

Legal Regulation of Passenger Transportation by Rail in the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: Railway transport occupies a special place in the economic development of the Republic of Uzbekistan. One of the priorities of state policy is the transportation of passengers in the country, ensuring their safety, improving the quality of service and creating a transport system that meets environmental requirements. The effective operation of railway transport determines not only economic stability, but also social development, connectivity between regions and population mobility. Therefore, the correct formation of legal and regulatory frameworks in the field of passenger transportation is one of the urgent issues. This article fully covers the legal framework for rail transport.

Keywords: Railway transport, passenger transportation, the legal framework.

The transport system, in particular railway transport, is of particular strategic importance in the economic and social life of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Railway corridors passing through the territory of the country play a key role in international trade, economic integration and the free movement of the population. Therefore, legal and regulatory regulation of passenger transportation activities is one of the important directions of state policy.

Railway transport has many advantages over other types of transport: safe transportation of large volumes of passengers over long distances, environmental friendliness, low cost and high reliability. The geographical location of Uzbekistan also makes the development of the railway network a necessity. In recent years, Uzbekistan Railways JSC has carried out major modernization work. New routes have been opened, high-speed Afrosiyob trains have been launched, and stations have been reconstructed. All this is aimed at providing comfortable and safe service to passengers.

Passenger transportation in the Republic of Uzbekistan is regulated by the LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN 'ON RAILWAY TRANSPORT' and the DECISION OF THE Cabinet of Ministers of the REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN 'ON APPROVAL OF THE RULES FOR CARRIAGE OF PASSENGERS, BAGGAGE AND FREIGHT IN RAILWAY TRANSPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN'. These laws determine the rights and obligations of passenger transportation organizations, passenger safety, the procedure for setting ticket prices, the procedure for considering complaints, and other standards. In addition, the resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, documents such as the "Rules for the Transportation of Passengers by Rail", "Procedure for Providing Passenger Services at Railway Stations" establish specific practical norms in the field.

In particular, let's look at the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'ON RAILWAY TRANSPORT'. The purpose of this law is to regulate relations in the field of railway transport.

Also, Article 4 of this law outlines the main principles of railway transport activities, according to which they are:

- legality;
- safety;
- openness and transparency;
- sustainability;
- ecological cleanliness;
- convenience and quality of railway transport services;
- equality in the use of railway transport infrastructure;
- integrity and uninterrupted operation of railway transport infrastructure.¹

As can be seen from this article, it is expedient for the railway transport system to conduct its activities, as mentioned above, primarily based on legality, openness and transparency, and in an environmentally friendly manner.

According to this law, railway services and transportation are divided into the following types:

- domestic services - transportation of passengers, baggage, cargo, mail and courier shipments within the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- international services - transportation of passengers, baggage, cargo, mail and courier shipments between the Republic of Uzbekistan and other countries;
- direct mixed services - mixed transportation of passengers, baggage, cargo, mail and courier shipments by various modes of transport under a single transport document issued for the entire route. Direct mixed services can be both domestic and international;
- transit transportation - transportation that provides for the transportation of passengers, baggage, cargo, mail and courier shipments by rail through the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan, if such transportation is only part of the route with departure and arrival points outside the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as transportation carried out by rail of the Republic of Uzbekistan through the territory of foreign states;
- special transportation - transportation that provides for the transportation of special types of cargo for extremely important state needs, including defense needs.²

Our legislation also broadly covers the rights and obligations of passengers in railway transport, according to which a passenger has the right to purchase a ticket for any train and any carriage open for passenger transport along the routes of trains to the specified station; to take a seat in a train carriage according to the purchased ticket; to carry one child under the age of five with him free of charge without a separate seat. If more than one child under the age of five is traveling with a passenger, one of them is carried free of charge, and the rest are issued a ticket with a separate seat at the children's fare. Children from five to ten years old are also issued a ticket with a separate seat at the children's fare; carry one piece of hand luggage weighing no more than thirty-six kilograms for one full travel document or a travel document for a child fare free of charge. Hand luggage exceeding this weight must be checked into the baggage car.

The passenger must:

- show an identity document when purchasing a travel document (ticket), boarding the train and checking the travel document (ticket) during the journey, with the exception of suburban trains;

¹ <https://lex.uz/en/docs/-7239390>

² <https://lex.uz/en/docs/-7239390>

- have a travel document (ticket) available when boarding the train and during the journey until the end of the journey;
- observe public order, the rules for using passenger cars and facilities intended for the provision of passenger transportation services, as well as be careful with the carrier's property and comply with fire safety rules both during the journey and in waiting areas.

The passenger may also have other obligations in accordance with the law and the contract of carriage.

In addition, it should be noted that the rules for the carriage of passengers, baggage and cargo in the railway transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan were also strengthened by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 109 dated April 13, 2012. This legislation also fully covers all legal issues related to the railway transport system.

These Rules regulate the relations arising between the carrier and the passenger, the consignor and the consignee in the provision of services for the transportation of passengers, hand luggage, baggage and cargo by rail on domestic railway routes. These Rules apply to the transportation of passengers, hand luggage, baggage and cargo by rail on public railways in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan. When carrying out international railway communications on public railways in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the norms of international treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan are observed. All users are provided with the same terms of service and payment for the provision of services. Other terms of payment for the services provided to certain categories of users of services may be provided in accordance with the legislation. Carriers, passengers, baggage, cargo consignors and consignees are obliged to comply with these Rules and the Rules for the Stay of Passengers and Other Persons at Railway Stations (Stations), approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 314 dated November 30, 2011. The passenger is obliged to pay for the carriage of baggage by train, the carriage of baggage (when handing it over), and the consignor is obliged to pay for the carriage of baggage, cargo according to the established tariffs. The conclusion of a passenger carriage contract is confirmed by a railway travel document (ticket), and the passenger's handing over of baggage is confirmed by a baggage receipt. The conclusion of a cargo carriage contract and its handover to the carrier is confirmed by a baggage receipt. Tariffs, fees and charges related to the performance of works (services) in the field of passenger transportation on railways at places of general and non-general use, as well as the procedure for their introduction (amendment) are determined in accordance with legislation.³

State control over compliance with the requirements of these Rules is carried out by the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Transport Control Inspectorate under the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and other state bodies within the framework of their powers granted by law.

In recent years, the government of Uzbekistan has implemented a number of reforms in the transport sector. In particular, the concept of "Digital Railway" has been developed, creating convenience for passengers through an electronic ticket system, online services and mobile applications. Also, programs are being implemented to modernize railway infrastructure, expand international routes, and improve service quality.

In the future, it is necessary to continue reforms in the field of passenger transportation by rail in the following areas:

1. Studying international experience and harmonizing national regulatory documents;
2. Expanding the digital management system;
3. Improving passenger safety and environmental standards;

³ <https://lex.uz/acts/-2001187>

4. Ensuring the social orientation of transport services.

In conclusion, we can say that the system of legal and regulatory frameworks for passenger transportation by rail in the Republic of Uzbekistan has been significantly improved in recent years. National laws are being brought into line with international standards, the quality of service is increasing, and passenger rights are being protected more effectively. In the future, sustainable development in this area will be ensured based on innovative approaches, digital management systems, and international cooperation.

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3. The official website of Uzbekistan Railways JSC is www.railway.uz.