

Meade Area Railroad Society

Proposed Operating Rules

5 April 2021

Justification:

Real railroads have lots of rules – and for good reason. Rules help personnel operate trains safely and efficiently. They reduce the possibility of injury to or death of the railroads' workers and passengers or of damage to freight, railroad or other property. These operating rules and rule of yard etiquette are proposed to maximize everyone's opportunity to run trains and have fun. At the same time, we want to minimize collisions and damage to our beloved trains.

Note: The yard is a double ended, double throated yard, broken down into four (4) quadrants when looked at from the inside. Clockwise NE, SE, SW and NW. Tracks are numbered from inside to outside 1 thru 10, not including the mainlines (gray ballast). With track 1 being the inside and track 10 being the outside. These tracks 1 and 10 must remain clear to allow operators access to all the yard tracks. This means, do not park trains on them. The yard can stage at a minimum 16 trains, 4 each in the NE, SE, SW and NW quadrants. More if members run smaller trains and double/triple trains in a yard track. Tracks 6 thru 9 on the NW and 2 thru 5 on the SE quadrants of the yard are the longest tracks and should be reserved for members who tend to run long, 50+ car trains.

Article I. DCC

Section 1.01 The NCE throttle manual is your friend. Read it. Bring it with you. If you forget to bring it, ask another club member if he or she has one, because it is useful.

Section 1.02 Throttle Address

- (a) In a DCC system each throttle or cab must have a unique address. Before using your throttle on a MARRS layout, you **must** check in with the DCC superintendent (Dave T.) to get an address assignment.
- (b) Once you have an assignment, it is **recommended** that you place a label with your name and throttle address on the back of your throttle.
- (c) Because each type of NCE throttle can only use a specific address range, all addresses within a range may already be permanently assigned. If that is the case, the DCC superintendent may give you a temporary address to use during the show, based on who may not be in attendance at that show. While the DCC superintendent is always willing to help with DCC questions, it is helpful if you know how to set the address on your throttle and its other functions.

Section 1.03 Locomotive Address

- (a) Each locomotive on layout **must** have its own decoder address, except in the rare case where you intend to permanently couple a group of locomotives and run them using a common address. This will limit the functionality of the group (or consist) and is **not recommended**.
- (b) Choosing an address – All modern decoders will have two decoder addresses – a single byte short address ranging from 1-127 and a two-byte long address ranging from 0000 – 9999. A decoder can only use one or the other at any given time. Because consist addresses (see below) overlap the range of short addresses (1-127), **do not use short addresses** on a MARRS layout. If you want to address a locomotive within the range of 1-127, program that number as the long address and select it by entering a 0 preceding any other digits. For example, to select a locomotive with long address 80, press SELECT LOCO, then 0, 0, 8, 0 and ENTER. The display will show *080, indicating that you are using the long address.
- (c) If you have a Power Cab or other DCC system at home, it is **recommended** that any locomotive programming be done before bringing the locomotive to the show. If you need to program a locomotive at a show, use the program tracks on the bench (usually found near the Memorial Modules) that is often available or another programming device. Except for setting up consists, programming on the main (POM) is **not permitted** on the layout.

Section 1.04 Consisting

- (a) Consisting, or running a group of locomotives as a group, is a common use case at a show. Advanced consisting with an NCE system makes setting up and running consists simple, but there are some steps that must be followed.

- (b) **Make and break all consists on the layout** – In an advanced consist, a consist address is programmed into CV 19 in each locomotive. On an NCE system, that address, along with the locomotive addresses, is stored in the command station. This allows the user to use the locomotive address as an alias to the consist and the command station sends the commands to the correct consist address. [While the consist may be moved to another layout, this is not recommended. The user has to remember the consist address and make sure no other consists (or locomotives) are using that address. The command station on the other layout has no notion of the consist.] SOP for consisting on a MARRS layout –
- (c) Make sure all locomotives function correctly independently - Set the locomotives in the yard uncoupled and separated. Make sure each moves and operates before attempting to add them to a consist. If they do not operate independently, seek assistance in clearing the old consist from CV19 before attempting to create a new consist.
- (d) Set up the advanced consist – This is simple operation that is mostly menu driven, but if in doubt, read the fine manual. When prompted for a consist address, **always use** the suggested address. The command station is keeping track of which addresses are being used and giving you the next available address. You don't have to worry about conflicts and will never need to remember this address.
- (e) It is **recommended** that you consist no more than three powered locomotives in one consist.
- (f) Run your consist – Before coupling up the locomotives and train, test that the consist is set up correctly. Select the lead locomotive by its long address and verify that all the locomotives move and respond correctly together. You will see CON:NNNN in the display on the Pro Cab. If the locomotives do not act together, clear the consist and start over.
- (g) **Break the consist** – When you are done running, clear the consist before removing the locomotives from the layout. Use the lead locomotive address when prompted for a consist number. Again, this is straightforward and the manual can help you. It is a good idea to see that each locomotive operates correctly and independently after clearing the consist. Clearing the consist has two important advantages. First, it frees up a consist number for another club member to use. Second, and perhaps most importantly, it will permit you to operate your locomotives off the club's layout. Locomotives that are in a consist and removed from the club layout before the consist is cleared may not run on any other layout, since a consist number is stored in the locomotives' CV19.
- (h) Post engine numbers to the operations board when running. Remove engine numbers from the operations board after you have stopped running. This notifies members of engine numbers in use so that no one loses control of an engine because two or more with the same number are operating at the same time.

Article 2: The Yard

Section 2.01 One track at a time in the main yard per operator. Note: The yard track closest to the outside mainline in the NW yard is reserved for Steve, because it is his yard.

Section 2.02 The tracks closest to the edge in the South Yard (inside) and the North Yard (outside) portions of the yard are approach tracks to the SE and NW portions of the yard. Trains should not be parked there for two reasons:

- (a) Your train could get accidentally bumped off the track. It is a scale 300-foot drop onto a concrete floor.
- (b) These tracks are the only way for trains to access certain parts of the yard.

Section 2.03 Shorter trains should go on shorter yard tracks. Choose a yard track proportionate to the length of your train. Tracks 6 thru 9 on the NW and 2 thru 5 on the SE quadrants of the yard are the longest tracks and should be reserved for members who tend to run long, 50+ car trains.

Section 2.04 There are double-slip switches on Track 4 on the inbound track in the SW end and on the departure track in the SE end of the yard. Warning: these can be hazardous to big engines and long cars. Four-axle diesels, steam engines with six or fewer driving wheels and 40-foot (or smaller) freight cars usually do not have problems going through the double slip switches. If you are running a train with shorter wheelbases, consider setting up on these tracks to allow trains with bigger locomotives and/or longer cars to use other tracks that are less likely to derail them.

Section 2.05 If someone's train is blocking your arrival to or departure from the yard, politely ask them to move it. Move someone else's train only as a last resort – that is when the owner cannot be located. Make sure the train is placed in a location where it is unlikely to get damaged. Think about how you would want someone to treat your trains in a similar situation.

Section 2.06 When you are done running and your train is just taking up space in the yard, don't get huffy, if someone politely asks you to move your train.

Section 2.07 When you are done running, put your train away, especially if it is a small train (less than 20 cars). Clear space for other operators.

Section 2.08 When you have finished running and taken your train off the track, put your boxes away. Don't leave them on the staging tables. This leaves space for others to put their trains on the track.

Section 2.09 Use the yard track sign-up sheet to reserve track space in the yard and operating times. Use the colored dice to reserve your yard track while running your train. We strongly recommend that you do not sign up for more than a couple of hours in a row. You will get tired walking around the large layout.

Article 3. Running

Section 3.01 Departing from the yard and arriving in the yard.

- (a) When your departing train has cleared the yard, throw the switch back to the main, or ensure someone has done it for you.
- (b) Approaching the yard: if you are running on the inside, and your destination is the west yard, set switches to the appropriate yard track (2 through 5). If your destination is the east yard, set switch ladder to track #1 and then to the appropriate track (2 through 5) in the east yard. *After your train has cleared the mainline, reset the mainline switch back to the main.* This prevents a train from accidentally following you into the yard. After your train has stopped in the yard, reset the yard switches to track #1. *Again, this prevents a train from accidentally following you into the yard.*
- (c) If you are running on the outside, and your destination is in the west yard, set the switches to the appropriate yard track (6 through 9). If your destination is the east yard, set the switch ladder to track #10 and then to the appropriate track (6 through 9) in the west yard. After your train has cleared the mainline, reset the mainline switch back to the main. *This prevents a train from accidentally following you into the yard.* After your train has stopped in the yard, reset the yard switches to track #10. *Again, this prevents a train from accidentally following you into the yard.*

Section 3.02 When running, pay attention to your train.

- (a) Has it uncoupled and or derailed?
- (b) Whenever possible, but especially when testing new equipment or with trains of 40+ cars, run with a brakeman or conductor to help notify the engineer of uncouplings and derailments and to help remedy them quickly.
- (c) Hang up and drive. Your focus should be on your train, the train in front of you, the train behind you, and your throttle. Using electronic devices other than your throttle while operating your train is discouraged.
- (d) Maintain a distance of at least four feet (minimally) and eight feet (optimally) behind the train in front of you.

Section 3.03 Communication

- (a) Communicate with other operators. If you are planning to depart the yard on the inside or outside, find other operators on that line and let them know of your plans. If another train is in your line-of-sight (Within 18 ft.), wait for that train to pass before pulling out of the yard. Similarly, if you are done running and are planning to return to the yard, let the operator of the train behind you know so that he or she can slow down or stop if needed.
- (b) Politeness works. "Please" and "thank you" are (or should be) appreciated. Phrase your request in the form of question: "Would you please throw the switch for me?" Questions like, "Would you please move your train?" or "May, I move your train to another track, please?" sound much better than "Move your damn train!" The latter phrase should only be used in dire emergencies or in the face of extraordinary stupidity.

Section 3.04 Faulty Equipment

- (a) If your equipment does not work, if it keeps derailing or uncoupling, remove the faulty car or engine from the track and fix it before putting it back on the track. Don't run multiple laps with bad locomotives and/or rolling stock.
- (b) Make every effort to test new equipment on the layout in the hour or so before the show opens. Several members (Mark P & Steve H) are willing to inspect trains and cars to ensure that they meet NMRA standards/recommendations.

Section 3.05 Know the rules and how to operate

Experienced club members with the designation of yardmaster will be willing to train new members in the rules of safe operation.

