POSITION DESCRIPTIONS
for the
GREAT NORTHWESTERN RAILWAY

Introduction:

The GNW is built for one purpose and one purpose only: to have fun. Everything from the design of the layout to the details of the operating sequence is there for the enjoyments of the guests and operators.

In that context, the supporting vision of the GNW is to recreate a model of a functional railroad with most of its complexities, including the various roles and responsibilities of the various staff and crews who work on the railroad. As such, each position is relatively well defined. If everyone knows what they are supposed to do, it really is more fun for everyone!

The positions each have varying degrees of difficulty. If you are a new operator, we suggest you consider signing up as a road crew. This will give you a chance to run and become familiar the various lines on the layout. As you become more familiar with the rhythm of the railroad, you may elect to try some of the other position. Regardless of whatever position you choose, you will find plenty of challenges in all the positions.

A final note: If you feel you are getting behind of overwhelmed by the work, it could be tempting to try to run faster to make up time. This generally only results in more mistakes and sometimes even derailed equipment. Add to that, all the locomotives on the railroad are programed with momentum. So doing things faster really will not make much difference as more time will be needed to accelerate and decelerate. Better is to plan your moves, make each count, and enjoy the time.

Position Description: Warm Springs Yard Master

Introduction: Warm Springs is located at the end of the branch line. It serves as the terminal for a number of trains including "haulers" (transfers between Armstrong and Warm Springs), locals, commutes, and the excursion.

Warm Springs YM is responsible for switching several local industries within the yard limits in addition to handling the make up and break down of trains. Work the local industries as time allows up to the Yard Limit signs.

General: Responsible for all activities within Warm Springs Yard Limits. DO NOT WORK MESA CITY.

Methods: In general, try to keep track 3 open as the Arrival/Departure track.

Make sure ALL passenger trains ARRIVE on track 3. Once a passenger train has arrived and passengers are off the train, IMMEDIATELY use the switcher to pull the cars off the train and set on track 2 or 1 as needed. This frees up the track to let the road power escape. Note the excursion train will use different power to leave than arrive so pulling the cars off track 3 is not necessary.

The passenger power will need to be turned. After pulling the cars, let the passenger road engineer have access to the Mesa City Wye. All the trackage is under either YM control or is considered an Industrial Spur, so no interaction with the DS is required.

Assemble trains for road crews, less power. Unless otherwise agreed, the road crews will move the power to the train.

Priorities: Refer to Train Sequence. Priority is commute trains. Be ready to send out and receive trains as laid out in the train sequence list. It is highly recommended to have the commute cars ready to go well in advance of the schedule departures.

Switch industries as time is available between incoming and outgoing trains.

Tower Work The Warm Springs YM is also responsible for the operation of East El Vado Junction. This is controlled by the white panel located near the yard lead. Controls include throwing of the junction switch as well as the permissive switch allowing trains into the yard.

Use the switch on the track diagram to throw the junction switch. TO CHLORIDE is typical mainline route. TO MESA CITY will access industrial spur.

Press the RED pushbutton to provide a LUNAR RESTRICTING signal to allow trains into the yard. A yellow indicator on the panel will confirm the signal is set. The signal will reset automatically once the junction is occupied.

Flip the BLACK toggle switch down to display FLASHING RED RESTRICTING signal. This is used for if there is work at Wm Nixon Generating Station. The signal will NOT reset when the junction is occupied. Returning the switch to the middle position will reset the signal to red – STOP.

Misc Steam loco is to be stored in engine house on Track 9.

If light on work and road crews are in demand, offer to the road crew to turn power around as needed via Mesa City Wye.

Position Description: Armstrong Yard Master

Introduction: Armstrong Yard is located on the GNW main between east and west staging yards. It handles all freight coming on and off the layout. Freight comes through the GNW, SP, ATSF, CRI&P and the Rocky Mountain Line. While these different railroads are represented, ANY west bound (WB) off-layout car can be placed in ANY WB freight heading to staging. Same for EB.

Armstrong is the terminal for a number of trains including "haulers" (transfers between Armstrong and Warm Springs), locals, commutes, and the excursion.

Armstrong YM does not have any responsible for switching local industries other than at the engine terminal. These are all handled by locals.

General: Responsible for all activities at Armstrong Yard.

Methods: Main and siding, as well as cross-overs and yard leads are under shared control with the dispatcher. Please contact DS to coordinate use. Main and siding through Armstrong is always under DISPATCHER control. Expect trains through Armstrong without your knowledge or authorization. Generally, a verbal track warrant will be sufficient to access or cross mainline. Written Track Warrant is not necessary for local moves across main.

YM authority extends on all tracks outside of that, including A/D tracks, all yard classification tracks, engine terminal, passenger terminal and coach yard except main line. Note the leads to the passenger terminal are dispatcher controlled.

There are 2 arrival/departure tracks, with easy access to the main. In general, bring trains into and send out trains from the A/D tracks.

Priority is to assure passenger trains and commutes are handled in a timely and expeditious manner. Commutes should generally coming in on the main and directed to the passenger siding (Track 12). Power is cut off and cross-overs used to bring into the yard. Once clear of the main and siding tracks, contact Dispatch to release the main (if yard crews have not already done so.) Note: the commute crews will need access to the Turay Wye to turn the passenger power. Access to Turay is via the yard switching lead.

Assemble trains for road crews, less power. Unless otherwise agreed, the road crews will move the power to the train.

Work with train crew to contact dispatch with details about preferred route out of yard. If there are specific needs for incoming trains, contact DS.

Priorities: Refer to Train Sequence. Be ready to send out and receive trains as laid out in the train sequence list.

Passenger: Commute work, including use of tracks, is as outlined on the instructions for the commute road crews. Expect to need to turn locomotives after arrival at destination. Use wye at Turay to turn locomotives or cars.

Position Description: Road Crew

General: Responsible for all railroad work outside of yards.

Methods: Obtain train pack from dispatcher. Review instructions.

Unless otherwise agreed, pick up power at engine terminal, tie onto train. ALWAYS confirm train makeup by checking car cards against actual consist. Check loco and caboose cards. Stretch train prior to departure to confirm all cars are coupled.

Obtain Track Warrant as soon as familiar with instructions.

Entrance yard leads are protected by interlocking signals. Do not pass STOP signal. Request restricting signal (lunar or flashing red) prior to proceeding.

Priorities: Check all parts of Track Warrant to assure you have track authority prior to entering main.

Be cognizant that track authority may require locals to clear main for higher priority trains.

If possible, when executing a Track Warrant, call in clear as your work progresses. This will free up the track behind you for other crews.

Passenger: Commute work, including use of tracks, is as outlined on the instructions for the commute road crews. Expect to turn your locomotive after arrival. At Armstrong, use the wye at Turay. At Warm Springs, use the Mesa City Wye.

At Armstrong, most commutes arrive on Track 12 (Passenger). Cut off the power and, with permission from DS, cross the main and enter Armstrong yard. The Turay wye is accessible from the yard side of Armstrong.

Most passenger trains ARRIVE on track 3 at Warm Springs. Once the passenger train has arrived, the WS switcher will pull the cars off the train and set on track 2 or 1 as needed. This frees up the track to let the road power escape. Work with WS YM to run to Mesa City to turn power on wye. Note the excursion train will use different power to leave than arrive so pulling the cars is not necessary.

It is highly recommended that the commute power be placed on the head end of the next outbound commute train to assure it is ready to go when scheduled.

Industry Locals are responsible for pulling and placing cars at industry. Be considerate of other industry operations as cars are placed.

If an industry track is full and there is no room for placement of incoming cars, leave extra cars on unused leads or sidings for placement later. The car cards for these cars are considered “off-spot.”

Position Description: Industrial Operations

General: Responsible for all railroad work on private trackage. This includes the following operations:

- ALL operations of the Ojitas Railroad
- Moving cars Halcon Cement
- Moving cars at Sinclair Baker Refining
- Moving cars at Jones-Heartz
- Positioning equipment at Western Rail Services

Methods: In general, industrial operations are apart from any railroad operations. The only exception is to time dropping and picking up cars from the GNW at Rosita for the Oitas RR. For this operation, obtain train pack from dispatcher. Review instructions. No track warrant is required.

Priorities: None. However review all locations and train sequence sheet to determine when service will be required.

Be cognizant that industrial operation have no authority to enter GNW main track or sidings. None of the industrial locomotives and rolling stock are inspected or required to follow FRA regulations for common carrier operation. Additionally, the do not have access to gain authority. Therefore, they may not access any main track at any time.

Industry Locals are responsible for pulling and placing cars at industry. Be considerate of other host railroad operations as cars are placed.

If an industry track is full and there is no room for placement of incoming cars, leave extra cars on unused leads or sidings for placement later. The car cards for these cars are considered “off-spot.”

Position Description: Dispatcher (DS)

General: Responsible for all orderly control of trains on mainline, specifically outside of yard limits.

Methods: A Train Lineup Sheet (Train Sequence) is provided to control the release of trains. This sheet also serves as a record of movements, as well as a tool for notating track warrant release extents.

Authority for occupying the main on the railroad is via written, and in some cases verbal, track warrants. Written track warrants are to be used for all trains moving beyond their city of origination. Verbal track warrants may be used for movements across or on the main as long as the movement stays within that town.

Train Authority: Trains are given authority via WRITTEN track warrants. Dispatcher will plan for and issue instruction to trains via track warrants. Readback of the track warrant is expected and confirmed by the DS, which activates the warrant. Note that once a track warrant is issued, the crews should not need to contact the DS for further instructions until the TW is completed. However crews are encouraged to call in to "clear" segments of the route as they pass through stations.

Staging: There is single 9-track, double ended yard representing points east and west. Each track has 3 segments, that is, can hold 3 trains. The staging yard is controlled via an LCC data link to a PC at the dispatcher's office. Track 1 is kept open at all times and used for run throughs. The staging plan defines which track is used for what trains during a session. Track assignments are flexible, however, the following track assignments are generally used:

- Track 1: ALWAYS OPEN – for run-throughs and staging yard bypass
- Track 2, 3: EASTBOUND OUTBOUND staged trains
- Track 4, 5: EASTBOUND INBOUND staging
- Track 6, 7: WESTBOUND OUTBOUND staged trains
- Track 8, 9: WESTBOUND INBOUND staging

CTC Panel: While not CTC controlled, the layout incorporates centralized main track switch controls (CTC Panel) running on a PC and connected to the layout via JMRI and LCC. As such, the dispatcher position incorporates both dispatching and tower operator functions. The panel includes detection but does not track train identification. It is up to the dispatcher to track what trains are where on the system. Normally this is done with the track warrants and train list. A magnetic board is available for use to assist, if desired.