

TIMELINES FOR VARIOUS FREIGHT CAR DETAILS

WHY? If you model a particular time frame, knowing the timelines for various practices can help you decide which details to add or remove from your freight car models. For example:

- A detail should appear if it was required during your time frame.
- A detail may or may not appear if the car was built before the requirement was dropped.
- A detail should not appear if the car was built after the requirement was dropped.

WHERE? Of course, the ideal is to work from a photo of the car or its production batch mates (see the Official Railway Equipment Register [ORER]), such as are available on Web sites:

- www.railcarphotos.com, a Web site of freight car photographs. Each photograph is accompanied by a data sheet (not always fully populated) identifying the builder, build date, car series, load limit, light weight, gross weight. (Response is really slow lately.) [RCPW]
- www.rr-fallenflags.org, a Web site of railroad rolling stock photographs. [FFRPW]
- www.rrpicturearchives.net, Web site containing well-organized (by railroad and car type) photographs of railroad rolling stock and other items. [RRPAW]

Timeline for Freight Car Markings, Appliances and Practices:

- **1964:** First use of Automated Car Identification (ACI) labels. (MR, Dec. 1983, p. 171.)
- **1966:** Roller bearing trucks required on all new/rebuilt 100-ton cars. (MRDFC, p. 91.)
- **1966:** ICC *allows* roofwalks to be removed.
- **1966:** New cars ordered after April 1966 or delivered after October 1966 must *not* have roofwalks (apart from covered hoppers, for hatch access).
- **1966:** Brake wheels required to be mounted low on all *new* cars. (MRDFC, p. 91.) Existing high brake wheels allowed to remain unless repair is required (then must be lowered).
- **1967:** Automated Car Identification (ACI) labels officially introduced. (MR, Dec. 1983, p. 171.)
- **1968:** American Association of Railroads (AAR) required roofwalk removal (apart from covered hoppers) by 1978 for cars in interchange service. Deadline eventually extended to 1983. (Sometimes roofwalk remained but ladders were cut down to prevent access.)
- **1968:** Roller bearing trucks required on all new cars. (See MRDFC, p. 91.)
- **1970:** 1 January 1970, Automated Car Identification (ACI) labels required on all interchange cars. (MR, Dec. 1983, p. 171.)
- **1972:** Consolidated stencils first used. (MRDFC, p. 91.)
- **1974:** Consolidated stencils required by 1 July 1974. (RMC, Dec. 1978, p.62.)
- **1978:** 1 January 1978, Automated Car Identification (ACI) labels no longer required on interchange cars. (MR, Dec. 1983, p. 171.)
- **1978: 23 March 1978,** start applying U-1 wheel inspection dots to cars using 33" wheels (mainly 70-ton cars); white = bad, yellow = OK. By **1 January 1979** all defective wheels were supposed to have been replaced. Inspection dots were occasionally applied to cars that did not have to be inspected, so might appear on a 100-ton car. (MR, Dec. 1982, p. 179.)
- **1990:** CAPACITY marking was eliminated as redundant. (MR, Nov. 2012, p. 21. This MR note explains CAPACITY, LIGHT WEIGHT and LOAD LIMIT.)
- **1994:** Automatic Equipment Identification (AEI) tags (transponders) were mandatory by 31 Dec 1994. (MR, July 1999, p. 35.)
- **2004:** The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirement for yellow safety stripes along bottom of car sides took effect. (DelGrosV2, p. 7.)

REFERENCES (with abbreviations shown in [square brackets]):

BNSF Railway Freight Cars, Vol. 2, by Robert C. Del Grosso. [DelGrosV2]

Model Railroader magazine. [MR]

Model Railroader's How-To Guide: Detailing Freight Cars (2005). [MRDFC]

Railroad Model Craftsman magazine. [RMC]