

Guidelines

Prepared: 01/25/1996

Revised: 05/12/2025

A. PURPOSE - to encourage and promote the continuance and enjoyment of model railroading, particularly as it applies to N-Scale and the "NTRAK"/"TTRAK" modular concepts, and by working together to create displays combining the individual modules for exhibition in public whenever practical and possible

1. We realize that the Lake Erie "N-Scale" Society (LENS) exists because of the cooperation of many individuals brought together because of an interest in, and love of, model railroading.

2. We further realize that the membership is made up of individuals that possess a vast array of talents, skills and backgrounds with varying degrees of experience.

3. We encourage persons with a particular talent or skill, to educate and share those talents or skills with the other members, in order to raise the level of expertise and enjoyment of the entire society.

4. We encourage persons that have been involved with the society in the past, to work with and help newer members, especially those who are new to model railroading.

5. We encourage persons who are new to the society and/or model railroading to ask questions and ask for suggestions in order to learn.

6. Towards that end, respect for each other, respect for each others property, skills and talents and realizing that no one individual has any greater rights than another, is paramount in achieving our purpose.

B. GUIDELINES AND PARAMETERS - because it has been agreed in the past that "the only rule that we have, is that there are no rules", the following is a list of common sense thoughts, suggestions and ideas to help promote a spirit of cooperation among the members.

1. GENERAL

a) Leadership Prior to the creation of this document (1/25/1996), we operated in excess of ten years under the leadership of two persons that have been in the society since its inception. They were responsible for any final decisions regarding policy or differences in opinion. Therefore, since that worked well, we will continue to encourage two active members in good standing to provide leadership to the membership.

b) Financial - One person is needed to be the treasurer. S/he will maintain the treasury and any other financial dealing of the society. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing to provide the society with these services.

c) Newsletter / Mailing List - One person is needed to be the Newsletter Editor. S/he will maintain a mailing list of the group membership, and will create and mail a monthly newsletter to the members of the society. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing (plus any volunteers) to provide the society with these services.

d) Scrap Book / History - One person is needed to maintain a Scrap Book / History Book of the society. S/he will assemble and store a copy of this document, news articles, photos, awards, etc. as it pertains to the history and activities of the society. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing to provide the society with this service.

e) Meeting Coordinator - One person is needed to be responsible for the societies monthly meetings. S/he will determine a location in advance, establish an agenda, select a topic of discussion or form of entertainment, and act as moderator during the course of the meeting. This person must work closely with the Newsletter Editor and Layout Coordinator to publicize the past and future business of the society in a timely manner. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing to volunteer to provide the society with this service.

f) Layout Coordinator - One person is needed to be responsible for the design of any displays the society assembles in public. S/he will determine the available size of a given public layout, determine which modules will be available for the display, assemble a drawing of the proposed layout and publish it for use during the set up. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing to volunteer to provide the society with this service.

g) Set Up Coordinator - One person is needed to be responsible for the set up of any displays the society assembles in public. S/he will monitor the progress of the set up; making sure it is done according to established procedure and in a timely fashion. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing to volunteer to provide the society with this service.

h) Webmaster - One person is needed to be responsible for editing our web site. S/he will make any changes, add or delete photos and articles and maintain the News and Events page; making sure it is done according to established procedure and in a timely fashion. We will continue to encourage an active member in good standing to volunteer to provide the society with this service.

i) Active Member in Good Standing

(1) Any person at least 18 years old (or younger if accompanied by an adult).

(2) In order to remain on the Active member list, you must attend a minimum of three meetings per calendar year. You must also attend a minimum of one “event” per calendar year, assisting in setup and/or teardown of the displays, either Ntrak or Ttrak. An event is defined as an occasion where the club sets up modules and runs trains for the public's enjoyment.

(3) Each member is expected to commit to and abide by these guidelines in order to maintain a “Good Standing” status.

j) Standards - To avoid confrontations and/or misunderstandings, each member of the society shall be given a copy of this document. In addition, a copy should be posted at each public

display to remind everyone to encourage a spirit of cooperation and enjoyment.

k) Revision - Review of these issues may be requested by any active member in good standing at any of the monthly meetings. However, the leaders should perform a formal review at least once every two years.

l) Consideration - Each person involved is a volunteer, and as such deserves the same level of respect that you expect. We have joined together to have fun; common sense, sensibility and respect must prevail.

m) Disciplinary Actions – In case there are issues or incidents that arise, the club has set forth these guides to handle disruptive activities such as negligence, carelessness, and hostility. In regards to issues that arise due to negligence and/or carelessness:

- A discussion with the offending member will take place with at minimum two members, in good standing, regarding what happened and how to prevent further incidents.
- On a second incident, the offending member will be given a formal warning notice that further incidents can result in either suspension or expulsion.
- Upon a third violation, active members of good standing are to vote on the disciplinary actions necessary for the offending individual. A quorum will be required in order to conduct a fair vote. A quorum is defined as 50% of the Active Members in Good Standing.

Regarding hostile behavior. Hostile behavior of any kind will not be tolerated and lead to a member being barred from LENS. Examples of behavior that will lead to being barred are:

- Violence of any kind.
- Cursing and name calling towards any member of the club or public.
- Purposeful mis-treatment of a member's private property or LENS community property.

2. PARAMETERS

a) These guidelines for set up have been established by the members of the society and should be followed equally by all members to ensure smooth set up and running of trains.

b) LENS strictly follows the concepts, plans, designs, regulations, etc. the NTRAK organization and its founder, Ben Davis and the "implementer", Jim Fitzgerald. All issues pertaining to the building and operation of modules used in the society are to be referred to and governed by the published standards of the NTRAK manual. (If an exception exists, it has been defined by, agreed to and voted on by the members of the society.)

c) Each owner of a module or equipment is responsible for making sure that track, trucks, couplers, coupler pins, etc. have been checked and are in gauge prior to public display and operation. We all realize that temperature and humidity may affect the gauge, but we must attempt to provide a baseline for smooth operation.

d) Wherever possible, the "west and east" side of a modules' frame should be constructed out of 3/4 inch thick plywood as it will not warp as easily as other materials providing a smoother end-to-end hook up. (LENS suggestion - not in the NTRAK manual)

e) Each owner of a module is responsible for bringing two - 3 inch "C" clamps (different sizes may be required for use in special designs) for each module. The society has extra 3-inch clamps; however, these are for an occasional emergency.

f) Modules, legs, backboards, Plexiglas, clamps, shipping bags, miscellaneous parts, etc. should be clearly labeled with the currently agreed upon code system, to facilitate rapid set up and tear down of the display. (LENS suggestion - not in the NTRAK manual)

g) Provide a clearly marked 1/2-inch long mark on the centerline of each of the common tracks (at the "east" and "west" edge of the module) to facilitate rapid "set up". The split in the cork roadbed is sufficient provided it can be clearly seen. (LENS suggestion - not in the NTRAK manual)

h) All "electronic displays" must be run from owner supplied transformers or batteries. The NTRAK standard does not provide for tapping into existing low voltage lines for power. You may draw 110-volt power from the supplied circuit, and then "step it down".

i) The owners of modules with additional "private trackage" or "electronic displays should provide detailed, printed instructions for their operation if permission has been granted for use in the owners absence. Those instructions should be posted near the lower edge of the backboard.

j) During "tear down", all special connecting rails should be removed first (by the owner). Then all other connecting rails may be removed; remember to sort them by the color code for storage in the proper container. All rail joiners should remain on the module trackage, wherever possible, to make the next set up easier.

k) To facilitate rapid "set up" and "tear down", offer to help if you have nothing to do; working with someone as a team can be fun. Everyone in the society is encouraged to help. New members can make social contacts and learn from current members. Don't be afraid to ask! We have an abundance of knowledge just waiting to be shared.

3. OPERATIONS

a) At the beginning of every hour, persons running a train must provide an opportunity to others who are waiting. An extension to two hours may be made for a very long consist, because of the set up and tear down time involved provided this is done in the spirit of cooperation. The use of a sign up sheet will help to facilitate run opportunities.

b) The public likes to see long trains running. Whenever possible, the "red" and "yellow" lines should be reserved for long trains. When we use "block control" for more than one train per line, a shorter train may be used as an additional train.

c) The public likes to see operating trains. During a public display of our NTRAK modules is not a good time to trouble shoot engines and/or rolling stock. If trouble with engines and/or rolling stock is evident and cannot be repaired quickly it should be removed and "sent to the

repair shop".

d) The owner of an engine (or engines) and/or rolling stock should be present while that equipment is operating in case a problem develops. Those persons (or a willing proxy) are responsible for helping to make a public display run as smoothly as possible.

e) Brand new modules should be checked and tested (by the owner or by members of the group if requested) before being displayed in public. A "bare" module should never be included in a public display.

f) Persons that do not have a module are needed, encouraged and welcome to bring engines and/or rolling stock for operation, provided they are willing to assist with the set up and tear down, and are an active member in good standing.

g) Because we are all volunteers, everyone that has made a commitment to participate during a particular time slot, must make every effort to be present. In case of an emergency, courtesy dictates that a person should attempt to find another member to fill in, or to contact the layout location and leave a message to be delivered to the society.

4. PROBLEMS - (Determination and Policy)

a) If a problem develops, assume that everything is wrong. We are not on a "witch hunt". Everything that we use was new at one time, but things wear or break; work together towards a solution that is fair to all parties involved. No "finger pointing" is ever permitted!

b) Respect each others property; don't forget this is not your home layout. Contact the owners of that module and/or equipment to attempt a repair. If this fails, ask others for help.

c) Please do not attempt any major repair yourself. Contact a team and discuss a solution to the problem that is fair to all involved.

5. "DO NOT" LIST

a) Do not use improper cleaning methods. You may only clean the three common tracks with a "bright boy" style track cleaner or a commercial cleaning car.

b) Do not cut track that is part of a module. If one of the standard color-coded connector tracks do not fit, and adjustments are needed while connecting modules, make a custom sized piece from flex track. Caution: do not reduce the length of color-coded connector tracks.

c) Do not make repairs (major or minor) unless you have the owners permission. If the owner is absent, assemble a team of the members present and discuss a solution before making repairs.

d) Do not clean the Plexiglas with paper towels or Windex style cleaners (they are abrasive and will scratch the surface). Our society will supply an approved plastic cleaner and polish to be used with a soft cotton cloth.

6. BEST PRACTICES

The following are Best Practices adopted by LENS to ensure smooth set up, operations and tear down of modular layouts. These include, but are not limited to: NTRAK, TTRAK, ONETRAK, FREMO and all others that may come after the writing of these guidelines.

SETTING UP:

- During set up, the Layout Coordinator should maintain control of the layout. This to ensure proper set up as well as the protection of the modules from damage during this activity.
- Handling of all modules and equipment shall be done with the highest level of care and respect in order to ensure that we will minimize the chances of having issues during the operation of the layout.
- Prior to set up, all modules should be checked for material condition.
- It is recommended that all modules are to have the frame, legs and back side of the sky boards painted flat black.
- All modules should have been repaired prior to arrival for any discrepancies previously identified.
- All modules should have the tracks cleaned and Plexiglas cleaned/polished.
- All module owners/members should keep in mind that they are representing Lake Erie N-Scale Society and its Members, and with that, our modules are expected to be operable and presentable to the limit of the modeling abilities of the respective owner.

RUNNING (OPERATIONS):

- Sign up sheet will be made available (Usually for a 2 week period) online in the Members Only section of the LENS website. After that, it will be made available in print at the set up and during run sessions for additions and/or changes.
- All members are expected to participate to the level that they can, in order to have trains on all 3 lines for the public to view.
- All members running trains are expected to give consideration to those members who are assembling/disassembling trains during operating sessions. Members who are not engaged in this activity should stay clear of the set up area(s).
- Members not running trains are encouraged to “police” the layout. This will ensure interaction with the viewing public, as well as aide in the running of trains by identifying track and/or rolling stock issues.
- Members are encouraged to speak up when they see an issue or something being done incorrectly.
- A Log Sheet will be present for the membership to log any issues identified with any particular module, to aid in the repair prior to the next set up.

TEARING DOWN:

- During teardown, the Layout Coordinator should maintain control of the layout. This to ensure proper teardown, as well as the protection of the modules and equipment from damage during this activity.
- Modules and associated equipment shall be handled with care during teardown.
- Any issues discovered during teardown should be reported to the module owner and written in the issues identified log.
- All sky boards and Plexiglas should be wrapped in a fashion that will allow it to be handled and stored properly. Plexiglas should not be stored in contact with any other Plexiglas or components.
- Members are expected to assist with loading equipment into member's cars/trailers if at all possible.