



Simple Continuity Tester

by Sparky, the Division Electrician

As you see in the accompanying photo, we have a very simplistic continuity tester. This device can be used in several ways to help you as you wire your layout. We have used this for wiring drops and power buses on a friend's layout, as well as ensuring we powered the frogs in hand laid switches with the correct polarity when using the internal contacts in a Tortoise switch machine.

The tester can be made for under \$10.00 from Radio Shack parts. (This includes spare parts to make a second one. Government motto: why buy one when you can have two for twice the price.) From Radio Shack, I bought a 9-volt battery clip (5 to

a package), a piezoelectric buzzer (one per pack, bought two packs), and several alligator test leads (several to a pack).

Cut the red and black test leads in half (one half set for each tester). Solder the black tester to the red lead on the buzzer. Then solder the red battery clip lead to the red tester. Then solder the

remaining two wires (which should be the black battery lead and the black wire on the buzzer). Cover the solder joints with heat shrink tubing if you have it, or as we did, use electrical tape. Attach a 9-volt battery to the battery clip and touch the test leads together. If you get an annoying buzz/honk from the device, you have complete the project successfully. (If not, try again.)

When using this device, just connect it between the components you wish to test. If the parts are not supposed to be connected like the power buses to the two rails, then the buzzer should remain joyfully quiet. If the circuit is supposed to be complete like

when the frog is being powered through a Tortoise contact pair, the buzzer should confirm it is right by buzzing/honking its approval.

For under \$10.00 and 20 minutes of work, you can save yourself plenty of time and aggravation when wiring around your layout. And aren't you worth it.

