

Title 27. Transportation

Chapter V. Arkansas Department of Transportation, State Highway

Commission

Subchapter B. Design and Construction

Part 97. Railroad Clearance Rules

Codification Notes. This part as promulgated prior to codification into the Code of Arkansas Rules provided as follows: "Effective January 1, 1956"

Subpart 1. Generally

27 CAR § 97-101. Special provisions.

(a) All existing structures, operating appurtenances, pole lines, service facilities, and track arrangements shall be exempt from this part except as hereinafter provided.

(b)(1) No change in track location or elevation shall thereafter be made which will reduce existing vertical or horizontal structural clearances below the minimum specified in this part.

(2) See subsection (d) of this section.

(c)(1) No repair or maintenance work shall thereafter be done on structures, facilities, or appurtenances adjacent to tracks which will reduce existing vertical or horizontal structural clearance below the minimum specified in this part.

(2) See subsection (d) of this section.

(d) As used in subsections (b) and (c) of this section, minimum clearance is described as follows: starting at the center line of track at top of rail and extending five feet six inches (5' 6") both sides horizontally and level therewith, thence upward diagonally to a point four feet (4') above top of rail and eight feet (8') laterally from center line of track, thence vertically to a point sixteen feet (16') above top of rail, thence diagonally upward to a point of twenty-two feet no inches (22' 0") above top of rail and four feet (4') horizontally from center of track, thence horizontally to center of track.

(e) Where an existing structure does not provide clearance equal to the minimum of subsection (d) of this section or such other minima less than that which may be herein specified, the portion of the structure producing the impaired clearance may be repaired and maintained by partial replacements, which shall in no case reduce the clearance available at the time this part takes effect.

(f) When the owner shall replace in its entirety the portion of a structure which has not previously provided standard clearance, the rebuilt portion must, when complete, provide the full standard clearance of this part, unless otherwise ordered by the State Highway Commission.

(g)(1) Existing tracks of all kinds may be maintained by re-ballasting, resurfacing, and replacing rails and ties subject to the limitations of subsection (b) of this section.

(2) Where existing yards are completely replaced or are partially replaced as a unit or section of a master plan, the arrangement must meet the provisions of this part both as to track centers and clearance to structures and other facilities being built in connection with and as a part of such plan.

(3) Existing structures which are to remain and which do not provide the minimum clearance of subsection (d) of this section with respect to the proposed new tracks must be approved by the commission for exemption from the terms of this part.

(4) Existing tracks having less vertical clearance than that specified in subsection (d) of this section may be maintained but the top of the rail may not be raised without a corresponding raise of the overhead structure so as to maintain the existing available clearance.

(5) Existing tracks having less horizontal clearance between them than is herein specified for new construction or having less horizontal clearance to structures than is specified in subsection (d) of this section may be maintained but they may not be shifted horizontally to reduce either the existing track centers or the existing structural clearance.

(h) "Overhead clearance" means the vertical distance from the top of the highest rail to a structure or obstruction above.

(i) "Side clearance" means the shortest horizontal distance from the center line of

track to a structure or obstruction at the side of the track.

(j) "Track clearance" means the shortest horizontal distance between the center lines of adjacent tracks.

(k) "Icing platforms". The term "icing platforms" shall include structures used in performing the service of icing, precooling, heating, ventilating, and servicing of cars used in the handling of commodities requiring the above service.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 27-65-107.

27 CAR § 97-102. Overhead clearances.

(a)(1) Overhead clearance in general: twenty-two feet no inches (22' 0").

(2) Overhead clearances may be reduced to comply with subsections (d) and (e) of this section.

(b)(1) Overhead clearance in building: eighteen feet no inches (18' 0").

(2) The overhead clearance inside of enclosed buildings may be reduced to eighteen feet (18'), provided that this clearance shall apply only to tracks terminating within the building or in the immediate plant area if said tracks should extend through the building.

(3) Overhead clearance of doors may be reduced to seventeen feet no inches (17' 0").

(4) **Note.** Engine houses and shop buildings are exempt from this section.

(c)(1) Overhead clearance in tunnels: twenty-three feet no inches (23' 0").

(2) The minimum overhead clearance in tunnels may be decreased to the extent defined by the half-circumference of a circle having a radius of eight feet (8') and tangent to a horizontal line twenty-three feet (23') above the top of rail at a point directly over the center line of track.

(d)(1) Overhead clearance in through bridges: twenty-two feet no inches (22' 0").

(2) See 27 CAR § 97-101(d).

(3) Overhead clearance in through bridges will require tell-tales if built with less than twenty-two feet (22') overhead clearance.

(e)(1) Overhead clearance, all other structures: twenty-two feet no inches (22' 0").

(2) Except as herein specifically provided, all other structures shall have the clearance starting at the center of track at top of rail and extending six feet (6') both sides horizontally and level therewith, thence diagonally upward to a point four feet (4') above top of rail and eight feet six inches (8' 6") laterally from center line of track, thence vertically upward to a point fifteen feet nine inches (15' 9") above top of rail, thence diagonally upward to a point twenty-two feet (22') above top of rail and four feet (4') horizontally from center of track, thence horizontally to center of track.

(3) Overhead clearance for other structures other than buildings may be reduced if overhead tell-tales are maintained for clearances less than twenty-two feet no inches (22' 0"), provided that in such cases any reduction of clearance below twenty-two feet no inches (22' 0") must be approved by the State Highway Commission.

(f) **Overhead clearance of wires.** All wires in general shall have a minimum vertical clearance of not less than that specified by the National Electrical Safety Code as published by the United States Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards, or any revisions or amendments thereto.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 27-65-107.

27 CAR § 97-103. Side clearances.

(a)(1)(A) Side clearance in general: eight feet six inches (8' 6").

(B) **Note.** It is recommended that, wherever practicable, all posts, pipes, warning signs, and other small obstructions be given a side clearance of ten feet (10').

(2)(A) Side clearance may be reduced to comply with subsection (k) of this section.

(B) **Side clearances at platforms – Note.** Following clearances to apply to both main line and side tracks unless otherwise indicated.

(3) Engine houses, shop buildings, and passenger platforms, at car floor height, are exempt from this section.

(b) Platforms, eight inches (8") or less above top of rail: five feet no inches (5' 0").

(c)(1) Platforms: four feet (4') or less above top of rail except as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

(2)(A) Freight platforms on side tracks: five feet nine inches (5' 9") or eight feet no inches (8' 0").

(B)(i) No intermediate clearance permitted, except compensation for curvature.

(ii) See subsection (u) of this section.

(C) If side clearance is reduced to five feet nine inches (5' 9") on one side, a full clearance of eight feet no inches (8' 0") shall be maintained on the opposite side.

(D) Freight platforms on main line tracks or eight feet six inches (8' 6") passing tracks.

(d)(1) Platforms: more than four feet (4') above top of rail.

(2) On side tracks: eight feet no inches (8' 0").

(3) On main line and passing tracks: eight feet six inches (8' 6").

(e)(1) Icing platforms and supports: six feet eight inches (6' 8").

(2) Limited to side tracks only.

(3) The dimension of six feet eight inches (6' 8") shall apply to the platform at eave height on car.

(4) The supports of this platform shall provide clearance of eight feet (8').

(f)(1) Platforms, other than above: eight feet no inches (8' 0").

(2) Side tracks only.

(3) **Note.** Retractable platforms, either sliding or hinged, which are attached to a permanent structure, must be so constructed that, when retracted or in a nonworking position and firmly secured or anchored, the resulting clearance shall not be less than the clearances provided in this section.

(g)(1) Platforms, combination of any above: see subdivision (g)(2) of this section.

(2) **Note.** Platforms defined under subsection (b) of this section may be combined with either subsection (c) or (d) of this section provided that the lower platform presents a level surface to the face of the wall of the platform with which it is

combined.

(3) No other combinations will be permitted.

(h)(1) Platforms, extension of existing platforms: see subdivision (h)(2) of this section.

(2) **Note.** Platforms which were constructed at prevailing clearances prior to the effective date of this part may be extended at existing clearances.

(i) Side clearance, bridges and tunnels: eight feet no inches (8' 0").

(j) Bridges and tunnels, upper section: side clearances in tunnels and through bridges may be decreased to the extent defined in 27 CAR § 97-102(c) and (d).

(k)(1) Bridges, lower section and structures: four feet (4') high or less.

(2) Through bridges supporting tract affected, hand rails, water barrels, and refuge platforms on bridges and trestles, water columns, oil columns, block signals, cattle guards, or portions thereof, four feet (4') or less above top of rail may have clearances decreased to the extent defined by a line extending diagonally upward from a point level with the top of rail and five feet six inches (5' 6") distant laterally from center line of track to a point four feet (4') above top of rail and eight feet (8') distant laterally from center line of track.

(3) **Note.** The clearances authorized in this subsection are not permitted on through bridges where the work of trainmen and yardmen require them to be upon the decks of such bridges for the purpose of coupling or uncoupling cars in the performance of switching service on a switching lead.

(l)(1) Side clearance, interlocking mechanism, switch boxes, etc.: three feet no inches (3' 0").

(2) Switch boxes, switch operation mechanism necessary for the control and operation of signals, and interlockers projecting four inches (4") or less above top of rail.

(m)(1) Side clearance, mail cranes and train order stands: eight feet six inches (8' 6").

(2) When not in operative position.

(n)(1) Side clearance, oil and water columns: eight feet no inches (8' 0").

(2) See subsection (k) of this section or eight feet (8').

(o) Side clearance, poles supporting trolley contact: eight feet three inches (8' 3").

(p)(1) Side clearance, poles other than trolley poles: eight feet six inches (8' 6").

(2) **Note.** Except that the clearance for poles, other than trolley poles, covered by and designated in the National Electrical Safety Code, as published by the United States Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards, and any revision or amendment thereof or thereto, shall be governed by the provisions and the exceptions set forth in said code or in any such revision or amendment, relating to clearances for such poles from railroad tracks.

(q)(1) Side clearance, signals and switch stands: six feet no inches (6' 0").

(2) Three feet (3') high or less above top of rail when located between tracks or where not practicable to provide clearances otherwise prescribed in this part.

(r)(1) Side clearance, signals and switch stands other than above: eight feet three inches (8' 3").

(2) Switch stands over three feet (3') high.

(3) Signals and signal poles higher than three feet (3') above top of rail shall have the portions thereof higher than four feet (4') above top of rail and less than sixteen feet (16') above top of rail eight feet six inches (8' 6") from the center of track.

(s)(1) In buildings and entrances thereto, at doors: seven feet no inches (7' 0").

(2) Inside of buildings, clearance may be reduced on one (1) side of the track to five feet nine inches (5' 9") provided eight feet (8') is maintained on the opposite side.

(t)(1) Side clearance, doors.

(2) Warehouse doors: seven feet no inches (7' 0").

(3) Side clearance at doors may be reduced to five feet nine inches (5' 9") on one (1) side of track only, provided a full clearance of eight feet three inches (8' 3") is maintained on the opposite side.

(u)(1) Side clearance on curved track.

(2) The horizontal clearances specified herein relate to tracks on tangent.

(3) On curved track, the clearances shall be increased to allow for the

overhang and the tilting of a car eighty-five feet (85') long, sixty feet (60') between centers of trucks, and fourteen feet (14') high.

(v) Side clearance, material or merchandise and other articles adjacent to tracks: eight feet six inches (8' 6").

Authority. Arkansas Code § 27-65-107.

27 CAR § 97-104. Track clearances.

(a)(1) Track clearances, in general: fourteen feet no inches (14' 0").

(2) The minimum distance between the center lines of parallel standard gauge railroad tracks, which are used or proposed to be used for transporting freight cars, shall be fourteen feet (14'), except as hereinafter prescribed.

(b) Track clearances, main and subsidiary tracks.

(1) Two (2) parallel main tracks: fourteen feet no inches (14' 0").

(2) Main and passing tracks: fourteen feet no inches (14' 0").

(3) When another track is constructed adjacent to a passing track, the clearance may be as prescribed in subsection (a) of this section.

(c)(1) Track clearances, parallel team, house, or industry tracks: thirteen feet no inches (13' 0").

(2) Minimum clearances between center lines of parallel team, house, or industry tracks shall be thirteen feet (13').

(d) Track clearances, ladder tracks. Minimum clearances shall be as follows:

(1) Ladder track and any parallel track, except another ladder track: seventeen feet no inches (17' 0"); and

(2) Ladder track and another parallel ladder track: twenty feet no inches (20' 0").

(e) **Track clearances, existing tracks.** Existing tracks may be extended at clearances prevailing prior to the effective date of this part.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 27-65-107.

27 CAR § 97-105. Public roads, highways, and street covers over or under tracks.

(a) Where a public road, highway, or street crosses above any railroad or street railroad track used or proposed to be used for transporting freight cars, the minimum overhead and side clearance in general provided in this part for such tracks must be observed.

(b)(1) Where a railroad or street railroad crosses above any public road, highway, or street, a minimum overhead clearance of fourteen feet (14') shall be provided above the surface of such:

- (A) Road;
- (B) Highway; or
- (C) Street.

(2) Where a railroad or a street railroad crosses any highway of the state highway system or any street or highway of the Federal-aid urban systems, a minimum overhead clearance of sixteen feet (16') shall be provided above the surface of such highway or street.

(c)(1) Where a railroad or street railroad crosses above any public road, highway, or street on a single supporting span, a minimum width of twenty-six feet (26') shall be provided for the opening for such:

- (A) Public road;
- (B) Highway; or
- (C) Street.

(2) Where a railroad or street railroad crosses any highway of the state highway system or any street or highway of the Federal-aid urban systems on a single supporting span, a minimum width of thirty feet (30') shall be provided for the opening of such highway or street.

(3) Where two (2) or more supporting spans are used for such an opening, the minimum widths above specified shall be provided for each of such supporting spans.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 27-65-107.

27 CAR § 97-106. General conditions.

(a) Exemptions.

(1) Exemptions from any of the requirements contained herein will be considered by the State Highway Commission upon proper application from the:

- (A) Carriers;
- (B) Industries; or
- (C) Other interested persons.

(2) A request for such exemption must be accompanied by a full statement of the conditions existing and the reasons why such exemption is asked.

(3) Any exemption so granted shall be limited to the particular case covered by the application.

(b) Emergencies. No restricted clearance set out herein shall apply to falsework, shoo-fly tracks, or other temporary emergency conditions caused by:

- (1) Derailments;
- (2) Washouts;
- (3) Slides; or
- (4) Other unavoidable disasters.

(c) Construction materials. No restricted clearances set out herein shall apply to ballast, track material, or construction material unloaded on and adjacent to tracks for contemplated use thereon or in the immediate vicinity, nor shall they apply to falsework or temporary construction necessary on any construction project.

(d) Modifications. The commission reserves the right to modify, after public hearing, any of the provisions of this part when, in the opinion of the commission, public interest would be served by so doing.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 27-65-107.