

FORMAL OPERATIONS

What are formal operations? Simply put it is moving freight and passengers from Point A to Point B within a given period of time. Each train has an assigned job. Each job has a series of tasks. Trains follow instructions provided by switch lists and their movements are directed by a Dispatcher and a Yardmaster. There are local trains which switch industries in every town; through freights which either pass through or make one stop at Nickel City Yard to pickup and setout cars; intermodal and coal trains which stop at specific industries along the layout; and passenger trains which must keep on schedule in order to keep their passengers happy.

Time flies literally during formal ops sessions. We use a 6:1 fast clock (6 minutes of scale time to every minute of real time) so that a session can cover a 24 hour period in 4 hours.

Operators earn certifications. Besides having fun and learning new skills, operators earn credit hours towards certifications in five categories. There are also groupings of categories that qualify operators for advanced certifications. Hours earned on the Nickel City Line are also applied towards the National Model Railroad Association's (NMRA) Chief Dispatcher Achievement Program. If you are an NMRA member, this is an added bonus for you.

