

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Railway Management Law

Adopted by Decree No. 1216 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on February 2, 2023

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Chapter 1: Basics of Railway Management Law

Article 1 (Purpose of the Law)

The Railway Management Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aims to establish strict systems and order in the construction, protection, management, and utilization of railways, enhancing the cultural and safety aspects of railways and ensuring the transportation needs of the people's economy are fully met.

Article 2 (Definitions of Terms)

The definitions of terms in this law are as follows:

1. **Railway** refers to the roadbed, tracks, and railway structures that allow trains to travel.
2. **Roadbed** refers to the ground that supports the tracks.
3. **Track** refers to the part consisting of rails, sleepers, fasteners, and ballast.
4. **Railway structures** refer to various facilities such as railway bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, and culverts that protect or maintain the railway.

Article 3 (Classification of Railways)

Railways are classified according to their mission into main lines, branch lines, and dedicated lines, and according to their width into standard gauge, narrow gauge, and broad gauge. The standard width of railways in our country is 1,435mm.

Article 4 (Grades of Railways) Railways are graded into first, second, third, and fourth grades based on their political and economic significance, annual freight volume, and technical requirements.

Article 5 (Principle of Railway Modernization)

Railways symbolize the nation, and modernizing the nation's railways is a key goal of railway modernization. The state aims to achieve heavy-duty and high-speed railways to modernize the nation's railways.

Article 6 (Principle of Nationwide Love and Management of Railways)

Railways are the arteries of the nation and an important component of the people's economy. The state strengthens patriotic education among the people so that they cherish and love the valuable asset of the nation, the railways, and participate in railway management as rightful owners.

Article 7 (Principle of Strengthening Scientific Research)

The state firmly establishes scientific research institutions and educational institutions in the railway transportation sector, strengthens scientific research for heavy-duty and high-speed railways, trains technicians and experts, and actively adopts advanced scientific technologies and methods in railway construction and protection management.

Article 8 (Principle of Ensuring Production of Railway Equipment)

Ensuring sufficient production of railway equipment is a crucial condition for guaranteeing both the speed and quality of railway construction and protection. The state firmly establishes modern railway equipment production bases and systematically ensures the production of heavy-duty rails, concrete sleepers, railway fasteners, and railway construction equipment that meet the technical performance requirements suitable for our country's conditions.

Article 9 (Principle of Exchange and Cooperation)

The state develops exchange and cooperation with other countries and international organizations in the railway sector.

Article 10 (Guidance on Railway Management)

Guidance on railway management is provided under the unified leadership of the Cabinet by the central railway transportation guidance institution and local people's committees. The central railway transportation guidance institution and local people's committees must establish a system for railway management and regularly grasp and guide it.

Article 11 (Railway Inspection)

The central railway transportation guidance institution and relevant institutions organize biannual railway inspections and strictly summarize the defects found.

Article 12 (Supervision and Control of Railway Management)

Supervision and control of railway management are carried out by the central railway transportation guidance institution and relevant supervision and control institutions. The central railway transportation guidance institution and relevant supervision and control institutions must regularly supervise and control railway construction, protection management, and utilization.

Article 13 (Application of the Law)

This law applies to all institutions, enterprises, organizations, and citizens within the territory of the Republic. It also applies to foreign institutions, foreign investment enterprises, and foreigners in our country.

Chapter 2: Railway Construction

Article 14 (Planning of Railway Construction)

Scientific and prospective construction of the nation's railways is an important requirement for increasing the utilization rate of railways. The central railway transportation guidance institution and local people's committees must systematically carry out railway construction according to the national land construction master plan.

Article 15 (Preparation of Railway Construction Plans)

Railway construction plans are prepared when new railways are laid or when the technical condition of existing railways is to be improved.

Article 16 (Institutions Preparing Railway Construction Plans)

Plans related to new railway construction are prepared by the central planning guidance institution, and plans related to railway improvement are prepared by the relevant railway transportation institution. The planning institution must properly determine the priority of railway construction and plan to concentrate on constructing railways with significant economic importance.

Article 17 (Review of Railway Construction Plans)

The planning institution must agree on the railway construction plans with relevant institutions and submit them for review to the Cabinet or the central planning guidance institution, depending on the subject. The central planning guidance institution and the central railway transportation guidance institution must promptly deliver the approved railway construction plans to the railway construction enterprises.

Article 18 (Preparation of Railway Construction Designs)

Designs for new railway construction and technical improvement are prepared by railway design institutions according to the approved railway construction plans.

Article 19 (Review of Designs)

The prepared railway construction designs must be reviewed by the central railway transportation guidance institution or the central design guidance institution, depending on the investment scale and subject.

Article 20 (Construction Based on Designs)

Railway construction enterprises must strictly adhere to the design requirements during construction. Construction cannot be carried out based on unapproved designs.

Article 21 (Responsible Entities for Railway Construction)

National railway construction is carried out by the railway construction enterprises of the central railway transportation guidance institution and provincial railway construction enterprises. Dedicated railway construction is carried out by the relevant institutions that use the railway exclusively.

Article 22 (Strengthening Construction and Execution Capacity)

Railway transportation institutions must establish and strengthen specialized railway construction and execution capacities responsible for the nation's railway construction. The central planning guidance institution, the central labor administration guidance institution, and relevant institutions must annually establish and accurately implement labor allocation plans required for the railway construction sector.

Article 23 (Compliance with Technical Regulations and Standard Methods)

Railway construction enterprises must prioritize the construction of railway bridges, tunnels, culverts, and other railway structures, strictly adhere to technical regulations and standard methods in construction, including roadbed piling and compacting, ballast and sleeper laying, rail installation, fastener installation, retaining wall construction, and ditch making.

Article 24 (Equipping Railway Construction Enterprises)

Railway construction enterprises must be equipped with modern railway construction equipment to ensure high-speed and high-quality construction. The Cabinet and relevant institutions must provide the necessary conditions for railway construction enterprises to equip themselves with modern railway construction equipment.

Article 25 (Quality Inspection of Construction Projects)

National construction supervision institutions and railway transportation institutions must strictly conduct process inspections, intermediate inspections, and completion inspections to ensure the highest quality of construction. Construction cannot proceed to the next stage if it fails process or intermediate inspections, and railways that fail completion inspections cannot be handed over to relevant institutions.

Article 26 (Quality Inspection of Railway Equipment)

Quality supervision institutions must strictly inspect the quality of rails, concrete sleepers, and railway fasteners. Equipment that fails quality inspection cannot be used for railway construction or maintenance.

Chapter 3: Protection and Management of Railways

Article 27 (Establishment of Railway Protection Management System)

Protecting railways is an important task to enhance the safety and cultural aspects of railways. Railway transportation institutions and local people's committees must establish a systematic framework for railway protection management and assign railway management sections to relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations according to the principle of responsible management.

Article 28 (Inspection of Railway Conditions)

Railway transportation institutions must regularly inspect railways and railway structures to identify and address unsafe conditions that pose risks to train operations. They must properly determine the priority of railway inspections, conduct inspections according to relevant guidelines, and provide necessary data to institutions, enterprises, and organizations responsible for railway management to take measures.

Article 29 (Registration of Inspection Data)

Railway transportation institutions must accurately register inspection data of the railway sections they are responsible for in the railway and structure inspection registration book according to the format specified by the central railway transportation guidance institution.

Article 30 (Technical Inspection of Railways)

Railway transportation institutions must organize technical inspections to scientifically evaluate the technical condition of railways and establish maintenance measures. They must accurately establish inspection plans by period and conduct detailed inspections of the railway sections and facilities they are responsible for.

Article 31 (Maintenance of Railways)

Railway maintenance is divided into major, medium, and minor maintenance based on the political and economic significance of the railway, annual freight volume, service life of railway equipment such as rails and sleepers, and the condition of the railway's plane and gradient. Railway transportation institutions and relevant institutions must properly determine the maintenance cycle and regularly maintain the railway according to maintenance standards to ensure safe train operations.

Article 32 (Concentrated Maintenance of Railways)

To conduct maintenance according to the technical condition and seasonal changes of railways, concentrated maintenance periods are established. The central railway transportation guidance institution determines the establishment of concentrated maintenance periods. Railway transportation institutions, local people's committees, and relevant institutions must mobilize labor, materials, and transportation means to conduct concentrated maintenance of railways during seasonal concentrated maintenance periods.

Article 33 (Implementation of Railway Maintenance Plans)

The central railway transportation guidance institution, local people's committees, and relevant institutions must properly plan and ensure the supply of materials for railway maintenance to enable timely and complete maintenance. Institutions and enterprises that receive railway maintenance plans must carry out maintenance and report to the relevant institutions upon passing inspection. Institutions and enterprises must accurately calculate and pay labor compensation to personnel involved in railway maintenance management.

Article 34 (Mandatory Mobilization for Damage Recovery Work)

Railway transportation institutions, local people's committees, relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must mandatorily mobilize necessary labor, equipment, and materials for damage recovery work in case of railway damage due to abnormal weather conditions or accidents. Institutions, enterprises, and organizations must be thoroughly prepared to immediately mobilize personnel and materials for railway recovery.

Article 35 (Railway Patrol)

Railway transportation institutions must assign railway patrol personnel to specific sections to regularly confirm the safety of railways and address issues promptly. Railway patrol personnel must follow the patrol schedule, confirm the condition of the assigned railway section, identify and address deficiencies, and report issues that cannot be resolved independently in a timely manner.

Article 36 (Railway Surveillance)

Railway transportation institutions must prepare railway surveillance plans based on instructions from higher institutions and weather observation data, deliver them to units responsible for surveillance, and regularly understand and address surveillance conditions.

Article 37 (Methods of Railway Surveillance and Reporting Surveillance Conditions)

Railway surveillance is conducted through fixed and temporary surveillance methods. Railway surveillance personnel must responsibly monitor the railway and structures in their assigned sections and report surveillance conditions promptly at specified times.

Article 38 (Establishment of Railway Protection Zones)

To protect railways, certain sections are designated as railway protection zones. The railway protection zone is set at 2 meters from the railway roadbed (or the top edge of the slope in cut sections) and 3 meters in wetland areas. The land within the railway protection zone is managed by railway transportation institutions, and registered agricultural land is managed by relevant land use institutions.

Article 39 (Prohibited Activities in Railway Protection Zones)

The following activities are prohibited in railway protection zones:

1. Grazing livestock
2. Creating water channels or paths other than railway ditches
3. Cutting trees or removing ground cover plants such as grass
4. Digging or removing soil and gravel
5. Using explosives or setting fires
6. Violating railway and railway crossing traffic order
7. Sitting or sleeping on the railway or in the railway protection zone
8. Other activities that hinder railway protection

Article 40 (Management of Areas Surrounding Railways)

Railway transportation institutions, local people's committees, relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must plant flowering shrubs on railway roadbeds and ground cover plants such as dwarf bushes on slopes, and promptly transplant trees that hinder train operations and railway communication lines. Railway roadbeds and slopes are

managed by the responsible railway transportation institutions, institutions, enterprises, and organizations, while land and planted trees outside the railway protection zone are managed by forestry management institutions, urban management institutions, and relevant institutions.

Article 41 (Protection Construction for Railways and Structures)

Railway transportation institutions, local people's committees, relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must conduct necessary construction such as retaining walls, landslide prevention, and drainage works to protect railways and structures from natural damage, including railway embankments, railway bridges, and surrounding areas of tunnels. Local people's committees and relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must manage and utilize rivers flowing under railway bridges to prevent damage to railway bridges from floods.

Article 42 (Installation and Management of Safety Facilities for Railway Protection)

The installation and management of safety facilities for railway protection are as follows:

1. Railway transportation institutions and relevant institutions must install and manage safety facilities on railway bridges according to regulations.
2. Road management institutions must install and manage safety facilities such as railway bridge clearance signs on roads passing under railway bridges.
3. Institutions, enterprises, and organizations managing and utilizing power transmission lines, distribution lines, and communication lines must install and manage safety nets under transmission and communication lines passing over railways.
4. Institutions, enterprises, and organizations managing ground railway crossings must construct guard posts and install and manage various safety facilities such as barriers and automatic alarm devices.
5. Railway transportation institutions must remove cracked rocks on slopes next to railway roadbeds or take necessary safety measures to prevent rock falls.

Article 43 (Measures to Prevent Accidents)

Railway transportation institutions, local people's committees, relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must assign surveillance personnel on both sides of the work area and take necessary labor safety measures to thoroughly prevent accidents during railway maintenance management work.

Article 44 (Scientific Management of Railway Protection Work)

Railway transportation institutions must establish a scientific technical management system for railway protection, improve preventive maintenance and protection management methods using modern railway inspection and measurement tools, and maintain the technical condition of railways and structures at a high level.

Article 45 (Provision of Conditions for Railway Sector)

National planning institutions, labor administration institutions, financial institutions, commercial institutions, light industry institutions, health institutions, local people's committees, and relevant institutions must responsibly ensure labor, materials, funds, food, basic foodstuffs, and daily necessities required for railway construction and protection work. Railway patrol personnel, surveillance personnel, and other employees in the railway management sector must not be mobilized for work unrelated to the railway sector.

Article 46 (Establishment of Railway Fund)

To strengthen and maintain the material and technical foundation of railways, including railway construction and protection management, a railway fund is established and utilized. The railway fund cannot be used for purposes unrelated to railway sector work.

Chapter 4: Utilization of Railways

Article 47 (Subjects of Railway Utilization)

Only railway vehicles approved by railway transportation institutions can operate on railways. The operation of railway vehicles is under unified command and control.

Article 48 (Approval of Railway Utilization)

Approval for railway utilization is granted to units that have paid the railway transportation fee. The status of railway transportation fee payment is confirmed by the railway transportation fee deposit confirmation issued by the central railway transportation guidance institution.

Article 49 (Prevention of Railway Damage)

Institutions, enterprises, and organizations utilizing railways must thoroughly prepare for freight transportation to prevent damage or destruction of railways and protection zones during transportation.

Article 50 (Construction of Railway Crossings)

Railway crossings should be constructed as overpasses or underpasses with a distance of at least 2 km between crossings. If it is not possible to construct overpasses or underpasses, ground-level crossings may be constructed. Approval from the central railway transportation guidance institution is required to lay new railway crossings or remove existing ones.

Article 51 (Installation of Crossing Surveillance Posts)

Institutions, enterprises, and organizations managing ground-level railway crossings must install surveillance posts and safety facilities, and assign surveillance personnel to ensure the safe passage of trains, vehicles, and personnel. If necessary, institutions, enterprises, and organizations must obtain agreement from the relevant local public safety institution and road management institution, and approval from the railway transportation institution to temporarily establish ground-level railway crossings, install surveillance posts and safety facilities according to standards, and assign surveillance personnel. Temporarily approved ground-level railway crossings must be dismantled immediately after the usage period ends, and the railway transportation institution, public safety institution, and road management institution in the relevant area must be notified.

Article 52 (Railway Markers)

Railway transportation institutions, local people's committees, relevant institutions, enterprises, and organizations must install railway markers such as railway signs, signal signs, warning signs, and distance markers at designated locations to facilitate railway utilization. Railway markers must be made according to the specifications approved by the central railway transportation guidance institution and installed at designated locations.

Article 53 (Prohibition of Railway Passage)

Residents are prohibited from walking on railways or entering railway station areas without approval from railway transportation institutions. Vehicles such as cars, tractors, and carts cannot be driven across railways except at designated railway crossings.

Article 54 (Prohibition of Construction Hindering Railway Utilization)

Institutions, enterprises, organizations, and citizens must not engage in construction activities such as installing temporary buildings, warehouses, or facilities that hinder railway utilization. If construction is necessary, approval must be obtained from the relevant railway safety institution and railway transportation institution, and railway safety facilities must be installed to ensure no disruption to train operations.

Chapter 5: Legal Responsibilities

Article 55 (Restoration and Compensation Penalties)

Responsible individuals must restore or compensate in the following cases:

1. If the railway section under their management is damaged or destroyed due to failure to manage it according to technical regulations.
2. If railway facilities such as railway bridges, overhead lines, communication poles, and railway crossing barriers are damaged due to exceeding the height limit of cargo on vehicles operating in station areas or roads, careless driving, or vehicle malfunction.
3. If railway roadbeds and structures are damaged by floods due to disorderly use or improper management of rivers flowing under railway bridges.

Article 56 (Compensation for Damages)

Compensation is provided for damages caused by accidents due to poor railway conditions. Compensation is governed by the Compensation Law.

Article 57 (Fines)

Institutions, enterprises, organizations, and individual citizens are fined 100,000 to 1,500,000 won and 1,000 to 100,000 won respectively in the following cases:

1. Failure to organize maintenance according to railway maintenance plans or failure to mobilize for damage recovery.
2. Failure to install barriers or slow-down markers or assign surveillance personnel during maintenance, cleaning, or snow removal work, causing accident risks.
3. Operating vehicles without railway transportation fee deposit confirmation or operating defective vehicles, causing accident risks or damaging railway surroundings and structures.
4. Establishing or utilizing temporary railway crossings without approval from railway transportation institutions or failing to dismantle temporary railway crossings immediately after the usage period ends and restore the railway and protection zone.
5. Driving cars, tractors, carts, or self-made vehicles across railways at non-designated crossings.
6. Cultivating subsidiary fields or grazing livestock in railway protection zones.
7. Walking or sitting on railways.

8. Surveillance personnel or patrol personnel leaving their posts or sleeping during duty or failing to perform their duties properly.

Article 58 (Suspension Penalties)

Railway construction or utilization is suspended in the following cases:

1. Constructing railways without approval or failing to adhere to construction design requirements.
2. Operating defective railway vehicles or vehicles without railway transportation fee deposit confirmation, causing damage to railways.
3. Railways are destroyed by natural disasters or accidents, or railway conditions are poor enough to cause train operation accidents.

Article 59 (Confiscation Penalties)

Illegally obtained railway fasteners and unauthorized self-made vehicles are confiscated.

Article 60 (Warning and Severe Warning Penalties)

Responsible individuals are given warning penalties in the following cases:

1. Failure to properly reinforce railway structures, protect railway facilities, or install and manage safety facilities.
2. Failure to properly construct crossing posts, assign surveillance personnel, or install and manage crossing safety facilities.
3. Constructing buildings or facilities unrelated to railway operations within 1-2 km of railways or approving such construction.
4. Cultivating fields or constructing roads or water channels within railway protection zones without approval from the central railway transportation guidance institution.
5. Failure to properly inspect, maintain, monitor, or patrol railways.
6. Hindering scientific research and training of technicians and experts in the railway sector.

If the above actions are severe, severe warning penalties are given.

Article 61 (Unpaid Labor and Labor Education Penalties)

Responsible individuals are given unpaid labor or labor education penalties of up to 3 months in the following cases:

1. Operating railways without completion inspection.
2. Failure to conduct retaining wall construction, landslide prevention construction, or drainage construction at dangerous railway sections or conducting such work irresponsibly.
3. Constructing railways or establishing new railway crossings without approval from the central railway transportation guidance institution or failing to dismantle temporary railway crossings after the usage period ends.
4. Using defective concrete sleepers, fasteners, or rails.
5. Failing to adhere to construction method requirements during railway construction.
6. Failing to ensure the supply of steel, cement, vehicles, and other construction materials and equipment required for railway construction and protection management, hindering the production of concrete sleepers and fasteners, and railway construction and protection management.
7. Failing to ensure the timely supply of labor required for the railway sector or mobilizing railway sector labor for other work, hindering railway construction and protection management.
8. Failing to properly conduct educational activities related to railway protection and utilization, causing human injury accidents.
9. Walking, sitting, or sleeping on railway bridges or tunnels.
10. Digging up railway ballast.
11. Operating unauthorized or self-made vehicles.
12. Illegally trading or collecting railway fasteners weighing less than 1 kg.

If the above actions are severe, unpaid labor or labor education penalties of more than 3 months are given.

Article 62 (Dismissal, Removal, and Demotion Penalties)

Individuals who fail to properly implement national railway management policies, causing serious consequences, are given dismissal, removal, or demotion penalties based on the severity of their actions.

Article 63 (Criminal Responsibility)

If actions violating this law constitute a crime, responsible individuals are subject to criminal responsibility according to relevant provisions of the Criminal Law.

Chapter 6: Supplementary Provisions

Article 64 (Effective Date)

The Railway Management Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, revised and supplemented by Decree No. 1530 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly on January 17, 2024, is effective from February 1, 2024.