

RCW 81.104.115 Rail fixed guideway public transportation system—State safety oversight agency—Safety program plan and security and emergency preparedness plan—Penalties, sanctions—Rules—Annual report. (1) The department of transportation is established as the state safety oversight agency. As such, the department is subject to the following conditions:

(a) The department must be financially and legally independent from any public transportation agency that the department is obliged to oversee;

(b) The department must not directly provide public transportation services in an area with a rail fixed guideway public transportation system that the department is obliged to oversee;

(c) The department must not employ any individual who is also responsible for administering a rail fixed guideway public transportation system that the department is obliged to oversee; and

(d) The department has investigative and enforcement authority with respect to the safety and security of all rail fixed guideway public transportation systems in Washington state. The department shall adopt rules with respect to its investigative and enforcement authority.

(2) The department shall collect, audit, review, approve, oversee, and enforce the system safety program plan and the system security and emergency preparedness plan prepared by each owner or operator of a rail fixed guideway public transportation system operating in Washington state. In carrying out this function, the department shall adopt rules specifying the elements and standard to be contained in a system safety program plan and a system security and emergency preparedness plan, and the content of any investigation report, corrective action plan, and accompanying implementation schedule resulting from any reportable incident, accident, security breach, hazard, or security vulnerability. These rules must include due dates for the department's timely receipt of and response to required documents.

(3) The department, in carrying out the duties in this section, shall compel the rail fixed guideway public transportation systems to comply with state and federal safety and security regulations for rail fixed guideway public transportation systems. The department may also impose financial penalties for noncompliance with state or federal regulations, or both, related to state safety and security oversight. Specific financial penalties, if imposed, must be determined by rule. When reportable safety or security deficiencies are identified and not addressed in a timely manner by rail fixed guideway public transportation system owners and operators, the department may require the suspension or modification of service or the suspended use or removal of equipment. The department may impose sanctions upon owners and operators of rail fixed guideway public transportation systems for failure to meet deadlines of submissions of required reports and audits.

(4) The system security and emergency preparedness plan as described in RCW 35.21.228(1), 35A.21.300(1), 36.01.210(1), 36.57.120(1), 36.57A.170(1), and 81.112.180(1) is exempt from public disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW by the department when collected from the owners and operators of rail fixed guideway public transportation systems. However, the system safety program plan as described in RCW 35.21.228, 35A.21.300, 36.01.210, 36.57.120, 36.57A.170, and 81.112.180 is not exempt from public disclosure.

(5) The department shall audit each system safety program plan and each system security and emergency preparedness plan at least once every three years. The department may contract with other persons or entities for the performance of duties required by this subsection. The department shall provide at least thirty days' advance notice to the owner or operator of a rail fixed guideway public transportation system before commencing the audit.

(6) In the event of any reportable incident, accident, security breach, hazard, or security vulnerability, the department shall review the investigation report, corrective action plan, and accompanying implementation schedule, submitted by the owner or operator of the rail fixed guideway public transportation system to safeguard against a recurrence of the incident, accident, security breach, hazard, or security vulnerability.

(a) The department may, at its option, perform a separate, independent investigation of any reportable incident, accident, security breach, hazard, or security vulnerability. The department may contract with other persons or entities for the performance of duties required by this subsection.

(b) If the department does not concur with the investigation report, corrective action plan, and accompanying implementation schedule, submitted by the owner or operator, the department shall notify that owner or operator in writing within forty-five days of its receipt of the complete investigation report, corrective action plan, and accompanying implementation schedule.

(7) The secretary may adopt rules to implement this section and RCW 35.21.228, 35A.21.300, 36.01.210, 36.57.120, 36.57A.170, and 81.112.180, including rules establishing procedures and timelines for owners and operators of rail fixed guideway public transportation systems to comply with RCW 35.21.228, 35A.21.300, 36.01.210, 36.57.120, 36.57A.170, and 81.112.180 and the rules adopted under this section. If noncompliance by an owner or operator of a rail fixed guideway public transportation system results in the loss of federal funds to the state of Washington or a political subdivision of the state, the owner or operator is liable to the affected entity or entities for the amount of the lost funds.

(8) The department and its employees shall have no liability for any actions taken pursuant to this chapter arising from: The adoption of rules; the review of or concurrence in a system safety program plan and a system security and emergency preparedness plan; the separate, independent investigation of any reportable incident, accident, security breach, hazard, or security vulnerability; and the review of or concurrence in a corrective action plan for any reportable incident, accident, security breach, hazard, or security vulnerability.

(9) At least once every year, the department shall report the status of the safety and security of each rail fixed guideway public transportation system to the governor, the federal transit administration, the board of directors or equivalent entity of the rail fixed guideway public transportation system, and the transportation committees of the legislature. [2016 c 33 s 8; 2007 c 422 s 7; 2005 c 274 s 359; 2001 c 127 s 1; 1999 c 202 s 7.]

Effective date—2016 c 33: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or

support of the state government and its existing public institutions,
and takes effect immediately [March 25, 2016]." [2016 c 33 s 9.]

Effective date—1999 c 202: See note following RCW 35.21.228.