

Newbie Skills and Etiquette for the OP Session.
Notes by Norm Logan

Etiquette-The decorum and implied observance of the formal requirements governing behavior in model railroad society.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE OP SESSION:

1) Practice [re-railing](#) a car (getting the car back on track). Cars WILL derail so this is skill you must know.

2) Practice coupling cars using the "4 step" method.

Put together some basic tools- Pencil, small note pad, and an uncoupling [tool/pick](#).

ARRIVE EARLY

Arrive early to see the whole layout before the [OPS](#) (operation) session.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

The Yard Master controls the Yard from the Yard limits.

The Dispatcher controls the MAIN LINE.... All of it.

BEFORE LEAVING THE YARD:

Check to see that you have an "AIR TEST" (Train coupled together).

WHAT TYPE OF ORDERS APPLIES TO YOUR TRAIN?

Through, Freight, Interchange, Local or Turn

ART OF SWITCHING CARS

Find the "RUN AROUND TRACK" first.

Recheck the "TRAIN ORDERS".

Keep the MAIN LINE OPEN.

Keep organizing the order of your train. This will keep the Block cars (cars for the same industry) together and you will make the fewest moves.

STRIP or ADD?

RETURN ALL SWITCHES TO NORMAL. This is MUST!!!! When in doubt what constitutes normal, ASK!!!

SWITCHING SPEED AND GIVING "TIME" FOR YOUR CREW MEMBERS:

First, SLOW DOWN! This is not a race as this is an "artificially contrived situation" ([operating model trains](#)) anyway.

Give "Time" for your crewmembers to do the "switching game".

PROTECT YOUR REAR!

Remember that you are responsible for the safety of each train move. Backing up a train may mean contacting the DISPATCHER for clearance to make that move.

USING THE "PUSH CAR" or CABOOSE is important.

Think about your move first, and then move.

Newbie OP p2

PASSENGER TRAIN OPERATION

Don't forget that you need to "give time" for the Conductor to open the platform door and place a step for passengers.

ON THE MAIN – SIGNALS

If the layout has signals, use them. RED will always mean stop. GREEN is to proceed, however get permission from the Yard Master and Dispatcher to move forward.

RADIO EQUITTE

Have your radio in "push to talk" mode.

OS for DISPATCHER

OS means "on sheet" for the Dispatcher.

LASTLY... Touch or No Touch?

There will always be those times when you your engine will "die" on the track. If you think that this is just dirty track, push the engine by the coupler with your finger.

DO NOT try to pull the train by the last car.

Operate or don't operate.

Do not lean on the layout, and watch where you rest your hands.

Lastly- train controllers, uncoupling tools, pen, pencils, train orders, and of course food/drinks, should never be placed on the layout –EVER.

I know this seems like a lot of dos and don'ts but operators and crewmembers need to know this information so that you can practice the craft of model railroad operation and not be cause of extra work, repair or πgrief for the layout owner.

Happy Operating!

Norm Logan
North Central Div 6 NMRA