

Model Railroading Maintenance Tips

- **Cars and Accessories**
- **Engines**
- **Track**



Car and Accessory Maintenance *Tips*

First, why clean and maintain your Cars and Accessories ?

- **Cleaning a typical car**
 - Use a damp cloth and compressed air to remove dust from the shell
 - *Can use a light spray of WD40 as well and then wipe it off the shell*
 - *Use Scotch bright pads on wheels and center rollers and a little WD40 on a rag as well*
- **Lubricating a typical car**
 - When? When squeaks develop or there is resistance
 - What do you use? Light hobby machine oil for truck axle points and center rollers- one drop per axle point and center roller pivot. Hobby grease is rarely used for cars.
- **Accessory Cleaning**
 - Same as car shells above
 - Light white hobby grease is generally used for plastic accessory gears
 - Take this opportunity to make sure the accessory fully functions after the cleaning
- **Replacing Light Bulbs**
 - Light bulbs are generally different by manufacturer and age of the piece. Check with your local train store or manufacturer web sites for replacement bulbs. Removing a car or accessory shell to access the bulb takes time and patience. Be careful.
- **Maintenance Records**
 - Keep a log by car or accessory. Suggested criteria: Car or Accessory number, Livery, Date purchased, Date of last service, What was done, other observations.
- Other resources for you: Lionel.com - Service Videos, your local model train store, Classic Toy Trains Magazine, O gauge Forum and Magazine

Engine Maintenance *Tips*

First, why clean and maintain your engines?

- **Cleaning a typical engine**
 - Use a damp cloth and compressed air to remove dust from the shell
 - Use a light spray of WD40 as well and then wipe it off the shell. *WD40 is ideal for cast iron steam engines to prevent rust!*
 - Use Scotch bright pads on wheels and center rollers and a little WD40 on a rag as well
- **Lubricating a typical engine**
 - When? *New out of the box* or when squeaks develop or there is resistance
 - What do you use? Light hobby machine oil for truck axle points and center rollers- one drop per axle point and center roller pivot. Hobby grease is used for grease pots and fittings on the gear box.
- **Smoke Units- Probably the most problematic engine component!**
 - Often overfilled ruining internal boards and components. Follow Manufacturer instructions out of the box and for refilling.
 - Use compressed air to clear smoke fluid build up.
 - Many new Lionel engines have *special diagnostics built in* communicated by the number of *cab light blinks*. 1 blink=motor issue, 2 blinks=Smoke unit heating element failure, 3 blinks=Smoke unit fan motor failure. If your engine is communicating any of the above error conditions, try to reset the engine, if that fails contact your local train store or Manufacturer for service.
- **Replacing Light Bulbs and traction tires**
 - Light bulbs are generally different by manufacturer and age of the engine. Check with your local train store or manufacturer web sites for replacement bulbs. Removing an engine shell and reassembly to replace the bulb takes time and patience. Be careful.
 - Traction tires need to be inspected frequently looking for cracks and looseness. Follow your manufacturer process for replacement or contact your local model train store for help. Always keep a couple of extra traction tires on hand!
- **Maintenance Records**
 - Always Keep a log by engine.
 - Suggested criteria: Engine number, Livery, Date purchased, Date of last service, What was done, other observations.
 - Always check coupler activation, headlight direction, Smoke unit operation, smoke production, sound / dialog, speed control during routine maintenance and update the log.
- **Other resources for you:** Lionel.com - Service Videos, your local model train store, Classic Toy Trains Magazine, O gauge Forum and Magazine

Track Maintenance *Tips*

First, why clean your track?

- Cleaning all types of Fast Track
 - Use *Denatured* Alcohol for rails and pins
- Cleaning Tubular Track
 - Use *WD40* for rails and pins, why not Alcohol?
- Use of Scotch Bright pads, when?
 - hardened on deposits and electrical burns on rails and pins
- What do you never use to clean track?
 - SOS , sandpaper!!!!!!
- Track Cleaning Cars
 - great for mountains and hard to reach spaces
- One of the most frequent train problems
 - Poor conductivity due to dirty track or pins with carbon build up.
 - The answer: Clean your track, remove carbon from pins connecting the track, add jumper wires every 6-10 feet.
- Other resources for you: Lionel.com - Service Videos, contact your local model train store, Classic Toy Trains Magazine, O gauge Forum and Magazine

