

TRAIN ORDER BOARDS, TRAIN ORDERS AND CLEARANCE FORMS (Don Grove)

All mainline trains run under the direction of the train dispatcher. An order board gave the dispatcher direct control over all trains through the operator.

The order board was used to maintain the block between trains. The block is the interval that had to be maintained between trains, which was twenty minutes, or until the train ahead had passed another open train order office. When a train passed an open train order office, the operator would drop, or show the board red.

A train could not pass a red board without a clearance, which indicated the time the train ahead passed by.

The order board was also used when the dispatcher wanted to deliver an order to a train, to change a meeting point, or just hold a train. A red board would stop everything.

A train crew was required to know the colour, or position of train order signals, before passing them. It was a dismissable offence for a crew to pass an order board that was anything but green, without obtaining a clearance.

If the dispatcher wanted to deliver a non-restricting train order to a train, he would instruct the operator to put the board on yellow. An order board at 45 degrees (yellow) means there is a "non-restricting" order for that train at that station. If the operator is on the platform with the hoop the train may proceed without stopping.

RULES FOR MOVEMENT BY TRAIN ORDER

Under the Uniform Code of Operating Rules every engine, train, box car, passenger car, work equipment, section gang, track motor cars or any piece of railway equipment either standing or moving on a track is covered by a rule.

Every engine, train, box car, passenger car, section gang or track motor car moving or standing on a mainline must have permission to do so from the Train Dispatcher. [There are some exceptions to this rule when on the main line in Yard Limits.]

How is this permission granted? For engines, or trains by a clearance form issued by the designated train dispatcher.

Every engine or train must have a clearance form before entering the mainline at any location.

The first line of the clearance form would list the station name and date. The next line would start out with the printed word TRAIN ... The operator would then fill in the title of the train which would be e.g. Extra 1250 North, or 62, or second 5.

Below that he would list all the train orders issued for that train at that station.

Section gangs and track inspectors required a track line up, issued from the dispatcher, before using the mainline. A track line up did not give the section men any authority, only information. The section men with a track line up still had to expect a train on any track at any time.

Once a train has received the clearance form, with a list of all the train orders for that train, and proceeds on the mainline heading to its destination, the only way train the dispatcher could control the movement of that train was with the TRAIN ORDER BOARD and the operator on duty.

The dispatcher could use the Train Order Board, via the operator on duty, to do any number of things with the train. He could put on a red board to stop the train if the train was getting too close to the train ahead of it (rule 91), or if there was congestion on the track ahead.

He could use the board to advise the train that he has orders for that train. A yellow board would indicate the dispatcher has a non-restricting order for them at that point.

A yellow board means the orders can be picked up, without stopping, if the operator has the orders on the platform. This could be an order indicating a meet with another train at the next station.

A red board would indicate to the crew that the order is restricting for them at that station. It could be that the dispatcher changed the meeting point, e.g., instead of the meet being at the next station, the dispatcher has decided to make the meet at the station with the red board. This is a restricting order. There are a number of other ways the order could be restricting at that point. (Where there is a proposed meet, and the dispatcher does not state which train will go into the siding, the train in the "inferior" direction will take the siding.)

The dispatcher could also use the red board to give tail end protection to a train that had a lot of switching to do at the stations ahead.