

Model Railroad 101 Locomotives Cars and Couplers



Your Railroad, do what interests you

- What do you want to do with your railroad
 - Modeling a scene or particular city
 - Train operations
 - Entertain the kids or grandkids
 - Retirement hobby or bring back great memories
 - Free-lance modeling or particular road name, can be one you make up
 - Do you want to model a particular era or even a particular date
 - Early steam or Late steam
 - Early diesel or Late Diesel
 - Street Car or Subway

Type of Locomotives

- Locomotive/era may define your ideal railroad empire
 - Steam railroading had
 - Fuel and water towers (every 8-12 miles early; 100-150 miles late steam)
 - Turn-tables and Round houses
 - More destinations that are closer, lots of local freights
 - Steeper grades (logging railroads)
 - Shorter cars and locos, fewer cars in each train



Steam Locos



Steam Geared locos



Diesel locomotives

- Fewer fuel stations and no water towers
- No turn-tables, diesels run in forward or reverse
- Larger locomotives, Larger curves and Larger bridges
- Longer trains more freight cars
- Fewer station stops, not as much passenger traffic
- You can decide to do both steam and diesel, this may limit you to early 1950's



Diesel Locos





Types of Cars

- The type of locomotive will have an impact on car types.
 - Modern cars do not look right with steam era locomotives (i.e. Intermodal cars)
 - Steam era cars do not fit in with modern locomotives (wood box cars)
 - Pick the type or era that interest you, better to have a interesting layout than the biggest layout around. If the layout is interesting to you, that is the most important thing you will be spending lots of your time and money, choose wisely. Be honest with yourself
 - But model railroading is fun, if you want to break or make the rules **go ahead!**

Flat Cars - carry over-size loads & create interest



Flat Cars



Auto Rack – carry trucks and automobiles



JP/2012
RailroadsTrains.blogspot.com



Tanks Cars – Liquid or Gas



Box cars

- automobiles, tractor, bicycles
- Appliances, parts, tires
- Lumber, large boxes
- Grain



Box Cars

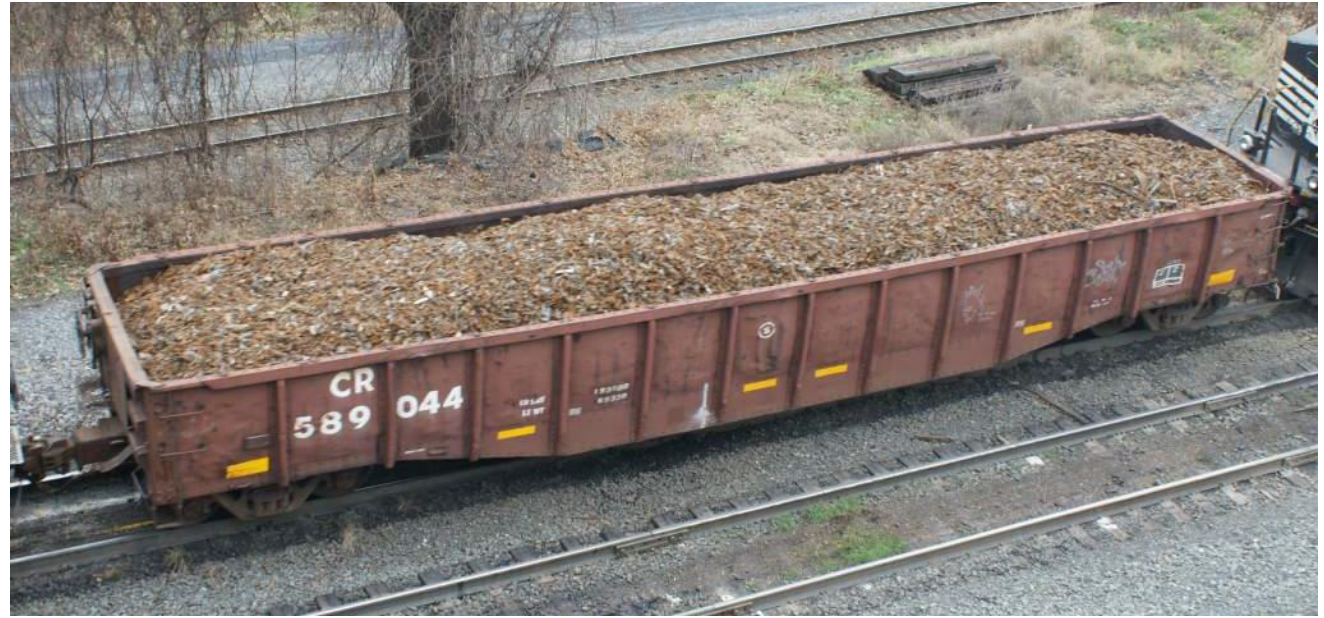


Gondola

- Gravel, wood, old railroad ties, wheels
- scrap iron, lumber, scrap aluminum
- telephone pole, large pipes, oversize tire



Gondola



Passenger cars



Hopper cars

- Gravel, sand, and ballast
- Coal different sizes
- Wood Chips



Covered Hopper

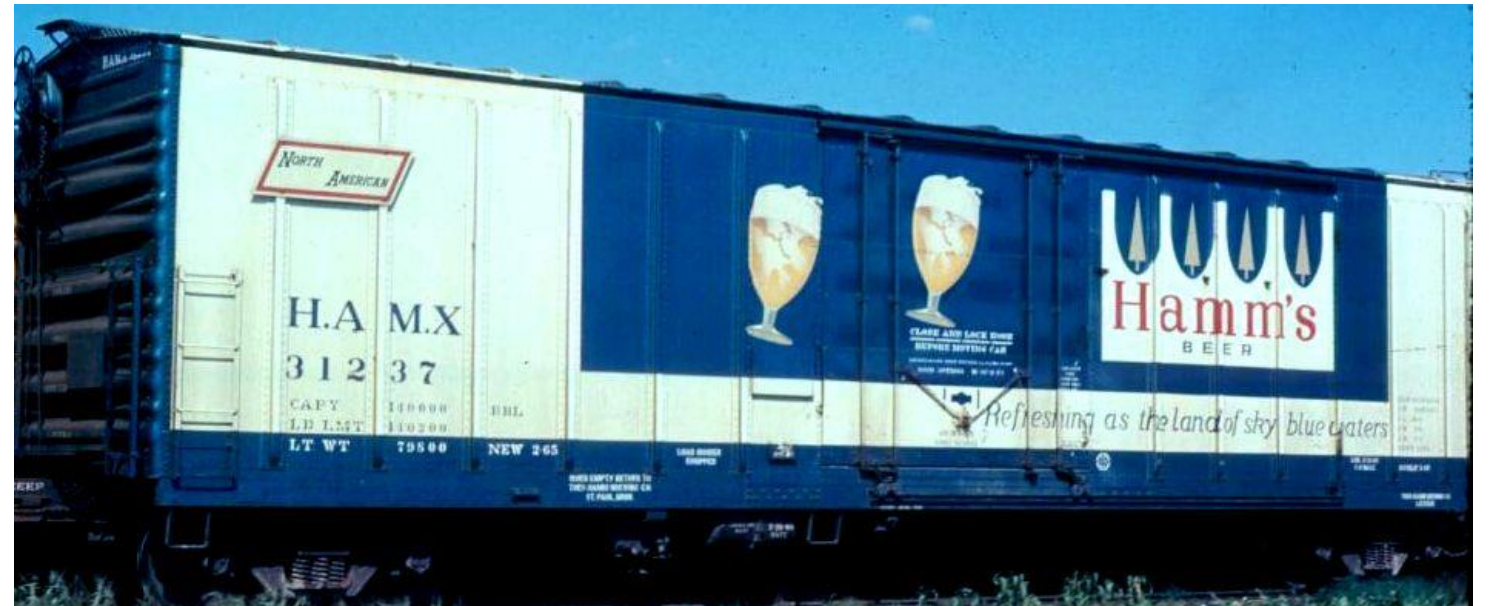
- Grain, plastic pellets
- Cement, sand, Dry chemicals



Reefers – Refrigerator Car carry perishable produce, sodas, or beers



Beer Cars - Reefer



Stock Car



Coil cars – carry roll steel or aluminum



Maintenance of Way

- Snow plows, cranes
- Track maintenance



TOFC – trailer on Flat Car



Intermodal



Caboose

- Do you want caboose on your railroad
- Modern trains have EOT or FRED



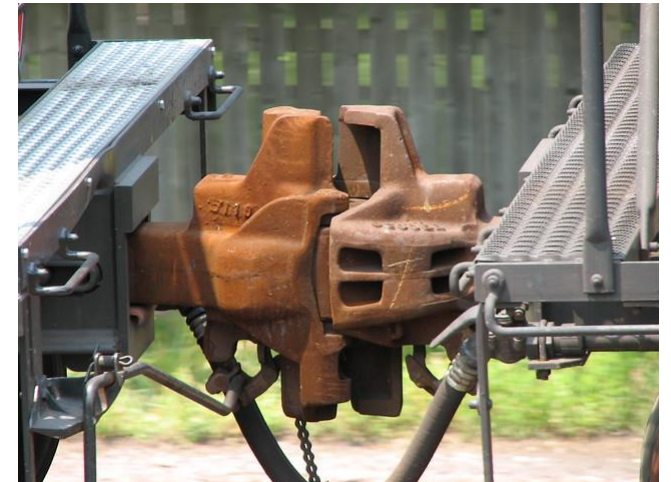
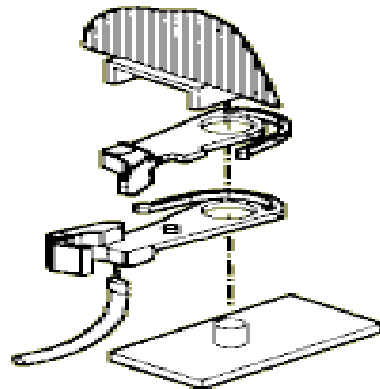
Acquire your equipment

- Do you want to build kits
- Do you want to buy Ready to Run (RTR) saves time cost more money
- Some prefer RTR so they can run the railroad not build kits
- Buy used equipment at Train shows. May need repair and parts
- Repaint equipment to match your railroad empire name
- Scratch build equipment you can not find



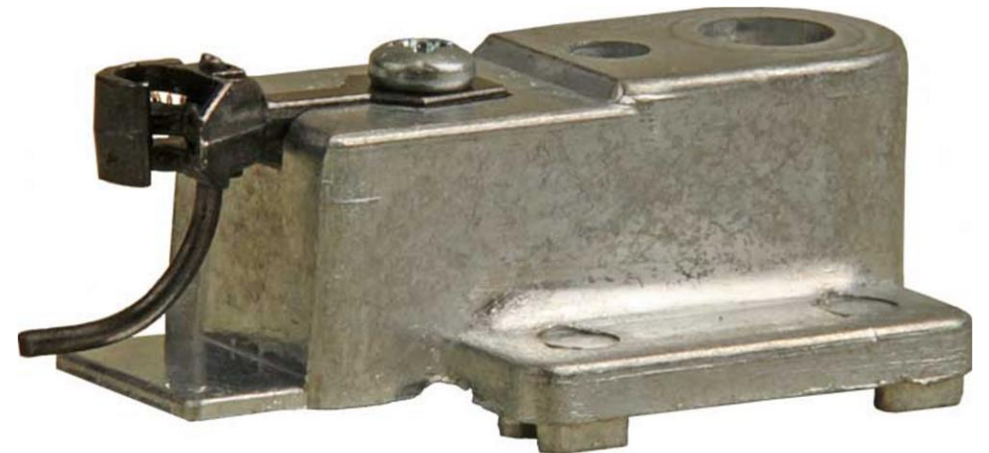
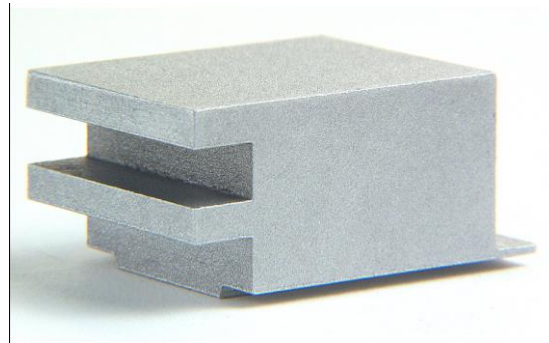
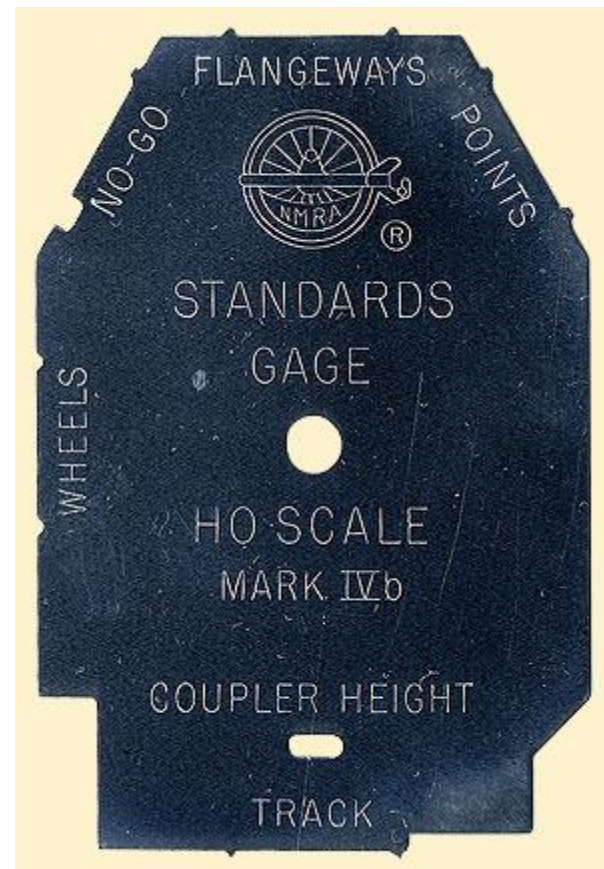
Couplers

- Horn hook
- Kadee most popular #5
- Mc Henry
- Accumate two pieces
- Specialty Couplers
 - Shelf Couplers
 - Non-working
 - Long/Short Shank
 - Couplers on Trucks



Checking your equipment

- Using NMRA recommend practices
 - Be sure the wheels are in gauge
 - Be sure the track is in gauge
 - Add weight to cars use the NMRA weight recommendation
 - Helps when backing up your train, help prevent derailments
 - Check couplers and be sure proper height, use same couplers



Options to make a better layout

- Buy steel wheel sets to make cars run smoother less dirt than plastic wheels
- Buy Kadee (or compatible) couplers to make more realistic operations
- Add grab irons, coupler bars, brake detail, and chains
- Add people to passenger cars, workmen to locos
- Add loads to freight cars, make them removal able
- Weather the cars and locos
- Sound decoders to locomotives



Decisions – Decisions

It may seem there are too many variables and decisions, but the time you spend on the initial planning, will save you hundreds of dollars and dozens hours of work. Re-building or re-working can be exciting, but may take you away from the joy of running your layout.

Do not worry too much about the decision(s) you make as long as you remember to have fun and do what you enjoy!

Questions or Comments

