

Station Master Rules

Historical Setting

Between 1840 to 1950, trains operated without radios in their cabs, racing in the dark against oncoming traffic, relying on timetables and pocket watches to avoid collisions. Station Operators physically passed engineers orders from the dispatchers and “OS” reported (“On Station”) them through.

As the *Station Master* in your lineside Office, you’ll manage a town’s railroad connection, embarking passengers and gathering freight, meeting demands from all quarters. Can you manage trains and cargos effectively? The railroad depends on you!

Definitions

The following are railroad/game terms.

- Along the right of way:
 - Division Point: Where your railroad ties into other railroads. There is an Eastern Division Point and a Western Division Point.
 - Division: Your company’s tracks that connect the Eastern and Western Division Points. It might represent hundreds of miles of track and several train “Offices” (each controlled by a player serving as a Station Operator).
 - Mainline Card: Tarot-sized cards that represent roughly the hundred miles of tracks between train offices.
 - Office: The location you (the Station Master) sit at to lord over your area. An Office might be a Whistle Post (basically, a shack in the middle of nowhere), a depot, a station or a terminal.
 - Control Point: An office where trains are reported in to the distant (NPC) dispatcher. These include Division Points, Depots, Stations and Terminals. Whistle posts are not Control Points. Control Points are denoted by a train order signal on their card.
 - Limits: The sign located on the track east and west of your Office’s area that denote the limit of your control area. As the track controlled by your office expands, the sign may be moved outwards.
 - Subdivision: The Mainline track between the Limits of opposing Control Points. Note that Whistle Posts are *NOT* Control Points and are considered to be an internal part of a Subdivision, no different than Mainline Track.
 - Running Track: The “Mainline” that runs horizontally between your limits, including your office. It is the horizontal row of cards, Limit-to-Limit.
 - Secondary Track: All tracks in your limits that are not the Running Track.
 - Operational Rail: Any track (Running and Secondary) on which a train may sit, change direction, drop and pick up cars on. Operational Rail is marked with a wheel icon.

- A/D (Arrival/Departure) Track: These are short sidings in front of your office where trains arrive and depart from. A train at an Office occupies one A/D track. Should a train arrive and there are no available A/D tracks, there might be a collision.
- Train makeup:
 - Crew Tray: The canoe-shaped holder that contains the train pieces.
 - Engine: The engine piece. A Crew Tray must have an engine piece. The engine may be pulling cars, pushing cars, or a combination of both.
 - Consist: A collection of Rolling Stock (cars) in a Crew Tray.
 - Rolling stock: The non-engine pieces representing rail cars that make up either a train (in a Crew Tray) or are left sitting on an Operational Rail card. Rolling stock may be...
 - Coaches for passengers (blue or white)
 - Boxcars for general freight (brown or white)
 - Refrigerated cars (reefers) for field produce (brown or white)
 - Hoppers for coal (brown or white)
 - Tank cars for oil (brown or white)
 - Cabooses for the conductor and switch crews (red)
 - A colored car is loaded. A white car is empty.
 - Division Yard: A table-top pile of Rolling Stock. Rolling Stock for use for cargo, passengers or on trains are selected from here.
 - Classification Yard: Where used Rolling Stock is placed. Used engines and cabooses return directly to the Division Yard. When the Division Yard is empty, all Rolling Stock in the Classification Yard is moved back to the Division Yard.
- Train types:
 - Timetabled Trains: These are trains scheduled to run every day at the same time. This time is denoted by a Number Board placed on the turn chart. The Timetabled Trains are numbered 1-12, with odd-numbers westbound (left) and even-numbered eastbound (right). The train image on their card also defines its direction. Lower-numbered trains are more important and the dispatcher will give them greater seniority on the railroad.
 - Number board: The small tiles, numbered 1-12, that record which stage (hour) the train should depart.
 - Extra Trains: These are one-and-done trains, a train which runs once with its card returned to the Scrap Yard deck upon completion. Since their image on the card is head-on, the player drawing it may determine its direction. Their train number is denoted with an "X" designation, but the actual following number denotes their seniority.
- General terms:
 - East is to the player's right. West is to the player's left.
 - A Stage is a two-hour section of time.
 - A Phase is an operational component of a Stage.
 - A Day is a series of twelve Stages.
 - A Move is a Crew Tray moving from one Operational Rail card to another.

- Highball: When a train holding at an Office automatically departs.
- Revenue: Points gained and lost in the game to determine victory.
- Passenger and Cargo elements
 - A Facility is a business which loads/unloads cargo and freight.
 - A Modifier Facility is a card placed adjacent to a Facility that increases its capacities.
 - A blue man-icon is a Laborer, who works cargo
 - A black man-icon is a Porter, who assists passengers.
 - A green Outbound box holds all to-be-loaded freight/passengers of the indicated type.
 - A red Inbound box holds all just-unloaded freight/passengers of the designated type.
 - A blue “MEN | AT | WORK” turn track follows how quickly freight cars are loaded/unloaded.
- Railroad management:
 - Dispatcher: The imaginary person running the railroad and granting rights to trains to operate.
 - Superintendent: The Dispatcher’s right-hand-man, who manages the division. The role of the superintendent is passed player to player, and a Superintendent’s shift is six hours (i.e. three Stages).
 - Home Office: The primary face-down deck cards are drawn from.
 - Departments: Three decks (face up) from which cars may also be drawn from and discarded to.
 - Salvage Yard: Where used cards are placed. They are face up to ensure that no cards that should not be discarded are. We’re keeping an eye on you.

Game Mode

The type of game should be chosen. Versions include

- Solitaire (player controls either one or several Offices). You may consider playing an open-ended solitaire game to grow familiar with *Station Master’s* mechanics.
- Multiplayer (players each control an Office)

Goals are...

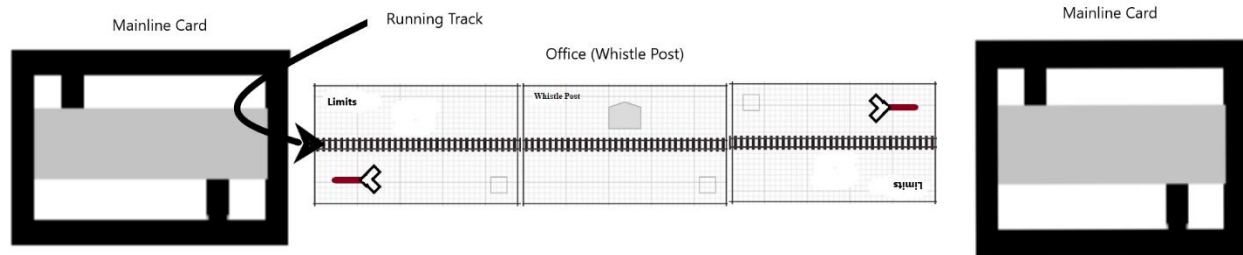
- A specific total Revenue Points or highest Revenue within a specific number of Days.
- Co-Op. Multiple players work to achieve a shared goal.

Game Setup

The game begins in the early days of railroading. The Division has just been spiked down and no trains are officially running yet. The future awaits!

Each player places a Whistle Post card (representing his Office) in the center of his play area. A Limits card is placed to either side, east and west. These three cards represent his “Running Track”. All remaining Whistle Posts and Limits are set aside.

A “Mainline” card (tarot size) is drawn at random and placed between each player, forming a chain of Offices.



Players are assumed to be in a “chain” of Offices running east to west. Each player rolls a D12. Highest number is considered the Eastern Division point. Place the “Eastern Division Point” just right of the player’s eastward Mainline card. The player to his right (or at the opposite end of the table space) gets the Western Division Point card to the left of another Mainline card, placed to his left.



Example: Two players with Mainline cards placed and Division Points on each end.

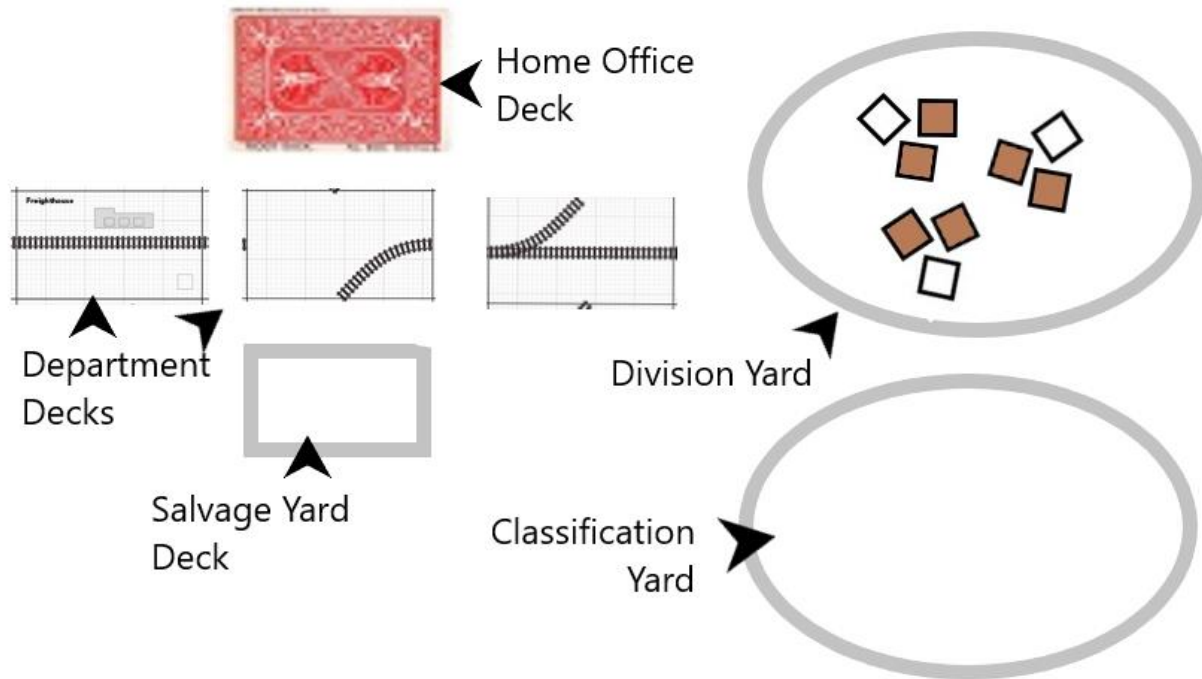
Each player rolls the D12. Highest begins the game as the Superintendent (his shift runs three turns (or six hours) Place the Fedora piece before him to signify his position. A Pocket watch piece is placed on the “midnight” hour on the turn sheet.

The “Home Office” deck is shuffled and placed face down.

Starting from the superintendent, each player draws three cards off the Home Office deck. Once they have these cards, three cards are drawn from the Home Office deck and placed face up next to it, three individual decks representing the Department decks.

Space should be provided for the Salvage Yard deck (discards).

All available train car pieces should be placed the Division Yard pile. Crew trays and Number Boards are placed near the turn sheet.



Order of Play

In each Stage of the day (a two-hour time period) the players perform Phases, one at a time in order from the Superintendent through the players in order to his left. Once all the Phases for that Stage are complete, the day ends. Every three Stages, the Superintendent's fedora piece is given to the player to the current Superintendent's left.

Phases

Phases are (in order)

- Local Operations Phase
- New Train Phase
- Mainline Phase
- Cargo phase
- Superintendent Shift Change (at 4am, 10am, 4pm and 10pm)

Local Operations Phase

A player may do one of three things in this phase:

- **Switch with a train**
 - If choosing this option, the player may move trains about his station area.
 - He has six Moves he can use to move his Crew Trays about. He may divide these moves between multiple Crews in any fashion he chooses.
 - See Appendix A for details on how trains move and switch.

- **Draw a card**
 - The player may draw a single face-down card from the Home Office deck, or take the top face-up card from any of the three Department decks.
 - He may play any or all appropriate cards from his hand.
 - Any played cards are placed on the table or into the Salvage Yard deck, face up.
 - Before concluding, the player must reduce his hand to no more than three cards. If he must (or wishes to) discard, that card is placed face up on top of one of the three Department decks.
 - If drawing a card has depleted the Home Office deck, immediately collect all cards from the Salvage Yard and three Department decks, reshuffle, and reestablish the Home Office and Department decks.
 - If any of the Department decks is empty, draw a Home Office card and place it in the empty spot.
- **Freight Agent Operations**
 - You may select one Rolling Stock from the Division Yard pile and place it onto a Facility's green Outbound box.
 - Or you may select one Rolling Stock from a Facility's red Inbound box and place it into the Classification Yard pile.
 - Or if your Facility is hopelessly jammed, you may remove one car from the Outbound/Inbound/"MEN|AT|WORK" areas and place it into the Classification yard.

New Train Phase

There are only a limited number of crew trays / engine pieces. If all are in play, keep any train cards due out near the turn sheet to remind you of these "held trains". As soon as you can run a train, build it as specified below. The lowest numbered train should go out first.

If there is a Timetabled Train (one with a number board on that Stage) and a crew is available, set the crew on the appropriate Division Point (based on the train card's image's direction). Put an engine piece on the "front" of the train. Then, starting with the superintendent and working left, each player may place ONE car (loaded or empty) on the train (within the car types and numbers specified) from the Division Yard pile. The person placing the Rolling Stock piece on the train must make every effort to find a suitable car (within the train's specific criteria, either loaded or empty). If no appropriate cars exist, the train will run short (Rolling stock might be added enroute to bring it to its maximum length).

For new Timetabled Trains (when a player draws that card and plays it), roll 1D12 and place the number board in that spot on the Timetable column of the turn chart. If occupied by a scheduled train, work down the column, looking for the next available space. If you get to the bottom of the chart, start again at the top. This train is now a scheduled train and will run every day at that time. If a new timetabled train is placed on the current turn, refer to the paragraph above for determining the consist.

Once all timetabled trains are created, if there is a played Extra Train card and an available Crew Tray, the player who played the card may place the Crew Tray in either division point (west or east) for immediate departure and may load the consist *as he chooses, subject to the listed criteria*.

Mainline Phase

Any train holding at a player's Office (Whistle Post, Depot, Station, or Terminal) or a Division Point must attempt to move. These trains move automatically and in numeric order based on the white number board pictured on the train's image (lowest number first). Remove the "X" from extras to determine their true number.

Note that at the start of the game, the entire railroad consisting nothing but Whistle Posts is considered to be one big Subdivision. Updating Offices with the Control Point icon split the Subdivision in two at that point.

The imaginary dispatcher will Highball (i.e. clear a train) out of an Office under the following conditions:

- The train must be sitting on the A/D track before the Office or at a Division Point.
- The train must be in correct order listed on the train's card (engine on the front, Rolling Stock and possibly a Caboose). It may depart with fewer Rolling Stock than listed.
- If there is a train in the next Subdivision and moving towards the considered train, the considered train will not depart.
- If there is a train in the next Subdivision moving in the same direction (i.e. the considered train is following the other train), the Superintendent determines if it is safe for a following train to depart.
- If the Subdivision contains a Whistle Post (i.e. a non-Control Point) yet a train is occupying Secondary Track there (i.e. clear of the Running Track), the superintendent must Highball the train.

Trains are placed on the appropriate "Start" point of the Mainline card. They must move one region (vertical bar) every turn. Once they run off the end of the card, they enter the adjoining player's Limit. They are then moved immediately to the Office, where they stop for orders. When moving trains along the division, it's a good idea to keep their train card near them for reference as to the train number and operation details.

If any cars or trains are sitting on the Running Track between the Limits and the Office, a collision may occur. Further, if there is no room at the station (every A/D track is occupied by a train or Rolling Stock) a collision may occur.

If a train is ready to Highball and the track between it and the Limits is occupied by a train or cars, a collision may occur.

Load/Unload Phase

Loading and unloading of Rolling Stock (passengers and freight) takes place in this phase. There are special cards that permit this.

- Passenger Facilities: Depots, Stations and Terminals.
- Freight Facilities: Mine Tipples, Produce Sheds, Grocer's Warehouses, Oil Refineries, Power Plants.
- Modifier Facilities: A number of cards that, if placed adjacent (on any of the nine nearby spots) increase the passenger or freight facility's capacities. If two Facilities are adjacent to the Modifier, the effects of a Modifier Facility may only be used on one Facility in a turn.
- Note that some Freight Facilities allow only outbound cargos (loading), some inbound (unloading) and some both. Passenger Facilities always allow both.

Special Icons:

- Loading boxes are green, with the icon of the car type that can be loaded from there.
- Unloading boxes are red, with the icon of the car types unloaded from there.
- A number touching a box denotes the number of cars that can be held in the Loading/Unloading boxes. If it touches *both* boxes, then that is the total of *all* loads/unloads on that card.
- Human icons in denim blue are Laborers, used for handling freight.
- Human icons in uniform black are Porters, and used for assisting passengers.
- Laborers and Porters may only be used once each in a Stage.
- For Freight Facilities, there is a blue "MEN | AT | WORK" sign. This is used as a turn track for loading/unloading cars. Only one Load may exist on each of the three blue boxes. However, you may "move past" another load if you have enough Laborers to hop past it.

For each Facility, add up the number of icon resources (Laborers and Porters) that you have at each site. Resolve them one at a time.

- Passenger Operations: One Porter will allow you to do any one of the following actions.
 - Assist passengers to board. *Requirements*: A blue coach occupying a green Loading Slot, and a train at the Office's A/D track with a white empty coach. *Action*: Replace the white empty coach on the train with the loaded blue one, discard the empty coach into the Classification Yard, and earn a Revenue point.
 - Assist passengers to de-train. *Requirements*: White empty coach in Division Yard, and an unoccupied red Unloading slot. Replace the blue coach with the white one on the train. Place the blue coach on the red Unloading Slot. Earn a Revenue Point.
- Freight Operations: Freight operations are like passenger operations with the distinct difference that passengers self-load and unload, whereas freight can take hours to manually work. Each Laborer may do one thing below.
 - Load the car. *Requirements*: A load in the Green Loading Box and an empty car of the required type on the industry's track (maximum of four cars). It takes one laborer to move the cargo one spot: from the Green Loading Slot to "MEN", then "AT", then "WORK". If moved off "WORK", replace the empty white car on the

industry's track with the load and discard the white car into the Classification Yard. Earn a Revenue Point.

- Unload the car: Requirements: A load in the industry's track and an empty car of that type in the Division Yard. The first Laborer replaces the load with an empty car of that type on the industry's track and places the load on "WORK". Additional Laborers move it to "AT" then "MEN". The last one places the load on a red Unloading box. Earn a Revenue Point.
- NOTE: While ANY loads are in the "MEN | AT | WORK" track; the industry's track is locked down for safety reasons. It loses its status as Operational Rail. No cars can be picked up or dropped off, and no trains may occupy or move on it.

Passenger Facilities and Freight Houses permit cars to move each direction (loading and unloading). Of course, you *may not* load a car, gain a point, then unload it and gain another. To keep track of complex platform operations, the player should denote outbound pieces by flipping them onto their roofs. Once the train completes operations and highballs, the pieces can be flipped right-side-up once more.

Collisions:

- Any collisions that occurred on a mainline card are the fault of the Superintendent who cleared the trains out. He loses 5 Revenue points. Both trains are immediately removed. Timetabled trains can run the next day.
- Any collisions that occur on the track between (and including) a player's Limits are his fault. Lose 5 Revenue points. Both trains are removed. Timetabled trains run the next day.

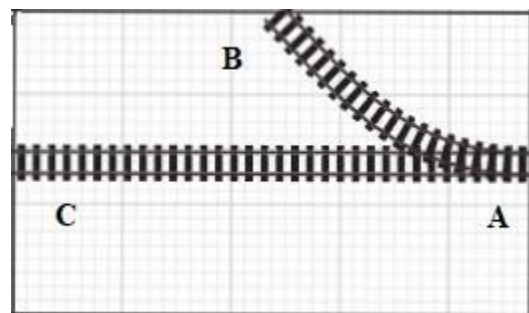
Appendix A: Local Switching

As mentioned before, *Operational Rail* is any track card that a train can stop and leave Rolling Stock (uncouple) on. Operational Rail is any track card with a train wheel icon on it.

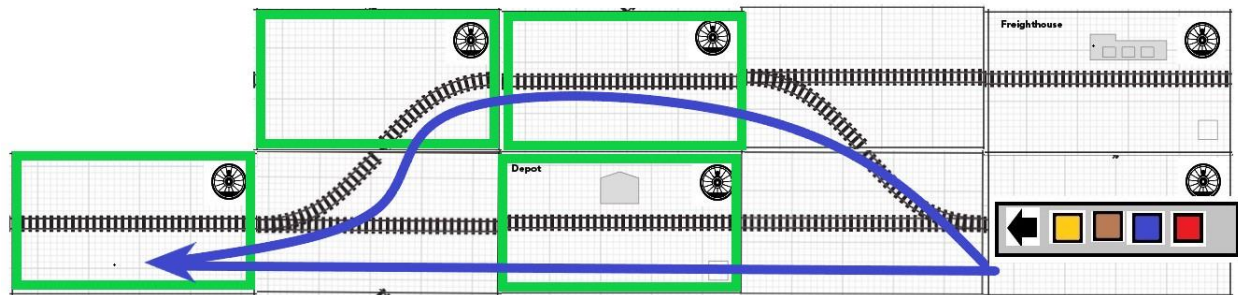
During the Local Operation Phase, you may operate your train if you do not draw a card or add/remove cargo or passengers from a card. You will have six Moves that you can make, and these moves can be split between trains if desired. A Move involves a train travelling from one Operational Rail to another (regardless of distance) without changing direction.

A train that enters a turnout from "A" may proceed to B or C. However, a train entering through B or C may only proceed to A. Since there is no Operational Rail wheel icon, the train may not stop on this card.

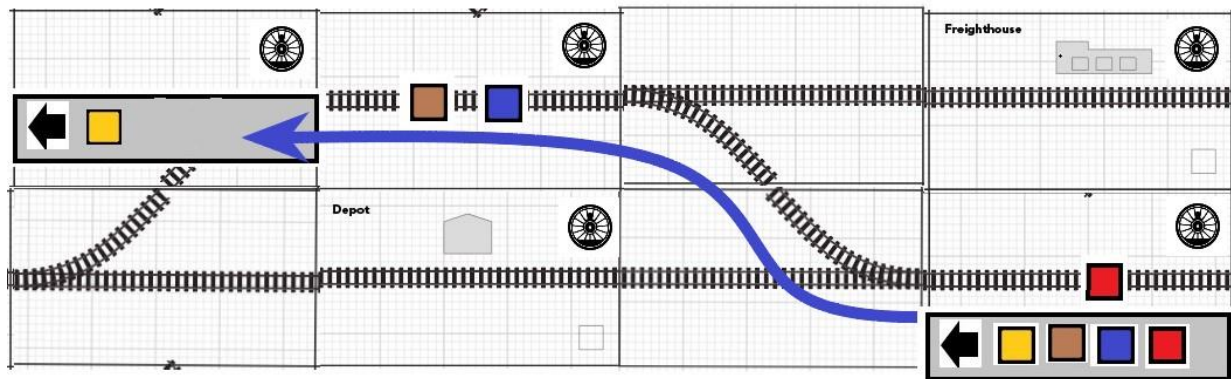
The example below shows all the operational squares a Crew Tray can go to in one move, shown



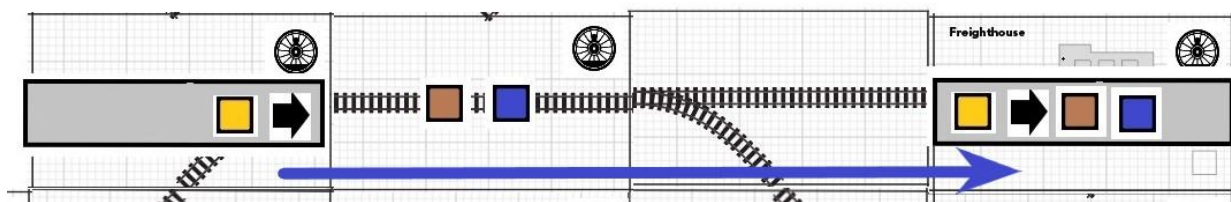
as green squares. Notice that he cannot end up in the upper right card, as that would require a change of direction. The two blue arrows mark his possible routes.



A train may drop off cars, either where he starts or while moving. Note that cars must come off the train in the order they are seated in the Crew Tray. In the example below, the train starts with four cars (yellow, brown, blue and red, in that order). He drops red as he starts, then brown and blue during his move. He ends with only the yellow car.



Engines also have couplers on the front end. In this case, a train can pick up two cars and add them to the Crew Tray in order that they were in, pushing them into the Facility.



It is critical that cars are loaded into and unloaded from the Crew Tray, and occupy the track, in the same order they originally held, left-to-right.

Special Rules:

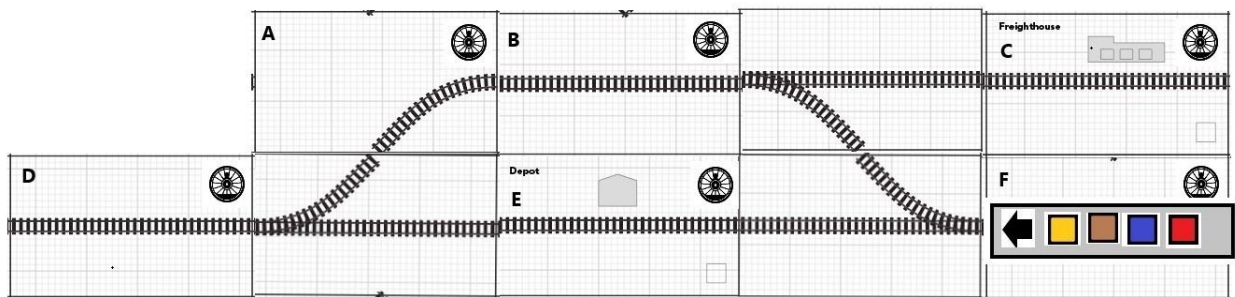
- While your Office Track is considered Operational Rail, Rolling Stock may not be dropped off here. As there is a passenger platform here, it would be dangerous for the railroad to switch Rolling Stock in this area.
- If two trains are operating in your station area, they may not share the same card or move through each other.

- The exception to the above is your Office track. It has the number of A/D (Arrival/Departure) tracks listed. As long as there are fewer trains holding here than A/D tracks, you may enter and pass through.
- If you move your Crew Tray into cars on your track, you **MUST** pick them up. You may not “go around them”.
- A Crew Tray must always have an engine. It may only move a maximum of four Rolling Stock.
- While you automatically couple to any cars you come across during your Moves, the same is not true for arriving at or departing trains during the Mainline Phase. Those trains are running at high speed and are not expecting any trains or Rolling Stock on the line. Any cars encountered by such trains result in a collision.

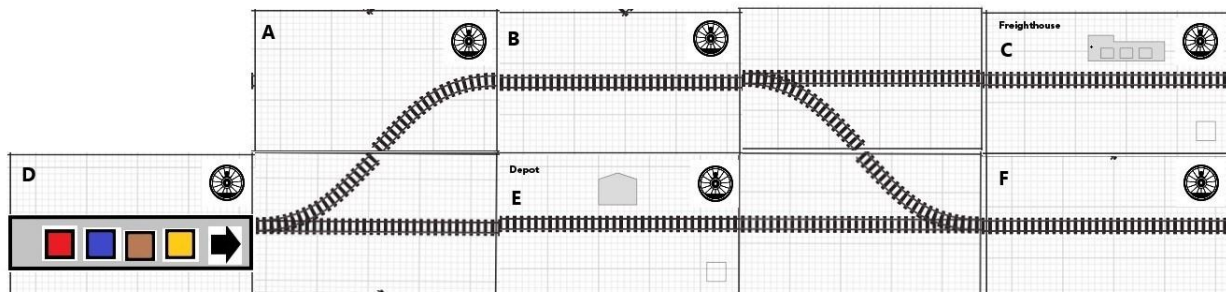
Basic Switching Moves:

There are two basic switching moves you should be aware of, *trailing* (that require a reverse move) and *facing* (more difficult, as they require you to push the cars in). See if you can figure out how to spot the brown car (in the middle of your train) to the freight house on Card “C”.

- Trailing point. How to get that brown car to the industry on Card C?



- *First move: Drop your back two cars (blue and red) on Card F. Move train to Card B.*
 - *Second move: Reverse to card C and drop the brown car.*
 - *Third Move: Move forward to Card B.*
 - *Fourth Move: Back up to Card F and collect the rest of your train. Simple!*
- Facing point: Again, get the brown car to Card C. This is more difficult and can only be done if you have a run-around (i.e. bypass) track in your Secondary Trackage.



- First Move: Move to Card B, dropping the red, blue and brown car. Continue with the yellow to Card F.
- Second Move: Back up via Card E to Card D.
- Third Move. Move forward to Card B, collecting red, blue and brown cars on the nose of your train. Push them into Card C, where the brown car is dropped off.
- Fourth Move: Back up and drop off everything on the nose of your train (red and blue) on Card B. Continue backing to Card D.
- Fifth Move: Pull forward to Card F via Card E.
- Sixth Move. Back up your train to Card B to rebuild your train (red, blue, yellow). If you wish to start back where you began, continue back to Card D. However, note that, with the Sixth Move, your Local Operations Phase is over. If the next Mainline Phase has either a train coming from the west (left) or highballing from Card E west, you might wish to remain clear of the Running Track.

Optional Rules:

- **Reduced visibility:** The first three Stages (midnight through 4am) and the last two (8pm through 10pm) are night operations. You only get five Moves in the Local Operations Phase during these times.
- **“Sister” trains.** Generally, trains run with counterparts, such as Trains 1 & 2, trains 3 & 4. Pull out all even train cards from the deck (2 through 12) and set them aside. When their companion train (odd number) is drawn and played, bring the Sister Train in as well. This does not include Extras.
- **Employee Rotation.** At the end of the day, all players move one chair to the left and take over the next station up the line. Take your points (and the Fedora) with you. Railroads are known for constantly moving people to new regions and why should you be excluded?
- **Emergency Toolbox:** Each player starts with a RED FLAG card, bringing his total hand up to four. He must play/discard his hand down to three on his first turn. This allows more collisions to be avoided.