

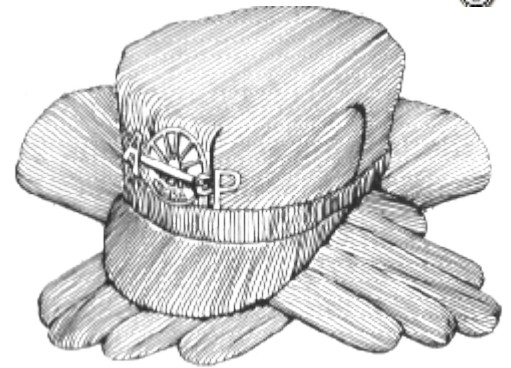


# Working on those certificates

*Editor's note: As a follow up to the discussion at September's meeting, and as part of our continuing series, here is more information about the requirements for*

## ***Master Builder - Cars***

A "Car" is just about anything that runs on rails and is NOT self-propelled (if it's self-propelled, it's Motive Power). This includes freight cars, passenger cars, maintenance of way cars (including equipment such as cranes), cabooses, cable cars, un-powered (dummy) locomotives, etc. Actually, if you have a model which is self propelled, but is a model of something that was designed to carry something (besides itself), such as a rail car, it can be used as one of the qualifying models for either Motive Power or Cars, but not both.



### **To qualify for the Master Builder - Cars certificate:**

You must build eight operable scale models of railroad cars:

"Operable" means that they must be able to roll on the track, negotiate a curve, be pulled by something, etc. It do not mean that every door, valve, or other moving feature of the car must work as the prototype does. (However, any operating features that you can include in your car are likely to increase your score.)

1. There must be at least four different types of cars represented in the total of eight. One of these must be a passenger car.

The intent of this requirement is show that you can model a variety of types of cars, not just several variations of the same type. For example: a 40' steel-side box car and a 36' wood side reefer would be different types of cars, but a 40' steel-side box car and a 50' steel-side box car probably would not (unless you can show that there was a substantial difference in what it took to build them). Similarly, a wood deck flat car and a steel deck flat car would not be considered "different" types of cars, but a regular flat car and a depressed center flat car would, because it is a substantially different type of car to build.

"Passenger cars" include anything that would normally be found in a regular scheduled passenger train including baggage cars, express reefers, business cars, or other passenger carrying cars like drover's cabooses.

Remember, it is only four different types that are required: you could build a set of five identical passenger coaches, a box car, a tank car, and a gondola, and satisfy the requirement.

2. Each of the eight models must be super detailed with either commercial parts or scratch built parts (for extra points).

When looking for ways to super detail your cars, brake wheels, grab irons and ladders are good places to start - particularly by replacing the "molded on" ones that the car

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came with. That's where many judges start looking. Another area that many judges look for is the under-frame brake gear.

In addition to being super detailed, at least four of the eight models must be scratch built. The term "scratch built" implies that the modeler has done all of the necessary layout and fabrication that produce the final dimensions, appearance, and operating qualities of the model.

This is a good statement of the intent and spirit of the "scratch built" requirement. Notice that it does not say that the use of a few commercial detail parts will disqualify the model as being "scratch built". In general, the same standard applies that is used in contest judging: "Completely Scratch Built" means that 90% or more of the model was scratch built.

The following parts are specifically excluded from the scratch built requirement: wheels, couplers, light bulbs & electronics, trucks, brake fittings, marker lights & drum-heads, paint, decals, etc., and basic shapes of wood, plastic, metal, etc. ("Basic shapes" are things that the builders of the prototype would have used as raw materials. For example, an "I" beam would be a basic shape; a commercial door or window casting would not.)

Something you should remember if the idea of 'scratch building' intimidates you: There is very little difference between scratch building and building most crafts-man kits. The big difference is that in a kit, the manufacturer has assembled the materials that you will need for you. Only the construction needs to be done from scratch. If you take someone else's plans and instructions (even those from a kit) and go to the hobby shop and buy the materials yourself and assemble them; that qualifies as scratch building. On the other hand, if you do develop your own plans, make sure that you tell the judges that, as it will earn you extra points.

You must earn a score of at least 87-1/2 points on four of the eight models in either an NMRA sponsored contest or in AP Merit Award judging. (87-1/2 is 70% of the maximum 125-point score.) Note that only four of the eight must earn 87-1/2 points. The others don't even have to be judged, but all have to be described in the Statement of Qualification.

Remember that your eight cars do not have to be from the same era, or part of the country. They don't even have to be the same scale. You also don't have to earn your four Merit Award certificates at the same time - you can earn one this year, another two years from now, and another the year after that.

## **Further Information**

For further information, contact check the National Achievement Program on NMRA's [website](#), or the AP General Manager, [Paul Richardson, MMR](#).

*More on this next month.*