

218.041 DUTIES OF COMMISSIONER.

Subdivision 1. **Operation, system of accounts, service, facility.** With respect to all common carriers including express companies the commissioner shall investigate the management thereof, the manner in which their businesses are conducted, and the adequacy of the services they are affording the public and shall prescribe uniform systems of keeping and rendering accounts and the time within which such systems shall be adopted. The commissioner shall make all appropriate orders relating to continuation, termination, modification or extension of services and facilities with a view to properly promoting the security and convenience of the public.

Subd. 2. **Commissioner's duties under federal law.** The commissioner shall, in accordance with the provisions of United States Code, title 49, sections 10101 to 11917:

- (1) exercise the jurisdiction over common carriers vested in the commissioner by law;
- (2) review and ascertain the reasonableness and equalities of all schedules of rates and charges or any part or classification thereof, including joint through rates, and, if found unreasonable or discriminatory, establish new schedules and prescribe the form and manner of filing, posting, and publication thereof;
- (3) order the issuance of any franchises, permits, or certificates of convenience and necessity;
- (4) the commissioner may unite two or more stations or commercial centers into a common rate point and fix the mileage that shall govern between the common rate point and any or all other points in the state. The distance so fixed shall not apply as a measure of the rate for the movement of freight for similar distances between other points;
- (5) prescribe a schedule of joint through railway rates for freight over two or more connecting lines of railway and revise the same from time to time. In so doing, the commissioner shall consider, among other things, rates established for shipments within this state for like distances over single lines, rates charged by the railway companies operating such connecting lines for joint interstate shipments, and the increased cost, if any, of a joint through shipment as compared with a shipment over a single line for like distances. In establishing rates for shipments in less than carload lots, in cases where connecting railways are not required to have common stations or stopping place for loading or unloading freight at connecting points, the commissioner shall regulate the transportation of such freight from the usual unloading place of one railway to the usual loading place of the other. The share of any railway company of any joint through rates shall not be construed to fix the charge that it may make for a similar distance over any part of its line for any single rate shipment, or the share of any other joint rate. Where the line of a railway company connects the point of shipment with the point of destination but would require a longer haul than a joint haul for which a joint rate has been established, the commissioner may authorize charging the joint rate for the single haul without affecting the charge upon any other part of its line except that the charge for a like kind of property must not be greater for a shorter than for a longer distance upon that railroad, all of the shorter hauls being included within the longer;
- (6) define switching and drayage service to apply to the movement of traffic within and between points and fix reasonable maximum rates for the same, which shall be independent of any rates that may be made for line haul transportation. If it is necessary that any car in such transfer pass over the tracks of more than one railroad within such limits, the company first so transferring such car shall receive the entire charge therefor and be liable to each company doing subsequent switching for its just share of such charge as may be agreed upon among the companies, or, in the event of disagreement, as prescribed by the commissioner.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1Sp1981 c 4 art 2 s 24]

Subd. 4. **Commissioner's duties upon petition.** (a) The commissioner shall, upon petition, direct the repair, reconstruction, or replacement of any inadequate or unsafe trackage, structure or facility.

(b) Upon receipt of a petition for action pursuant to this subdivision the commissioner shall give notice to all persons known to the commissioner to have an interest in the matter and publish notice of the petition in the State Register. The commissioner may grant the petition 30 days after notice has been fully made. If the commissioner receives a written objection to the petition from any person within 20 days after the notice of filing has been fully made, the exemption must be granted or denied only after a contested case hearing has been held on the matter. The commissioner may elect to hold a contested case hearing if no objections to the petition or application are received. If a timely objection is not received and the commissioner declines to act without a hearing, the petitioner may request within 30 days of receiving a notice of denial, and must be granted, a contested case hearing on the application.

Subd. 5. **Investigative and enforcement duties generally.** The commissioner shall:

(1) investigate and determine whether any common carriers are granting rebates or, in any other particular, failing to comply with laws or with orders, rules, or directives of the commissioner; and

(2) institute and prosecute all actions and proceedings in the appropriate courts for the enforcement of this chapter; the orders, rules, and directives of the commissioner issued under this chapter; and any violations thereof.

Subd. 6. **Investigative powers.** In the exercise of powers granted in this chapter, the commissioner may:

(1) subpoena books, papers, or accounts kept by any regulated business within or without the state, or compel production of verified copies;

(2) prepare all forms or blanks for obtaining information that the commissioner may deem necessary or useful for the proper exercise of the authority and duties of the commissioner in connection with regulated businesses, and prescribe the time and manner within which the blanks and forms must be completed and filed;

(3) inspect, at all reasonable times, and copy the books, records, memoranda, correspondence, or other documents and records of any business under the commissioner's jurisdiction;

(4) examine, under oath, any officer, agent, or employee of a business under the commissioner's jurisdiction concerning any matter within the commissioner's jurisdiction; and

(5) assess common carriers, administer the state rail safety inspection account, and perform other duties on behalf of the state rail safety inspector under section 219.015.

Subd. 7. **Ratemaking powers.** The commissioner may, upon the commissioner's discretion and without hearing:

(1) upon application by a carrier stating that it desires to establish a rate for a temporary period for the protection of the interest of the carriers or its shippers, authorize and establish the temporary rate, and extend the rate as the circumstances of the case may require, and permit the restoration of the rate existing at the time of the application without further proceedings;

(2) approve the establishment, change, or alteration of any rate, charge or classification, minimum rate, or rule governing the same, to which a common carrier is a party, upon application of the common carrier in writing, when the application appears to be noncontroversial;

(3) authorize, on less than ten days' public notice, schedules containing classifications, rates, fares and charges for the transportation of freight and passengers;

(4) retain general ratemaking authority in intrastate transportation of livestock.

Subd. 8. **Intrastate rail passenger service rules.** The commissioner, as appropriate, may take action to promulgate rules in areas including, but not limited to the following: rates, routes, depots, schedules, quality of service, and safety requirements relating to intrastate rail passenger service.

History: *Ex1957 c 10 s 4; 1971 c 25 s 67; 1976 c 166 s 18; 1977 c 346 s 12; 1980 c 460 s 6; 1980 c 534 s 25; 1980 c 614 s 123; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 2 s 18-20; 1982 c 424 s 130; 1982 c 561 s 7,8; 1983 c 77 s 2; 1985 c 248 s 70; 1986 c 444; 1998 c 403 s 29; 2001 c 213 s 22-24; 2008 c 287 art 1 s 75*