

**§ 492. Bridge as post route; limitation as to charges against Government; telegraph and telephone lines**

Any bridge built in accordance with the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title, shall be a lawful structure and shall be recognized and known as a post route, upon which no higher charge shall be made for the transmission over the same of the mails, the troops, and the munitions of war of the United States than the rate per mile paid for the transportation over any railroad, street railway, or public highway leading to said bridge; and the United States shall have the right to construct, maintain, and repair, without any charge therefor, telegraph and telephone lines across and upon said bridge and its approaches; and equal privileges in the use of said bridge and its approaches shall be granted to all telegraph and telephone companies.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, § 2, 34 Stat. 85.)

**§ 493. Use of railroad bridges by other railroad companies**

All railroad companies desiring the use of any railroad bridge built in accordance with the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title, shall be entitled to equal rights and privileges relative to the passage of railway trains or cars over the same and over the approaches thereto upon payment of a reasonable compensation for such use; and in case of any disagreement between the parties in regard to the terms of such use or the sums to be paid all matters at issue shall be determined by the Secretary of Transportation upon hearing the allegations and proofs submitted to him.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, § 3, 34 Stat. 85; Pub. L. 97-449, § 2(d)(1), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2440.)

AMENDMENTS

1983—Pub. L. 97-449 substituted “Secretary of Transportation” for “Secretary of War”. See Transfer of Functions note below.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Functions, powers, and duties of Secretary of the Army [formerly War] and other offices and officers of Department of the Army [formerly War] under this section to extent that they relate generally to location and clearances of bridges and causeways in navigable waters of United States transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by Pub. L. 89-670, § 6(g)(6)(B), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 941. Pub. L. 97-449 amended this section to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(B) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(B).

**§ 494. Obstruction of navigation; alterations and removals; lights and signals; draws**

No bridge erected or maintained under the provisions of sections 491 to 494 and 495 to 498 of this title, shall at any time unreasonably obstruct the free navigation of the waters over which it is constructed, and if any bridge erected in accordance with the provisions of said sections, shall, in the opinion of the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating at any time unreasonably obstruct such navigation, either on account of insufficient

height, width of span, or otherwise, or if there be difficulty in passing the draw opening or the drawspan of such bridge by rafts, steamboats, or other water craft, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating after giving the parties interested reasonable opportunity to be heard, to notify the persons owning or controlling such bridge to so alter the same as to render navigation through or under it reasonably free, easy, and unobstructed, stating in such notice the changes required to be made, and prescribing in each case a reasonable time in which to make such changes, and if at the end of the time so specified the changes so required have not been made, the persons owning or controlling such bridge shall be deemed guilty of a violation of said sections; and all such alterations shall be made and all such obstructions shall be removed at the expense of the persons owning or operating said bridge. The persons owning or operating any such bridge shall maintain, at their own expense, such lights and other signals thereon as the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall prescribe. If the bridge shall be constructed with a draw, then the draw shall be opened promptly by the persons owning or operating such bridge upon reasonable signal for the passage of boats and other water craft.

(Mar. 23, 1906, ch. 1130, § 4, 34 Stat. 85; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, § 1, 37 Stat. 736; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, §§ 101-104, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7875, 60 Stat. 1097; Pub. L. 97-449, § 2(d)(1), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2440; Pub. L. 100-17, title I, § 135(a), Apr. 2, 1987, 101 Stat. 173; Pub. L. 109-241, title IX, § 902(k), July 11, 2006, 120 Stat. 568; Pub. L. 111-281, title IX, § 903(a)(9), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 3010; Pub. L. 114-120, title III, § 306(b)(2)(B), Feb. 8, 2016, 130 Stat. 55.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Act July 5, 1884, ch. 229, § 8, 23 Stat. 148, relating to authority of Secretary of War to require owners of bridges which obstruct navigation to relieve the situation or be penalized, was probably omitted from the Code as superseded by this section and section 495 of this title, which by section 498b of this title were made applicable to bridges authorized prior to March 23, 1906.

Section would seem to supersede a provision of act Aug. 7, 1882, ch. 433, § 1, 22 Stat. 309, which read as follows: “That all parties owning, occupying, or operating bridges over any navigable river shall maintain at their own expense, from sunset to sunrise, throughout the year, such lights on their bridges as may be required by the Light-House Board for the security of navigation: and in addition thereto all persons owning, occupying, or operating any bridge over any navigable river shall, in any event, maintain all lights on their bridge that may be necessary for the security of navigation.”

AMENDMENTS

2016—Pub. L. 114-120 substituted “Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating” for “Secretary of Homeland Security” in two places.

2010—Pub. L. 111-281 amended directory language of Pub. L. 109-241, § 902(k). See 2006 Amendment note below.

2006—Pub. L. 109-241, § 902(k), as amended by Pub. L. 111-281, substituted “Secretary of Homeland Security” for “Secretary of Transportation” in two places.

1987—Pub. L. 100-17 struck out last sentence relating to tolls.

1983—Pub. L. 97-449 substituted “Secretary of Transportation” for “Secretary of War” wherever appearing. See Transfer of Functions note below.