

**TELEGRAPH COMPANIES (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 59 of 1851**

**484.166 Divulging contents; willful failure to transmit; penalty, civil liability.**

Sec. 16. Any person connected with any telegraph company in this state or connected with any such company transacting business in this state, either as clerk, operator, messenger, or in any other capacity, who shall willfully or negligently divulge the contents or the nature of the contents of any private communication entrusted for transmission or delivery to the agent, clerk, operator, messenger, or other person in the employ of such company, or who shall willfully refuse or neglect to transmit or deliver the same, shall, on conviction before any court, be adjudged guilty of a misdemeanor and shall suffer imprisonment in the county jail where such conviction shall be had, for a term not exceeding 6 months, or shall pay a fine not exceeding 500 dollars, in the discretion of the court; and such company shall be liable to the party aggrieved for all damages sustained thereby.

**History:** 1851, Act 59, Imd. Eff. Mar. 20, 1851;—CL 1857, 2064;—CL 1871, 2640;—How. 3708;—CL 1897, 6682;—CL 1915, 8781;—CL 1929, 11677;—CL 1948, 484.166.