GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION QUIET ZONE RULE

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WHY DO TRAINS SOUND THEIR HORNS?

Put simply, trains sound their horns to warn motorists and pedestrians that a train is coming. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has very specific requirements as to when, where, how long and how loud a train must sound its horn.

The FRA Train Horn Rule (49 CFR 222) requires the engineer to sound the horn under various circumstances including when a train is approaching and passing through a public highway-rail grade crossing.

According to FRA rules, train horns must:

- be within 96 and 110 decibels, a sound level equivalent to that of a lawnmower
- be sounded at least 15 seconds but no more than 20 seconds before reaching a crossing
- be sounded no more than a quarter of a mile from a crossing if the train is traveling faster than 60 mph
- be sounded approaching persons on or near the track
- be sounded while moving through tunnels

In addition, CSX Operating Rules require trains to sound horns when:

- approaching or passing passenger trains or stations
- approaching or passing roadway or railroad workers
- approaching tunnels

WHY DOES THE RULE EXIST?

The Train Horn Rule was created following an increase in train collisions in the late 1980s at certain highway-rail grade crossings where nighttime whistle bans had been established.

According to the FRA, train collisions increased following the nighttime whistle bans.

In 1994, Congress ordered the FRA to enact federal regulations requiring train horns to be sounded at all public highway-rail grade crossings.

In 2005, the final rule on quiet zones and the removal of the requirement to sound a horn was adopted and placed in the Code of Federal Regulations.

SAFETY IS A WAY OF LIFE

CSX strives to be a good neighbor in all communities in which we operate.

However, the number of vehicle collisions at highway-rail grade crossings has unfortunately increased in recent years. The FRA reports that deaths at railroad crossings increased 15.6 percent and crossing collisions increased 8.8 percent from 2013 to 2014.

Safety is our number one priority, and CSX believes train horns save lives.

WHAT IS A QUIET ZONE?

A quiet zone is an FRA exemption to the rule requiring trains to sound their horns when approaching public highway-rail grade crossings.

A quiet zone may be a section of rail line at least one-half mile in length that contains one or more consecutive public grade crossings or a single public grade crossing at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded.

To locate existing quiet zones throughout the United States, visit the FRA website at www.fra.dot.gov and type "quiet zone locations" in the search box.

What to expect within a quiet zone:

- Upgraded warning devices and additional safety measures installed at grade crossings.
- Train horns may still sound. Quiet zones only prohibit horns to be routinely sounded as a train approaches a grade crossing. Train crews can still sound horns in emergency situations or for other safety reasons.
- The community requesting the quiet zone is responsible for funding the installation of additional safety measures which may cost in excess of $200,000 per crossing.

SAFETY CALCULATIONS

A Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI) measures the amount of risk associated with a crossing in a quiet zone. Its calculated value must meet one of the following requirements in order for a quiet zone to be established:

- QZRI is less than or equal to the Risk Index with Horns (RIWH)
- QZRI is less than the National Significant Risk Threshold (NSRT), the average risk of a gated crossing where train horns are sounding

The NSRT is an annually calculated value. A quiet zone established by being less than the NSRT may be canceled if its QZRI is not low enough to maintain qualification.

SAFETY MEASURES AND OTHER CRITERIA

Each highway-rail grade crossing located within a proposed quiet zone must be equipped with active warning devices including flashing lights and gates, as well as constant warning train detection systems and power-out indicators.

Grade crossings in a quiet zone may also be equipped with Supplemental Safety Measures (SSMs), including:

- four-quadrant gates
- roadway channelization and median barriers
- one-way roadway with gate(s)
- permanent closure of nearby public crossing(s)

HOW DO I ESTABLISH A QUIET ZONE IN MY COMMUNITY?

Citizens who would like to establish quiet zones should contact their local public agency. Only a public agency may request a quiet zone and initiate the establishment process.

The establishment of a quiet zone falls under the authority of the FRA. During the process, CSX provides feedback regarding safety and other rail-related concerns. A CSX-approved General Engineering Consultant will work with your community during the establishment process.

CSX cannot prohibit the creation of an FRA-approved quiet zone.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

1. Communities wishing to establish a quiet zone should first contact their local FRA Crossing Manager.

   FRA Crossing Manager contact information can be found by visiting the FRA website at www.fra.dot.gov and typing “regional offices” in the search box.

2. Public agency determines which crossings comply with FRA guidelines and completes calculation of Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI).

3. Public agency completes CSX’s Quiet Zone Data Form and submits it along with a $6000 advanced deposit.

4. Public agency, FRA and CSX General Engineering Consultant (GEC) perform a diagnostic review of the selected crossings.

5. Notice of Intent (NOI) is sent to CSX, FRA and state DOT, each via Certified Mail. Send CSX NOI to: CSX Transportation, Inc., Director Project Management-Public Projects, 500 Water St. J-301, Jacksonville, FL 32202

6. CSX reviews NOI and provides feedback to public agency.

7. Public agency enters into Preliminary Engineering Agreement with CSX.

   For more information about the preliminary engineering process please visitwww.csx.com, About Us, Property and then Public Project Manual.

8. Public agency and/or CSX installs appropriate Supplemental Safety Measures (SSMs) and the road authority installs applicable signage at the affected crossings.

9. Notice of Establishment (NOE) is sent to CSX, FRA, and state DOT each via Certified Mail. Send CSX NOE to: CSX Transportation, Inc., Director Project Management-Public Projects, 500 Water St. J-301, Jacksonville FL 32202

10. CSX visits affected crossings to confirm installation of SSMs and then provides NOE response to the public agency.

Additional information can be found
by visiting the FRA website,
www.fra.dot.gov,
and typing “guide to the quiet zone
establishment process” in the search box.

CSX provides this information to assist communities that are interested in establishing a quiet zone. The information provided here is not intended to address every aspect of the Train Horn Rule, and is not intended to supersede the regulations or guidance issued by the FRA.

For more information on the Train Horn Rule and quiet zones, please visit the FRA website at www.fra.dot.gov and type "the train horn rule and quiet zones" in the search box.

To contact CSX, please visit www.csx.com/tellcsx.