

§ 20306. Exemption for technological improvements

(a) GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b) of this section, the Secretary of Transportation may exempt from the requirements of this chapter railroad equipment or equipment that will be operated on rails, when those requirements preclude the development or implementation of more efficient railroad transportation equipment or other transportation innovations under existing law.

(b) CONDITIONS FOR EXEMPTION.—The Secretary may grant an exemption under subsection (a) of this section only on the basis of—

- (1) findings based on evidence developed at a hearing; or
- (2) an agreement between national railroad labor representatives and the developer of the new equipment or technology.

(Pub. L. 103–272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 883.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
20306	45:1013.	May 30, 1980, Pub. L. 96-254, §117, 94 Stat. 406.

In subsection (a), the words “Notwithstanding any other provision of law” and “the mandatory requirements of” are omitted as surplus. The words “existing law” are substituted for “the existing statutes” for consistency in the revised title.

In subsection (b), the words before clause (1) are added because of the restatement. Clause (1) is substituted for “after a hearing and consistent with findings based upon evidence developed therein” to eliminate unnecessary words. In clause (2), the words “an agreement” are substituted for “expressions of agreement” to eliminate unnecessary words.

CHAPTER 205—SIGNAL SYSTEMS

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§ 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.

(Pub. L. 103–272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 883.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
20501	(no source).	

This section is added to eliminate the unnecessary repetition of the words used in the definition. The definition is derived from 49 App.:26(b)–(f).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

SIGNAL PROTECTION

Pub. L. 114–94, div. A, title XI, §11408, Dec. 4, 2015, 129 Stat. 1684, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 4, 2015], the Secretary [of Transportation] shall initiate a rulemaking to require that on-track safety regulations, whenever practicable and consistent with other safety requirements and operational considerations, include requiring implementation of redundant signal protection for maintenance-of-way work crews who depend on a train dispatcher to provide signal protection.

“(b) ALTERNATIVE SAFETY MEASURES.—The Secretary shall consider exempting from any final requirements of this section each segment of track for which operations are governed by a positive train control system certified under section 20157 of title 49, United States Code, or any other safety technology or practice that would achieve an equivalent or greater level of safety in providing additional signal protection.”

§ 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.

(Pub. L. 103–272, §1(e), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 883.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
20502(a)	49 App.:26(b).	Feb. 4, 1887, ch. 104, 24 Stat. 379, §25(b); added Feb. 28, 1920, ch. 91, §441, 41 Stat. 498; restated Aug. 26, 1937, ch. 818, 50 Stat. 836; Sept. 18, 1940, ch. 722, §14(b), 54 Stat. 919; June 22, 1988, Pub. L. 100–342, §17(2), (8), 102 Stat. 635, 636.
	49 App.:1655(e)(6)(A).	Oct. 15, 1966, Pub. L. 89–670, §6(e)(6)(A), 80 Stat. 939.
20502(b)	49 App.:26(e).	Feb. 4, 1887, ch. 104, 24 Stat. 379, §25(e); added Feb. 28, 1920, ch. 91, §441, 41 Stat. 498; restated Aug. 26, 1937, ch. 818, 50 Stat. 836; Sept. 18, 1940, ch. 722, §14(b), 54 Stat. 919; June 22, 1988, Pub. L. 100–342, §17(5), 102 Stat. 636.

In this section, the words “signal system” are substituted for “block signal system, interlocking, automatic train stop, train control, and/or cab-signal devices, and/or other similar appliances, methods, and