



DATA SHEET

© NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Sheet #:	D8a
Title:	OPERATIONS OVERVIEW
Issued:	October 1999
Compiled by:	Eric Lundberg, MMR Operations SIG
Page:	1 of 2

INTRODUCTION

Model railroading incorporates a wide range of interests and opportunities. In the following Data Sheets, the subject of operation on a model railroad will be discussed and ideas presented of what can be done with the layout after it's up and running. A layout may be built only to showcase a modeler's trains, but on the other hand, operation can easily add depth and continuing interest to a layout as its owner, either solo or with friends, begins to operate the trains on a planned and prototypical basis.

To best prepare for operation, a modeler should give it consideration in planning a layout. But it can easily be adapted to existing layouts large and small alike and need not be overly complicated to provide hours of fun and relaxation. An understanding of the way and how prototype railroads moved goods and people is important, but not totally essential. The following Data Sheets will present some of that information.

There has been a wide variety of articles over the past 30-40 years in the model railroad press on all aspects of establishing and fine tuning operation on a layout. This list is too large and constantly added to, to be included in these Data Sheets. However, the NMRA's Kalmbach Memorial Library maintains an excellent data base on magazine articles and even books written on model railroad operation as well as other modeling subjects. The library can be contacted at (423) 892-2846 and is located at 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421.

Operating schemes are described in great detail in these writings and the modeler has only to follow the instructions to bring operations to the layout. In addition there is a wide variety of commercial operation programs available for purchase. These are generally advertised in the various model magazines or referred to in special articles.

The following Data Sheets were updated and enlarged by the Operations Special Interest Group (OpSIG). Member Bill Jewett explains operation:

“Operation is the use of prototype (real) railroad practices to determine train and car movements on a model railroad. Both individual layout owners and congenial groups of modelers conduct operating sessions which may be as formal and structured, or as loose and informal, as they prefer. The main idea is to understand and emulate the activities of a specific (actual or freelanced) portion of the national railroad network, at a particular era in time, and of the employees of the railroad, in satisfying the needs for transportation services of customers both on the layout and across the nation.

"We don't claim 'operating' is the 'right' way or the only way to enjoy a model railroad, but many operators have found it a source of continuing and increasing satisfaction from a layout that otherwise runs the risk of becoming 'done.'"



DATA SHEET

© NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Sheet #:	D8a
Title:	OPERATIONS OVERVIEW
Page:	2 of 2

The "OpSIG" dues are \$15 a year and includes four issues of the magazine "Dispatcher's Office," and access to an Internet site for discussions of model railroad design and operations. Further information can be obtained by contacting:

Operations SIG
Box 872
Arlington Heights, IL 60006

