

**Chapter 480-60 WAC**  
**RAILROAD COMPANIES—CLEARANCES**

Last Update: 11/24/03

**WAC**

480-60-010	Application of rules.
480-60-012	Contacting the commission.
480-60-014	Rules of practice and procedure.
480-60-020	Exemptions.
480-60-030	Definitions.
480-60-035	Walkways.
480-60-040	Overhead clearances.
480-60-050	Side clearances.
480-60-060	Track clearances.
480-60-080	Operation of excess dimension loads.
480-60-090	Narrow gauge railroads transporting freight cars.
480-60-990	Illustration—Typical clearance of structures from railroad tracks.
480-60-99001	Illustration—Typical track spacing.

**DISPOSITION OF SECTIONS FORMERLY CODIFIED IN THIS CHAPTER**

480-60-070	Marking of cars. [Order R-5, § 480-60-070, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.] Repealed by WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00. Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040.
480-60-99002	Table—Class of highway. [Order R-5, Table (codified as WAC 480-60-99002), filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.] Repealed by WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00. Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040.
480-60-99003	Diagram—Clearance diagram for underpasses two-way highway traffic. [Order R-5, Diagram (codified as WAC 480-60-99003), filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.] Repealed by WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00. Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040.

**Reviser's note:** WAC 480-60-010 through 480-60-090 as filed June 6, 1969, was to become effective upon publication in the Washington Administrative Code. The declared effective date of the rules as filed by Order R-5, and as published in Supplement #3, is October 9, 1969. See also, reviser's note Title 480 WAC digest.

**WAC 480-60-010 Application of rules.** (1) The rules in this chapter apply to all common carrier railroad companies operating within the state of Washington, including any facilities or structures owned or operated by the railroad, and to the construction and reconstruction of tracks or structures adjacent thereto.

(2) A railroad company must not operate any equipment over tracks where the clearances are less than those required by these rules, unless a commission order has been entered granting an exemption or an exemption is contained in these rules.

(3) Side clearances are based on the assumption that equipment used on tracks is not greater than ten feet ten inches wide. Height clearances are based on the assumption that equipment used on tracks is not higher than fifteen feet six inches. If equipment exceeds ten feet ten inches in width, the railroad must comply with WAC 480-60-080.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-010, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-010, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-012 Contacting the commission.** You may contact the commission in writing, in person, by telephone, by email, or by facsimile. The commission's location, mailing address, email address and telefax number are found in WAC 480-07-125. The commission's internet home page address is found in WAC 480-04-035.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160. WSR 03-24-028 (General Order R-510, Docket No. A-010648), § 480-60-012, filed 11/24/03, effective 1/1/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-012, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00.]

**WAC 480-60-014 Rules of practice and procedure.** The commission's rules governing administrative practices and procedures are in chapter 480-07 WAC. When a rule in this chapter conflicts with a rule in chapter 480-07 WAC, the rule in this chapter applies to railroad companies.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160. WSR 03-24-028 (General Order R-510, Docket No. A-010648), § 480-60-014, filed 11/24/03, effective 1/1/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-014, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00.]

**WAC 480-60-020 Exemptions.** (1) When the overhead or side clearances between a track and any building, structure, or facility are less than the minimum required by these rules, but were lawfully created prior to October 9, 1969, the minimum clearances required by these rules must be provided whenever the building, structure, or facility is relocated or reconstructed. However, the commission will consider specific requests for the future continuance of these previously lawful clearances when the railroad or owner or manager of the building, structure, or facility applies for an exemption under the provision set forth below.

(2) Where restricted clearances are unavoidable, the following moves are allowed without requesting an exemption from the commission:

(a) The movement of material over tracks when the material is needed for the construction or maintenance of the tracks;

(b) The movement of special work equipment used in the construction, maintenance or operation of the railroad;

(c) Movements during periods of actual emergency due to wrecks, derailments, washouts and like conditions;

(d) All movements authorized in this subsection may be made only after all reasonable steps are taken to provide for the safety of all who could be harmed by the move.

(3) The commission may grant an exemption of any rule in this chapter, if consistent with the public interest, the purposes underlying regulation, and applicable statutes.

(4) To request a rule exemption, a person must file with the commission a written request identifying the rule for which an exemption is sought, and giving a full explanation of the reason the exemption is requested.

(5) The commission will assign the request a docket number, if needed, and schedule the request for consideration at one of its regularly scheduled open meetings or, if appropriate under chapter 34.05 RCW, in an adjudication. The commission will notify the person requesting the exemption, and other interested persons, of the date the commission will consider the request.

(6) The commission will enter an order granting or denying the request, or setting it for hearing pursuant to chapter 480-07 WAC.

(7) Logging railroads, or any operation directly incident to logging, now subject to the provisions of the safety standards for logging operations in chapter 296-54 WAC, published by the division of safety of the department of labor and industries of the state of Washington, are exempted from these rules.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160. WSR 03-24-028 (General Order R-510, Docket No. A-010648), § 480-60-020, filed 11/24/03, effective 1/1/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-020, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-020, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-030 Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

**"Car width"** means twice the distance from the centerline of the car to its extreme outside part.

**"Commission"** means the Washington utilities and transportation commission.

**"Icing platforms"** means structures used in performing the service of icing, precooling, heating, ventilating and servicing of cars used in the handling of commodities requiring those services.

**"Overcrossing"** means any point or place where a highway crosses a railroad by passing above it.

**"Overhead clearance"** means the distance measured along a line which is perpendicular to and joins a horizontal plane passing through the top of the highest rail and a horizontal plane passing through the lowest point of the overhead structure or obstruction.

**"Side clearance"** means the shortest distance from centerline of track to a structure or appurtenances such as downspouts, ladders, or other obstructions at the side of the track.

**"Track clearance"** means the shortest distance between the centerlines of adjacent tracks.

**"Walkways"** means pathways located alongside or in the vicinity of a railroad track, or on a trestle or bridge, that provide an area for a railroad employee to perform duties associated with the track, trestle or bridge.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-030, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-030, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-035 Walkways.** (1) Walkways must be provided in yards where employees regularly work on the ground.

(2) Ease and safety of walking are the primary considerations for providing walkways. Ease and safety of walking and adequate track drainage are the primary considerations for selecting surface materials. Accordingly, walkways required by this rule must have a reasonably smooth surface and be maintained in a safe condition, without compromising track drainage. Any of the following are suitable surface materials:

(a) Crushed material may be used for walkways. The material must not exceed one and one-half inches in size. The term "one and one-half

inches in size" has a specialized meaning. That meaning can vary from company to company within the industry. For purposes of this rule, the term will have the following meaning (note: Percentages refer to weight measurements):

100 percent of the material will pass through a one and one-half inch square sieve opening.

90 to 100 percent of the material will pass through a one inch square sieve opening.

40 to 80 percent of the material will pass through a three-quarter inch square sieve opening.

15 to 60 percent of the material will pass through a one-half inch square sieve opening.

0 to 30 percent of the material will pass through a three-eighths inch square sieve opening.

0 to 10 percent of the material will pass through a #4 sieve (standard nomenclature in the industry).

0 to 5 percent of the material will pass through a #8 sieve.

0 to 0.5 percent of the material will pass through a #200 sieve.

Note: Smaller crushed material is preferable. It should be used where drainage and durability issues do not arise. Material that is three-quarter inch or less in size is recommended for switching leads in yards.

(b) Walkway surfaces may also be made of asphalt, concrete, planking, grating, or other similar material suitable for walking.

(c) Native materials may be used for a walkway surface if the materials provide a surface that is reasonably smooth and safe.

(3) Walkways must not have a grade or slope in excess of one inch of elevation for each eight inches of horizontal length in any direction, unless the geography of the area makes this impracticable.

(4) Walkways must be kept clear of vegetation, debris, mud, and other obstructions that constitute a hazard to railroad employees working on the ground. Standing water must be removed from walkways as soon as reasonably possible.

(5) When walkways are removed or damaged due to construction or emergencies, they must be restored within thirty days after construction is completed or the emergency ends.

(6) Walkways must be sufficiently wide to allow employees to safely perform all duties associated with the use of the walkways.

(7) Walkways on bridges and trestles existing on (effective date of this rule), must not be permanently removed without approval from the commission. Permission must be obtained by the process set forth in WAC 480-60-020. Walkways on bridges or trestles that are temporarily removed or damaged due to construction or emergencies must be restored within thirty days after construction is completed or the emergency ends.

(8) (a) Unless the commission identifies a serious safety condition on a walkway, Class I railroads must bring their walkways into compliance with this section within one year of the effective date of these rules, and Class II and Class III railroads must bring their walkways into compliance within five years of the effective date of these rules.

(b) If a railroad believes it will experience a serious financial hardship in bringing its walkways into compliance within the time allowed, it must submit to the commission in writing, an alternate proposal for bringing its walkways into compliance. The commission may grant an extension of time following a review of the railroad's alternate walkway compliance proposal.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-035, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00.]

**WAC 480-60-040 Overhead clearances.** (1) General rule. Overhead clearances shall be at least twenty-two feet six inches unless one of the provisions in this section applies.

(2) Buildings.

The overhead clearance inside of entirely enclosed buildings may be reduced to eighteen feet, if the tracks terminate within the building. When an overhead clearance of less than twenty-two feet six inches is established in a building, all cars, locomotives or other equipment must stop before entering it. The conditions provided to require the stop must be approved by the commission. Engine houses and car shops are exempt from these regulations.

(3) Trains in tunnels, under overcrossings, and on bridges.

Minimum overhead clearance in tunnels, under overcrossings, and on bridges may be decreased to the extent defined by the half-circumference of a circle having a radius of eight feet and tangent to a horizontal line twenty-two feet six inches above top of rail at a point directly above the centerline of track.

(4) All other structures.

Minimum overhead clearance may be decreased to the extent defined by the half-circumference of a circle having a radius of eight feet six inches and tangent to a horizontal line twenty-two feet six inches above top of rail at a point directly over the centerline of track.

(5) Overhead clearance of wires.

All overhead wires must have a minimum vertical clearance of not less than that specified by the safety rules for the installation and maintenance of electric supply and communication lines as provided by the rules for electrical construction and the electrical and communication workers safety rules of the state of Washington.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-040, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-040, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-050 Side clearances.** (1) General rule. Side clearances must be at least 8 feet 6 inches unless one of the provisions below applies. If exceptions in subsections (2) through (5) or (7) of this section apply, full side clearance of 8 feet 6 inches shall be provided on the opposite side of the track from the platform.

(2) Platforms - 8" or less above top of rail . . . . . 4'8"

(3) Platforms - 4'0" or less above top of rail . . . . . 7'3"

(4) Platforms - 4'6" or less above top of rail - When used principally for loading or unloading refrigerator cars . . . . . 8'0"

(5) Icing platforms and supports . . . . . 7'3"

(6) A retractable platform which is attached to a permanent structure must be designed so that when it is not in use no part of it shall fall within the clearance limits herein prescribed for a platform of that height above the top of the rail.

(7) Platforms - Combinations of any above.

Platforms defined under (2) above may be combined with either (4) or (3) if the lower platform has a level surface from a point not more than four feet eight inches from centerline of track to the face of the wall of the platform with which it is combined. No other combinations will be permitted.

- (8) Bridges and tunnels . . . . . 8'0"
- (9) Bridges and tunnels - Upper section (see WAC 480-60-040(3)).

Side clearance on bridges and in tunnels may be decreased to the extent defined by the half circumference of a circle having a radius of eight feet and tangent to a horizontal line twenty-two feet six inches above top of rail directly above centerline of track.

(10) Bridges - Lower section and structures 4' high or less. Bridges, hand rails, water barrels and refuge platforms on bridges and trestles, water columns, oil columns, block signals, cattle guards and cattle chutes, or portions of those items, four feet or less above top of rail may have clearances decreased to the extent defined by a line extending diagonally upward from a point level with the top of rail and five feet distant laterally from centerline of track to a point four feet above top of rail and eight feet distant laterally from centerline of track: Provided, That the minimum clearance for hand rails and water barrels must be seven feet six inches and the minimum clearance for fences of cattle guards must be six feet nine inches.

Unless previously approved, the clearances authorized in this subsection, except as provided for hand rails and water barrels, are not permitted on bridges where the work of trainmen or yardmen requires them to be upon the decks of such bridges for the purpose of coupling or uncoupling cars in the performance of switching service on a switching lead.

- (11) Side clearance - Engine house and car repair shop doors . . . . . 7'6"

- (12) Side clearance - Interlocking mechanism, switch boxes, and other similar devices projecting 4" or less above the top of the rail . . . . . 3'0"

- (13) Side clearance - Poles supporting trolley contact . . . . . 8'3"

(14) Side clearance - Signals and switch stands 3' high or less when located between tracks where not reasonably possible to provide clearances otherwise prescribed in these rules . . . . . 6'0"

- (15) Side clearance - Signals and switch stands other than above . . . . . 8'0"

(16) Side clearances on curved track. Side clearances adjacent to curved track shall be increased as necessary to give the equivalent of tangent track clearances. As a general rule, the side clearance on curved track should be increased 1-1/2" for each degree of curvature.

- (17) Side clearances - Material or merchandise adjacent to tracks.

No merchandise, material or other articles shall be placed or stored on ground or platforms adjacent to any track at a distance less than eight feet six inches from the centerline of track, except in cases of maintenance or emergency when such material is to be used within a reasonable period of time or where local conditions make compliance with this rule impossible.

- (18) Clearances - Car puller units and appurtenances.

Clearances for car puller units and appurtenances must be approved by the commission through the process set forth in WAC 480-62-020.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-050, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-050, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-060 Track clearances.** (1) Track clearances - in general . . . . . 14'0"

The minimum distance between the centerlines of parallel standard gauge railroad tracks, which are used or proposed to be used for transporting cars, engines, motors, or like equipment, must be fourteen feet, except as set forth below.

(2) Track clearances - Main and subsidiary tracks . . . . . 15'0"

The centerline of any standard gauge track, except a main track or a passing track, parallel and adjacent to a main track or a passing track, must be at least fifteen feet from the centerline of the main track or passing track however, where a passing track is adjacent to and at least fifteen feet distant from the main track, any other track may be constructed adjacent to the passing track with 14 feet clearance.

(3) Track clearances - Parallel team, house, or industry tracks . . . . . 13'0"

Minimum clearances between centerlines of parallel team, house, or industry tracks must be thirteen feet.

(4) Track clearances - Parallel ladder or ladder and other track . . . . . 20'0"

The minimum clearance between centerlines of any standard gauge ladder track, constructed parallel to any other track, must be twenty feet.

(5) Track clearances - Existing tracks.

Tracks existing prior to October 9, 1969, may be extended at clearances lawfully prescribed prior to that date.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-060, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-060, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-080 Operation of excess dimension loads.** (1) No person may ride on the roof of any car, or on the side of an excess width car, or the side of a car with a load that extends more than 5'5" from centerline.

(2) The railroad company must provide written notice to the train stating the total number of cars with excess height or width.

(3) Notice to yard supervisors. Yard supervisors must be notified sufficiently in advance of the arrival of cars with excess height or width to enable them to take necessary precautions to safeguard employees in yard.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-080, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-080, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-090 Narrow gauge railroads transporting freight cars.**

(1) Side clearances.

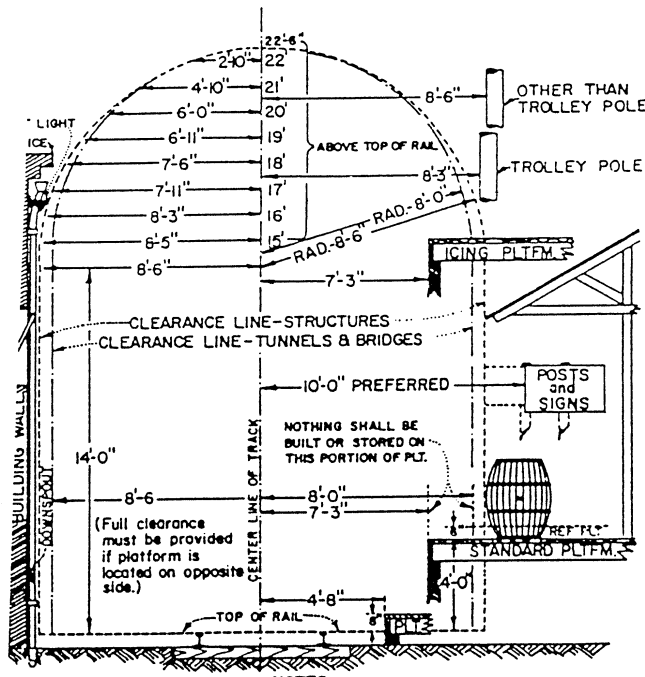
For the operation of equipment on narrow gauge tracks, the side clearances and distances between centerlines of tracks must provide a distance from the sides of cars, or between the widest cars operated, not less than those distances provided by these rules for cars ten feet ten inches in width operated on standard gauge tracks.

(2) All other requirements of these rules, where applicable, must be observed by narrow gauge railroads.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 81.04.160 and 80.01.040. WSR 00-04-011 (Order No. R-469, Docket No. TR-981101), § 480-60-090, filed 1/21/00, effective 2/21/00; Order R-5, § 480-60-090, filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-990 Illustration—Typical clearance of structures from railroad tracks.**

TYPICAL CLEARANCE OF STRUCTURES FROM RAILROAD TRACKS

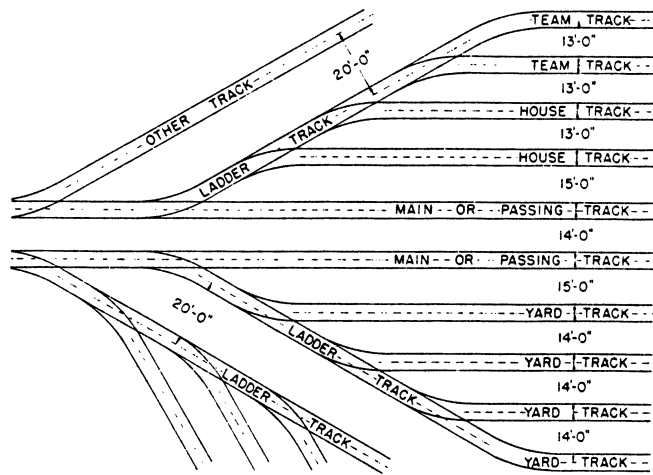


[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040. WSR 94-11-003 (Order R-413, Docket No. TR-940126), § 480-60-990, filed 5/4/94, effective 6/4/94; Order R-5, Illustration (codified as WAC 480-60-990), filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]

**WAC 480-60-99001 Illustration—Typical track spacing.**

TYPICAL TRACK SPACING





NOTE

EXISTING TRACKS MAY BE EXTENDED AT CLEARANCES LAWFULLY PRESCRIBED PRIOR TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER

[Order R-5, Illustration (codified as WAC 480-60-99001), filed 6/6/69, effective 10/9/69.]