

Saturday Call Board
Guide for Operators
Rev 12.27.23

The "Saturday Call Board" will contact you by email when there is an operating slot open. You will have three days to respond. When the three days passes with no response, that will be considered a no thank you.

Please arrive on time, *example*: for a 7:00 pm op-session, arrival time should be no sooner than 6:30. Don't arrive at 7:30. Respond back to the host's invitation in a timely manner. If you're delayed or can't come, call the layout owner and let him know. If you're sick or not feeling well, cancel and let the host know. If circumstances change and you can no longer attend a session, let the host know ASAP. Remember that you are a guest who was invited to help your host achieve his dream of an operating railroad. That dream should be your focus. Never show up to an op session uninvited.

Do not bring uninvited guests to watch.

Do not take pictures of a train you are physically operating. Photos are awesome, but not when you are operating a train. Ask the host if you can take photos and/or videos. It is best to do it during a break, but do not hold up operations. Do not take pictures while you are operating! This is not a photo shoot. Ask if you can come back another time to shoot the layout. Only take pictures or videos between jobs and be sure not to get in the way while doing so. Be sensitive to crowded areas.

Do not adjust any DCC parameters.

The owner may or may not allow food/drinks on the layout, abide by his rules. If snacks are served, consume them in the "ready area" only. Spilled soda on the layout or on the layout floor is not good. Do not bring food into the house unless specifically invited. Hosts do not want your crumbs, they do not want your trash, and they certainly do not want the smell of your garlic pizza. Wash your hands. Make sure they are clean before operating so you don't leave any residue on the layout, the paperwork, or anything else.

Sometimes equipment might have issues or accidental damage. Let the layout owner know what happened, don't try to hide an accident. Accidents happen. If you derail or have another problem with equipment, ask before handling it. People spend much money and time on their equipment, so respect that.

Do not wander around other parts of the owner's home. Stay in the layout area or bathroom area only. You will probably be in a private home and the homeowner is the boss, it's not a club setting. It all boils down to respect. Respect your hosts; Respect their homes; Respect your fellow operators. Do not wander around the house.

None of us get things 100% right, but the effort is appreciated. Do your best and have fun, run trains. There will be plenty of time to socialize after the last train is tied down. Don't get intimidated...have fun.

Additional tips for operators:

Ask where to park.

Wear a nametag

Keep outside chatter of non-related topics to a minimum

If you are a "newbie" (new or relatively new to operations) inform your host when accepting the invitation.

Pay attention during the pre-session briefing. There will be a lot of information to help you get up to speed on things. This is not the cocktail hour, so don't chat with your neighbors.

If you do not understand something, ask your host or helper specific questions to solve your issue. Ask general questions afterwards. Things are way too busy during a session for any in-depth answers. If you aren't sure what to do, ask for help from the owner or one of the other experienced crew. Better to ask than to mess up a session.

Wear short sleeves or tight fitting sleeves so you don't catch on things while reaching to uncouple. Wear a shirt that will not snag on anything, preferably with short sleeves and a handy breast pocket.

If using radios...press the talk button BEFORE speaking. This seems logical but you cannot believe how many times the dispatcher hears only half of a transmission.

When using radios...rehearse in your head what you want to say BEFORE engaging the radio.

Only talk on the radio when there is "radio silence". In other words do not speak over others.

Pay attention to the radio and your job. Don't distract other operators. Don't wander away from your assignment and don't talk on your phone in the train room.

Normalize (return to normal) turnouts when you go through if you are in an area of "local control".

Don't place anything (e.g. car cards, uncoupling picks, etc) on the layout without the host's permission.

Treat the layout and equipment with care. If you break something, inform the host. Let the host know of any problems which need to be fixed.

Thank the host at the end of the session. Provide constructive feedback and suggestions for improvements if asked.