance between the center lines of parallel team, house and industry tracks shall be not less than thirteen feet.

Sec. 16-140-27. Extension of existing tracks

Tracks constructed prior to May 1, 1956, may be extended without increasing distances between tracks.

Part VI**Other Conditions and Obstructions Adjacent to Tracks****Sec. 16-140-28. Articles on adjacent ground or platform**

No merchandise, material or other articles shall knowingly be permitted to remain piled or assembled on the ground or on platforms adjacent to any track at a distance less than eight feet six inches from the center line of track.

Sec. 16-140-29. Walkways between tracks

The space between tracks ordinarily used by train and yardmen and other employees as a walkway in the discharge of their duties and the space beside such tracks within eight feet six inches of the center line thereof shall be kept in a reasonably suitable condition for such purpose.

Part VII**Lesser Clearances Created Prior to May 1, 1956****Sec. 16-140-30. Minimum clearances on relocation or reconstruction**

Except as otherwise provided herein, where the overhead or side clearances between a track and any building, structure or facility are less than the minimum prescribed in these regulations, but were created prior to May 1, 1956, the minimum clearances prescribed herein shall be provided whenever the building, structure or facility is relocated or reconstructed.

Part VIII**Exemptions****Sec. 16-140-31. Construction, maintenance and operation material or equipment**

Nothing herein shall be construed as preventing the movement or distribution of material over tracks when such material is necessary in the construction or maintenance of such tracks, nor in the movement of special work equipment used in the construction, maintenance or operation of the railroad, provided such movements shall be carried on under conditions reasonably necessary to provide for the safety of all concerned.

Sec. 16-140-32. Engine houses, shops and facilities

The clearances provided in these regulations shall not apply to engine houses, shops or engine house facilities.

Sec. 16-140-33. Emergencies

No restricted clearance set out herein shall apply to temporary construction made necessary on any construction project or temporary emergency conditions caused by derailments, washouts or other unavoidable disasters.