

INTRODUCTION RAIL OFFICE PROGRAMS HANDBOOK

I.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Rail Office Programs Handbook (Rail Handbook)* is to identify and designate responsibility for rail processes in support of the Florida Department of Transportation's (Department) mission of a safe transportation system, which ensures mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity and preserves the quality of our environment and community.

I.2 AUTHORITY

The US Code, Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code grant the authority to the Department to administer the State's rail programs.

US Code Title 23 Highways; Title 49 Subtitle V Rail Programs

Florida Statutes:

- 120 Administrative Procedure Act related to hearing rights.
- 260.0161 Coordination with Department of Transportation on abandoned and to-be-abandoned railroad rights-of-way.
- 316.1575 Obedience to traffic control devices at railroad-highway grade crossings.
- 316.159 Certain vehicles to stop at all railroad grade crossings.
- 335.141 Regulation of public railroad-highway grade crossings; reduction of hazards.
- 336.045 Uniform minimum standards for design, construction, and maintenance of all public streets, roads, highways. . .
- 337.11 Contracting authority of department; bids; emergency repairs, supplemental agreement, change order.
- 337.403 Relocation of utilities along publicly owned rail corridor.
- 341.302 Rail program, duties and responsibilities of the program.
- 351.034 Railroad-highway grade crossings to be cleared for emergency vehicles.

- 351.35 Railroad tracks and related equipment; safety rules; penalties.
- 351.36 Railroad safety inspections and inspectors.
- 351.37 Railroad safety responsibilities of the Federal Government.
- 471.27 Engineers authorized to enter lands of third parties under certain conditions.

Florida Administrative Code:

- 14-57 Railroad safety and clearance standards, public railroad-highway grade crossings, and rail corridor crossing management.

I.3 SCOPE

The principal users of the ***Rail Handbook*** are Department personnel, railroad companies, design and construction companies, transportation planners, Florida cities and counties, individuals or groups requesting information or permits pertaining to rail programs, and other State or Federal organizations involved in the development and implementation of rail programs.

I.4 GENERAL

Chapters in the ***Rail Handbook*** define programs administered by the Central and District Rail Offices. These programs include the following:

- Chapter One Railroad Crossing Inventory – Chapter One describes the data collection and data entry requirements for the Department’s Rail-Highway Crossing Inventory (RHCI).
- Chapter Two Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program – Chapter Two outlines the program for identifying hazardous public highway-rail grade crossing locations and safety enhancements through installing or upgrading public highway-rail grade crossing warning devices, circuitry, and/or surfaces.
- Chapter Three Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Construction and Maintenance Program – Chapter Three establishes guidelines to be used by Department personnel in engineering a safe and effective highway-rail grade crossing through the installation and maintenance of crossing surfaces, signals, overpass bridges and track relocation.

- Chapter Four Highway-Rail Grade Opening and Closure Program – Chapter Four describes the standards and process for opening and closing public, highway-rail grade crossings. The chapter also addresses the Rail Corridor Management Program and abandonment of rail lines by railroads.
- Chapter Five Rail Safety Inspection Program – Chapter Five classifies five areas of rail safety inspection: track, operating practices, motive power and equipment, signal and train control, and hazardous materials.
- Chapter Six Rail System Plan – Chapter Six relates the methodology by which a unified, comprehensive rail plan is developed; a Plan that integrates passenger and freight rail plans and operations consistent with the 2025 Florida Transportation Plan, Florida’s growth management laws, Florida’s Strategic Plan for Economic Development, and the Strategic Intermodal System Plan, and public input.
- Chapter Seven Hurricane Emergency Plan – Chapter Seven provides guidance for the statewide planning and response of railroad related safety systems and resources prior to and after an emergency or disaster situation within the State of Florida.
- Chapter Eight Train Horn Rule and Quiet Zone Application Process – Chapter Eight identifies **49 CFR Part 222** requirements concerning the duration and noise level of locomotive horns, which are required to be sounded at all locations unless Quiet Zones are established. Federal Railroad Administration contacts are provided for communities seeking a Quiet Zone, along with the application process and responsibilities of each participating party.

I.5 DISTRIBUTION

Rail Handbooks are acquired by accessing the Central Office Rail internet web site:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rail> .

I.6 HANDBOOK REGISTRATION

Electronic distribution will be sent to each District Rail Office. Notification of revisions and additions to the **Rail Handbook** can be found on the Central Rail Office internet web site.

I.7 ADDITIONAL COPIES

Interested parties may obtain a **Rail Handbook**, at no charge, by accessing the Central

Rail Office web site identified above.

I.8 QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS SECTION

Users may direct questions, suggestions or comments regarding the content of the handbook to: Janice.Bordelon@dot.state.fl.us, (850) 414-4528 or fax (850) 414-4508. The ***Rail Handbook*** will be updated as necessary on the Central Rail Office web site.

I.9 TRAINING

No training is required

I.10 FORMS

Forms required by each program are identified within the program's chapter. Forms may be accessed on the Central Rail Office web site or by going through the Department's Forms Library.