

Types of Consignments

A consignment may be booked as a full train load or “wagon load”. The rates for train loads are lower than those for wagon loads, which in turn are lower than those for parcels. Consignments lower than wagon loads are charged as parcels.

Minimum weight applicable to consignment.

For a consignment to qualify as a train load or wagon load its weight has to be equal to or higher than the minimum weight prescribed for the purpose. This is termed as a minimum weight condition, and is determined on the basis of loadability of a commodity into a wagon upto its carrying capacity (CC). While a commodity like coal or iron ore can be loaded wagons upto CC in , a commodity like fruits and vegetables cannot be so loaded. Sometimes different weight conditions are prescribed even for the same commodity, e.g. for cotton raw, fully pressed the weight condition is 170 Q for a broad gauge wagon, but it is 110 Q when it is half pressed. For train loads also weight conditions differ, depending on the commodity.

Registration & supply of wagon

- For booking traffic in train loads/wagon loads a consignor has to place an indent for the type and the number of wagons required. For registering the indent with the Station Master, wagon registration fee at the rate of Rs.150/- per broad gauge, 4 wheeler wagon is payable, for 8 wheeler wagon, this fee is doubled in each case. Wagon Registration fee is not charged in case of military traffic & railway materials. Major siding owners on Indian Railways are allowed to deposit a lumpsum wagon registration fee.

- The wagon demands so registered are noted in a separate register called the “Wagon Indent Register” in serial order and wagon is supplied in the order of registration. But, certain categories of traffic are given priority under the schedule of preferential traffic framed by Central Government under the provisions of the Railways Act, 1989. For example military traffic is given the highest priority as it is schedule A traffic. Other Traffic is similarly placed under schedules B C D&E

Forwarding Note

- The first requirement of the party wanting to book traffic by rail is to furnish forwarding note to the Railway. This is a legal requirement prescribed in section 64 of the Railway Act, 1989 which lays down that every person entrusting any goods to a railway administration for carriage shall execute a forwarding note in such form as may be specified by the Central Government.

- Every consignment of goods when handed over to the railways for dispatch must be accompanied by a forwarding note which must be signed by the sender or his authorized agent and must contain a declaration of the weight, description, etc. and destination station of the goods consigned/offered for booking. The forwarding note is thus a document by which the consigner gives full details of the description of goods to be booked, their weight, measurement, etc., station to which booked etc. It also contains certain important conditions subject to which the goods are booked. It thus becomes the document by which the consigner enter into a contract with the Railways for booking and carriage of traffic and has a legal validity.

Weighment of Consignments

- All consignments accepted for booking should be weighted, not only for the purpose of charging but also to prevent overloading, which is dangerous and can lead to accidents. When a consignment comprises of articles of standard size and weight only a few articles need be actually weighed and then the weight of the whole consignment can be computed.

Marking of Packages

- Packages offered for booking must be marked by the sender indicating the names of the forwarding and destination stations and addressed of the consignor and the consignee. In addition, railway marks are also put on the packages by railway staff. These marks indicate code initials of the booking and destination station, the RR number and the number of packages booked under the RR in the following manner:-

MGS

742

HWS

Labeling, Riveting and Sealing of the Loaded Wagons

- The purpose of labeling is to ensure dispatch of the consignments to their correct destinations and their linkage to the specific Railway Receipts under which they are booked. There are two types of labels, viz. wagon labels and caution or pictorial labels.

- After loading is completed and covered wagons are closed, bolted and secured with rivets, they are sealed. Sealing is very important and is done under the supervision of a responsible official in such a way that it is not possible for any person to get at the goods without breaking the seals. If a wagon is delivered with its seals intact, it shows that there had been no interference with it en-route and Railways cannot be held responsible for shortage, if any, that may be detected at the time of unloading.

Routing of Traffic.

- There are situations when it is possible to carry the goods, booked from one station to another, by more than one railway route. In such case, the principle observed is that the goods will be charged on the basis of the cheapest route but they would normally be carried by the shortest route. Exceptions to this are routing orders covered by what is called the 'Rationalization Scheme' issued by the Central Government under section 71 of the Railways Act, 1989. Traffic covered by these orders is to be carried and charged by the route as prescribed therein.

Railway Receipt

- Section 65 of the Railways Act lays down that on completion of loading and acceptance of goods, the railway administration has to give a receipt to the consignor. This is in accordance with the normal commercial practice where a person handing over goods to a carrier would expect a receipt to be given to him. This Railways Receipt constitutes the authority for taking delivery and has to be surrendered at the destination station.

Re-booking of consignments

- At times, after the arrival of the goods at the destination station, the consignor wants the goods to be dispatched to a different station. This is called re-booking.

Diversion of consignments

After having booked a consignment to one station, and before the arrival of the consignment at the destination station, the consignor may want it booked to a different destination station. In that case, he has to apply to the booking station with proof, by way of the Railway Receipt, to show that it is his consignment and to pay the prescribed diversion fees.

Withdrawal of goods

If after the goods tendered for dispatch have been booked, the sender desires, in writing, to withdraw the goods, he may be permitted to do so by the Station Master of the booking station provided the sender is also the invoiced consignee and the connected railway receipt is surrendered by him along with the application.

Delivery of Goods on Production of R.R.

- Goods are delivered on production of Railway Receipt to the consignee or his authorized representative. However, since the Railway Receipt is a negotiable instrument, the named consignee can endorse it in favour of another party in which case goods may be delivered to the endorsed consignee. After delivering the consignment, the signature of the consignee is taken in the Delivery Book.

Delivery of Goods When RR is not available.

- When an RR is lost, mislaid or is for other reasons, not forthcoming, the railway can grant delivery on the authority of an Indemnity Note to be executed on a non judicial stamp paper, of the value chargeable in a State.

- Indemnity Bond on unstamped paper may also be accepted in the following cases viz:-
- Station Master may, at their discretion, allow delivery of such articles of trifling value as require speedy delivery, to well known persons on unstamped indemnity note.
- Station Masters may similarly, at their discretion, allow delivery of perishable articles on unstamped indemnity note.
- When a Government official is the consignee in his official capacity, he need not execute the unstamped Indemnity Bond.
- Consignment booked to registered co-operative societies.

Grant of Open/assessment delivery

- Section 81 of the Railway Act 1989 dealing with open delivery of consignment says that “Where the consignment arrives in a damaged condition or shows signs of having been tampered with and the consignee or the endorsee demands open delivery, the railways administration shall give open delivery in such manner as may be prescribed.”

Demurrage

Demurrage is defined in the Railway Act as under: “demurrage” means the charge levied for the detention of any rolling stock after the expiry of free time, if any, allowed for such detention.

Wharfage

Wharfage is defined in the Railway Act as follows:

“Wharfage means the charge levied on goods for not removing them from the railway after the expiry of the free time for such removal.

Blank Paper Tickets

- Whenever printed card ticket for a particular station are not available the station master/the booking clerk can issue on a prescribed form a blank paper ticket by filling up the name of the originating and destination station, class of travel fare etc.

Child tickets

- While children upto 5 years of age are allowed to travel free, children between 5-12 years of age are given 50% concession in fare and for them child tickets are issued.

Season tickets and vendors tickets

- For commuters undertaking frequent journeys, monthly season tickets/quarterly season tickets are issued. For vendors bringing market produce from village to towns vendor concession season tickets are issued on which the free allowance for luggage is substantially higher, namely 60 kg. These tickets are issued at highly concessional rates by Railways.

Circular Tour Tickets

These special types of tickets are available for tourists and pilgrims to enable them to visit a number of places on a round tour finally terminating at the starting station. These are basically issued to encourage tourism. The passenger can either avail of the standard circular tour tickets drawn up by the Railways or can give his own itinerary and have a ticket issued for the same.

Soldier Tickets

- Soldiers Tickets are issued to military and police personnel in exchange of warrants for which separate rules are framed.

Return Tickets

- Return tickets are issued at 2 single journey fares.

Excess Fair Tickets

- These are issued by the ticket checking staff when they detect a passenger traveling without a valid ticket or pass

Platform Tickets

These are issued at important stations only to enable persons to enter the platform for the purpose of receiving/seeing off passengers or other work. These have the hour of issue marked on them and are valid for a period of 2 hours from the time of issue.

Refund of fares

Railways grant refund of fares on unused tickets. Rules for refund of tickets were revised in 1990, and have been further modified from time to time. Details rules are published by the Railways in their Time Tables. Refund of fares is normally granted at the stations.

Sidings

- The Railways Act, 1989 (No.24 of 1989) defines railway as under:-
 - “Railway” means a railway or any portion of a railway for the public carriage of passengers for goods and includes –
 - All lines of rails, sidings or yards or branches used for purpose of or in connection with railway.

Assisted/Private Siding

- Sidings provided by the
- Railways are of two types, Assisted and Private. In the case of private sidings, the entire cost of private siding is borne by the siding owner. In the case of assisted siding, however, a part of the cost of the siding is borne by the Railway Administration.

Application to be made for Getting Siding Facilities

Take-off Point

- The take off point of private siding is normally the crossing station nearest to the party's premises. There are, however, cases where the nearest crossing station is at a considerable distance from the party's premises. In such cases, it may be desirable to provide a new crossing station at a convenient location.

- When a siding takes off from an existing station and the siding is equipped for direct reception and dispatch of trains, normally, there is no need to provide any additional facilities at the take off point. However, in case, certain minimum additional facilities are needed at the station to start with or subsequently to cope with increased traffic arising in the region, these have to be provided.

Capital Cost

- Capital cost of new siding: The siding owner shall bear the capital cost of the siding from the take-off point at the serving station including OHE.

Capital Cost of facilities to be developed at serving station for a new siding.

- The linking of the siding to the station shall be done at the cost of the siding owner. If any additional line(s) are required to be laid at the serving station to deal with the traffic offered by the siding or in the region. The same will be borne by the Railways provided the investment remains financially viable with at least 14% rate of return connection at the serving station should be planned where sectional capacity utilization is 80% or above and where such provision is absolutely inescapable. While the capital cost of 'Y' connection may be borne by the siding owner in these cases, staff should be posted in the cabins at Railway's cost.

Capital cost of a crossing station necessitated by a siding.

- The capital cost of the crossing station should be borne by the siding owner. If the capacity utilization of the section is 80% and above, the staff may be posted at the crossing station at Railway's cost, otherwise it should be at party's cost. A review in this regard should be carried out every three years and whenever the utilization reaches 80% and above. Railways should take over the staff cost.

Capital cost for augmenting siding facilities to cater to increased production.

- The capital cost for augmenting the facilities within the siding should be borne by the siding owner. The facilities at serving station necessitated by such expansion should be borne by Railway provided ROR on such investment is 14% or above vis-à-vis traffic projected. The cost of 'Y' connection provided on sections having capacity utilization of 80% or above and planned only when inescapable, will be borne by party and staff in the cabins will be at Railways cost.

Cost of Gauge Conversion

- Siding owners have been representing that gauge conversion is Railways operational requirement and, therefore, its cost should be borne by the Railways. The matter has been considered and it has been decided that if the investment made by the Railways is financially viable with as minimum return of 14% vis-à-vis traffic offered by the siding in the last 24 months this cost may be shared with the party in terms of paras 1822-1826 of the Engineering Code. The gist of these paras is that the entire cost within the siding holder's premises should be borne by him; while outside this may be shared by the Railway in accordance with the sharing cost of assisted siding explained in para 23 it is not financially justified, the siding owners will bear the full cost or the siding will be closed.

Electrification Cost

- **New Sidings**

For a new siding in the electrified territory approved for electrification, the capital cost of OHE should be borne by the siding owner. This will also apply to the military sidings.

Existing Sidings

- It has been decided that railways will bear the cost of electrification of existing siding provided the rate of return is at least 14% on traffic offered in the previous 24 months. In cases where the project is not financially justified, the siding owner will bear the full cost or arrange a diesel loco to work the loads to his premises.

OHE Maintenance (Both new & existing)

- It has been decided that OHE maintenance cost for existing as well as new sidings will be borne by the Railways.

Siding Charges

- The user of the siding has to pay to the Railways siding charge to be fixed by the Railway Administration from time to time for every wagon whether loaded or empty hauled over the siding in each direction by the Railways. If a siding has been provided with complete facilities of direct receipt and dispatch of trains and such trains do not require to be dealt with at the station from which the siding takes off/serving station but run through to or from the siding with railway locomotive or originate from or terminate in the exchange/peripheral yard provided by the siding holder, the Railway administration shall have the powers of levying freight charges on through distance basis upto the buffer end of the siding or the farthest point of the Exchange Yard, instead of levying freight charges upto the serving station and siding charges for haulage of wagon over the sidings.

Basis for Fixation of Siding Charges

- Where freight is levied from and to the serving station and separate siding charges are levied for haulage of wagons between the serving station and the siding, siding charges are normally fixed on the basis of cost per engine hour and the average time for a round trip from the serving station to the siding and back for placement and/or removal of wagons whether loaded or empty. The charges per trip are arrived at by multiplying average time taken per trip by the cost of engine hour as notified by the Railway Board from time to time. The siding charge can also be quoted as a rate per 4 wheeled wagon to be arrived at by dividing the total costs of all the trips performed for working the siding in a year by the total number of loaded wagons, inward, dealt with at the siding during the same period. Freight, this system is useful.

- Where the siding charges are so fixed on a per loaded wagon basis, they can be included in the railway receipt along with the freight charges instead of being separately collected from the siding holder. In the case of outward traffic booked from a siding where the siding holder wants to pass on the charges to the consignee as a part of the total Railway

Cost of Railway Staff

- **New Siding**

Cost of only commercial staff will be borne by the siding owner.

Existing Siding

- For existing sidings not opting for EOL system, the cost of staff will continue to be borne by them. In case, however, system and working can be changed to supply pre-examined empties, review of C&W staff will be undertaken. The Railways must undertake a thorough review of existing staff requirement including commercial staff posted in the siding in order to prune the strength. In view of block rake pattern of movement one or two commercial staff in each shift, as the case may be, should be sufficient.

Engine-on-load (EOL) Policy

- It has been decided that as far as possible all new sidings should be on EOL system which means that loading and unloading in the siding takes place with the engine attached to the train and the same engine places and draws out a rake.

Classification of commodities

- As mentioned, for the purpose of charging freight rates, commodities are grouped into classes. The main factors kept in view in classifying a commodity are mentioned below:
 1. Value or price of the commodity
 2. Use to which a commodity is put.
 3. Relativity between finished products and their raw materials.
 4. Load ability of a commodity.
 5. Susceptibility to damage in transit
 6. Nature of commodity dangerous or non-dangerous.

Telescopic basis of charging freight rate

- It goes without saying that the rate to be charged per tonne has to have a relation with the distance over which the traffic is carried. However, in Railways, the rate per tonne does not increase in direct proportion to the distances of haul. On the contrary, the rate per tonne per kilometer decrease as the distances of haul increases. This feature of railway rating take into account both the cost of service and value of service with terminal expenses remaining the same, the cost of haulage per kilometer goes down as the length of haul increases. Similarly, the capacity of traffic to bear more and more freight with the increase in length of haul also diminishes. Hence the practice of following telescopic basis for fixing rates.

General responsibility of Railways as carrier of goods

- General responsibility of Railways as carrier of goods is contained in section 93 of the Railways Act 1989, which is reproduced below :

“93 General responsibility of a railway administration as carrier of goods – save as otherwise provided in this Act, a railway administration shall be responsible for the loss, destruction damage or deterioration in transit, or non-delivery of any consignment, arising from any cause except the following namely :-

- act of God;
- act of War;
- act of public enemies;
- arrest, restrain or seizure under legal process;
- order or restrictions imposed by the Central Government or a State Government or by an officer or authority subordinate to the Central Government or a State Government authorized by it in this behalf;
- act or omission or negligence of the consignor or the consignee or the endorsee or the agent or servant of the consignor or the consignee or the endorsee:

- Nature deterioration wastage in bulk or weight due to inherent defect, quality or vice of the goods;
- Latent defect;
- Fire, explosives or any unforeseen risk; Provided that even where such loss, destruction, damage, deterioration or non-delivery is proved to have arisen from any one or more of the aforesaid causes, the railway administration shall not be relieved of its responsibility for the loss, destruction, damage, deterioration or non-delivery unless the railway administration further proves that it has used reasonable foresight and care in the carriage of the goods”.