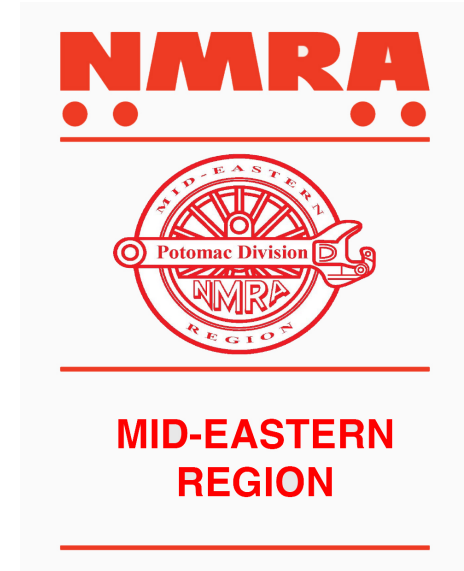


Chief Dispatcher

September 12, 2026

Ernie Little, MMR



INTRO

The Chief Dispatcher AP certificate requires a person to do several activities to qualify. The requirements of the Chief Dispatcher certificate can be met on one or more privately owned or club model railroad layout(s).

CHIEF DISPATCHER CERTIFICATION

To qualify for the Chief Dispatcher certificate, you are required to:

1. Participate in the operation of a model railroad, either home or club, for not less than **fifty** hours. A **minimum of ten hours** must be served in each of **three** of the **five** categories listed, **one of which must be Dispatcher**.

The experience must be accumulated on one or more model railroads having at least two mainline trains plus yard switching in simultaneous operation. Some system of freight and passenger train and car movements, including road switching, shall be used for controlling train activity.

CATEGORIES

There are five different categories of activities.

1. Engineer – Mainline freight, Passenger, or Way Freight.
2. Yard or Station Master
3. Hostler or Power desk
4. Tower Man or Traffic Manager
5. Road Master
6. Dispatcher. **** (Required Category)



ENGINEER



You are required to run a train in a manner that simulates that of the prototype locomotives.

Prototype operation includes not operating with “jack rabbit starts” or sudden stops during normal operations.

You must follow the rules of the model railroad being used.

ENGINEER

You operate your locomotive according to the provided signaling system, if one is provided on the layout, or by the direction provided by the Dispatcher.

If switching is required on the model railroad being used the switching must be conducted with Dispatcher approval or in a manner that does not adversely affect the model railroad's overall operation or railroad schedule.



YARD MASTER / STATION MASTER



You are required to conduct the operations of a freight yard and making up trains, using appropriate cars, in the desired number to have them ready for departure as required by the layout time schedule or required by the Dispatcher.

Can operate at the Yard Switch Engineer but could be the Supervisor of other Yard Engineers.

As a Station Manager, you are in charge of the passenger station and all passenger switching, making passenger trains with appropriate consists to have them ready for departure as required by the layout time schedule or required by the Dispatcher.

Terminating trains require you to break them down appropriately service and store the cars as needed. Through train switching is accomplished to keep the train on schedule.

HOSTLER / POWER DESK

You run the Engine facilities.

You assure locomotives are facing the correct direction of travel, doubleheaded or lashed up, and ready for and Engineer to leave the Engine service area.

Incoming locomotives are serviced and stored in their appropriate location when needed.

Where the layout has an advanced control system the Hostler can handle the assignment of locomotives to the appropriate Engineer's throttle.

As the power desk decides what the correct locomotive power is for each train, assigns throttle control to the motive power, and when a locomotive assignment is completed returns control of the locomotive to the Hostler or terminates the control.

TOWERMAN

You are required to operate one or more towers (control panels) on a layout.

You set the appropriate routing of trains at the correct time (timetable) or direction of the Dispatcher.

Reports (OS) passing of trains to Dispatcher, if required by layout operation scheme.

TRAFFIC MANAGER / ROAD MASTER

You determine which cars enter and leave an industry, amount and location of traffic on the model railroad layout specifying route where necessary.

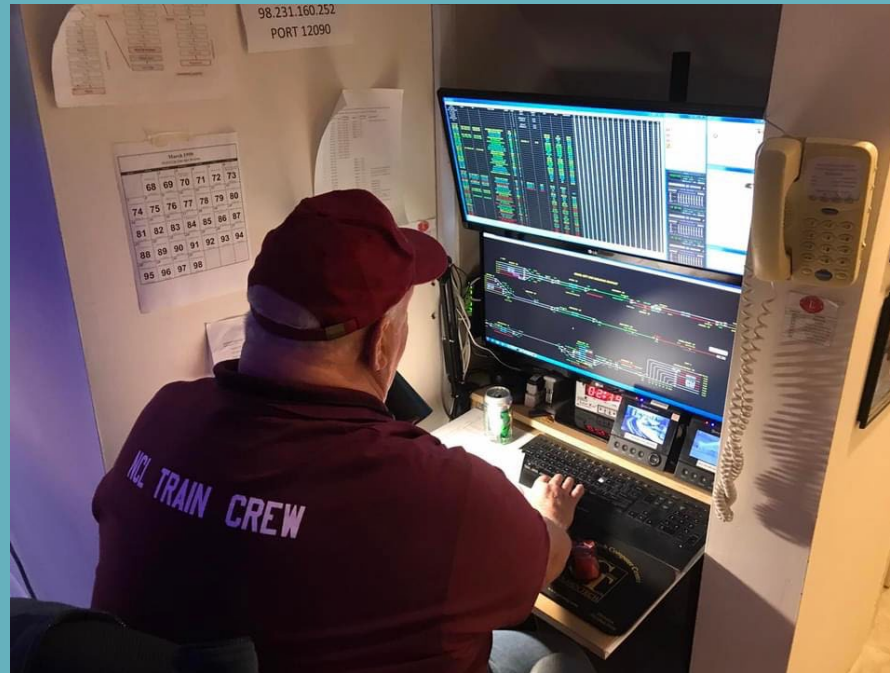
Uses a computer program to manage traffic if used on the model railroad.

As the Roadmaster you handle trouble shooting and/or repairs needed on the model railroad. Has the authority to take track out of service or place back in service as necessary.



DISPATCHER

You coordinate ALL train movements, either by sequence, timetable and fast clock, or other operating system used by the model railroad.



OPERATIONS DOCUMENTATION

2. You must create documentation - Use of a computer as well as hand drawn diagrams.

- a) **Prepare** a readable drawing of a model railroad meeting the operating conditions covered before.
- b) **Prepare** a timetable appropriate to the model railroad, simulating prototype time and covering a period of 8 hours or more, during which a minimum of 3 main line trains move in each direction.
- c) **Prepare** a operating train chart (string chart) that shows the train schedule used to show relationship of the movement of involved trains.

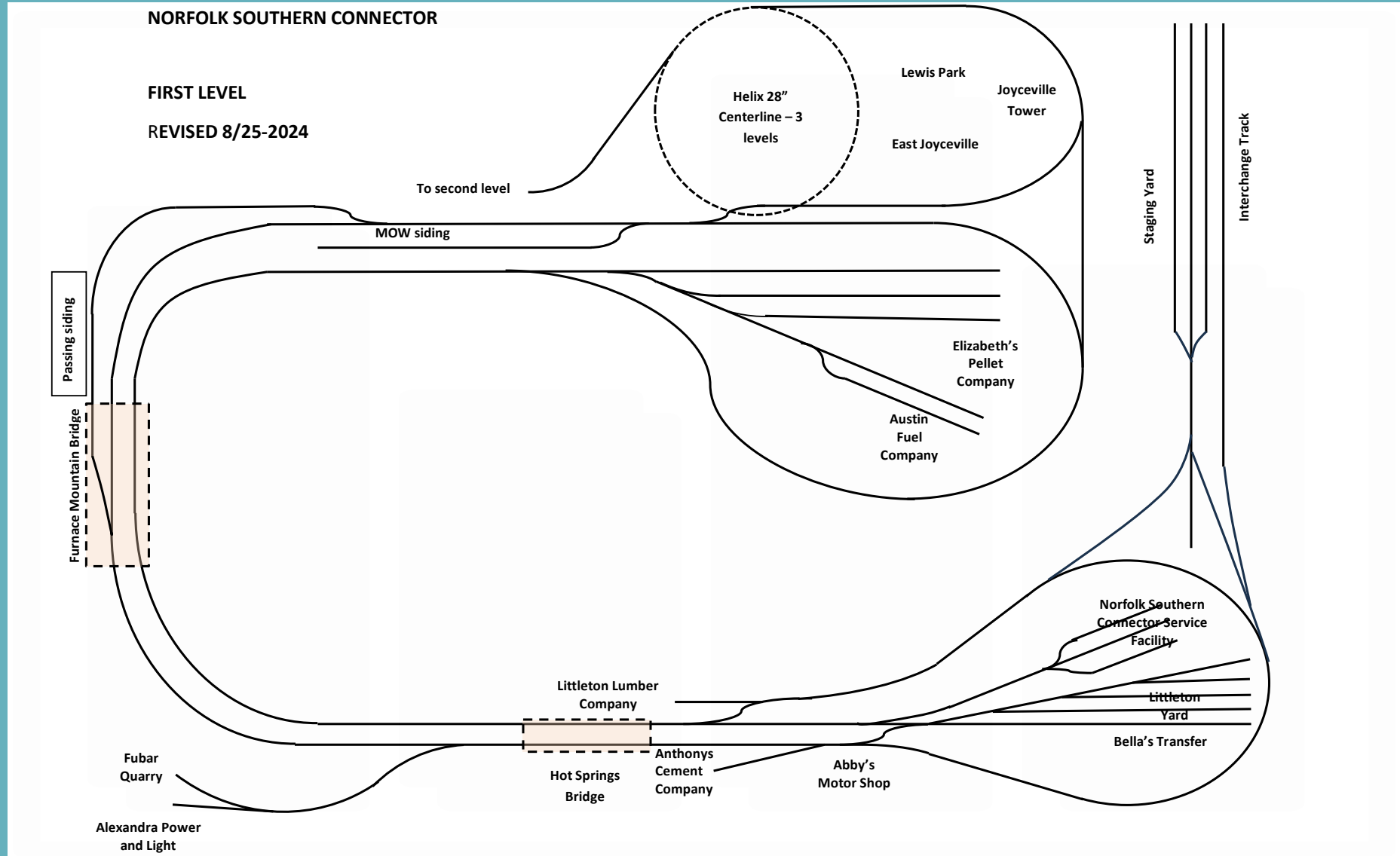
The string chart in item 3 above must show at least one meet of two trains with location of meet and description of action to be taken by each train providing pertinent time and movement data to effect the meet.

OPERATIONS DOCUMENTATION

(continued)

You must develop or adapt a model train layout operation system which includes the necessary forms and explanation of forms used, for controlling train movements, train make-up and prototypical operation.

MODEL RAILROAD DRAWING

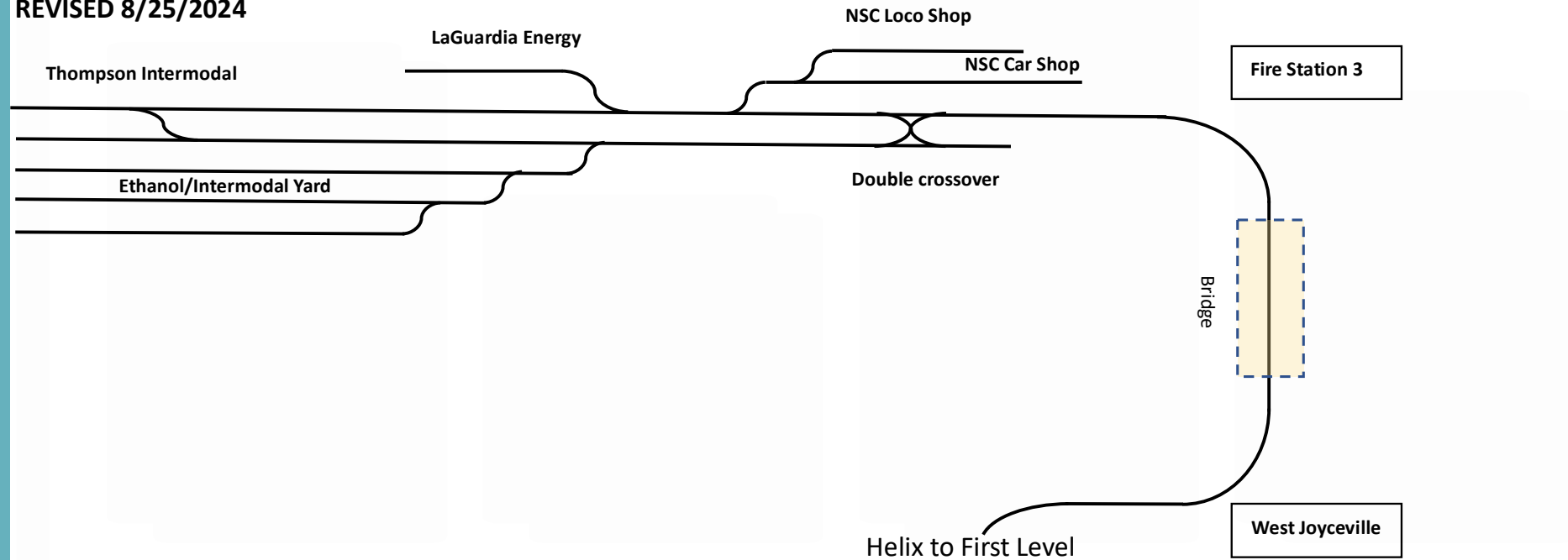


MODEL RAILROAD DRAWING

NORFOLK SOUTHERN CONNECTOR

SECOND LEVEL

REVISED 8/25/2024



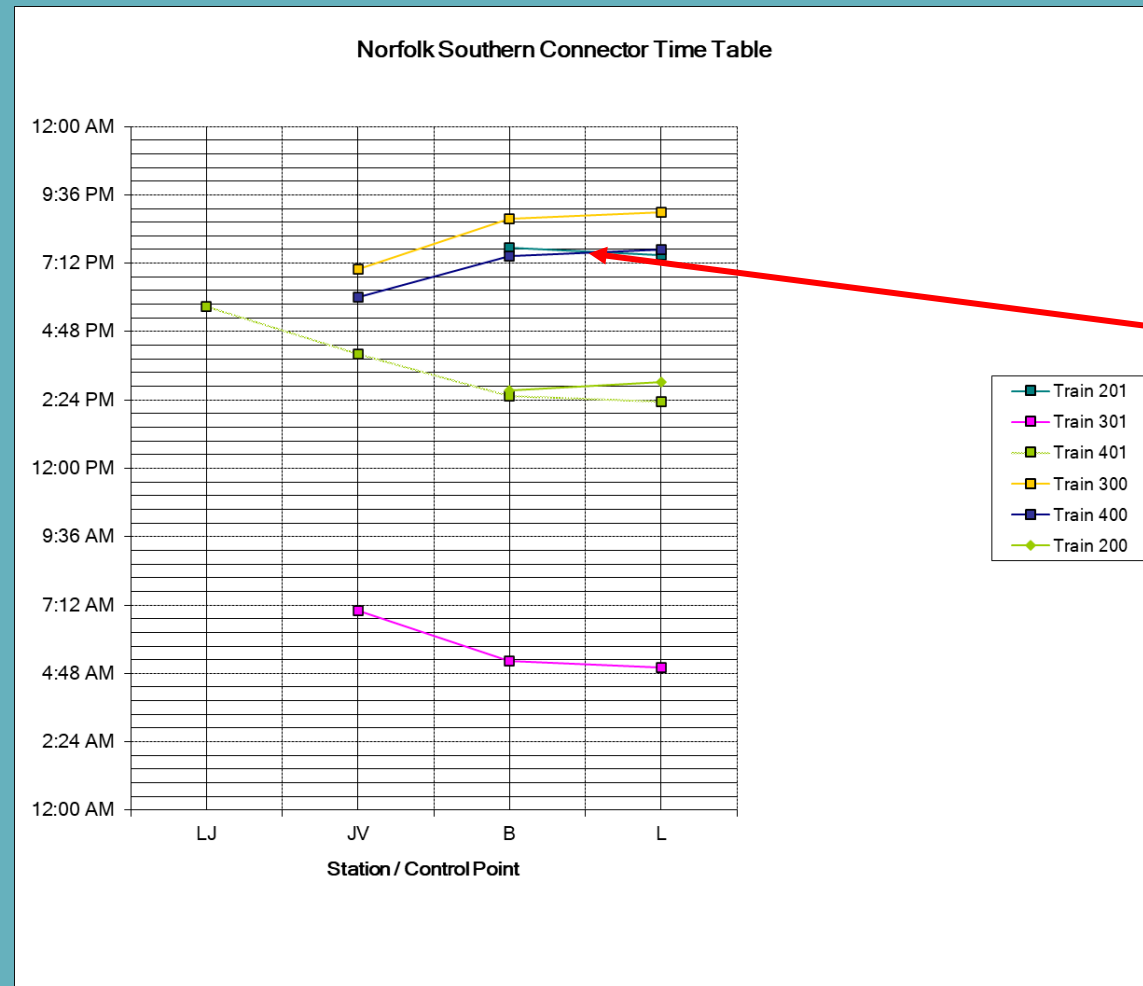
OPERATIONS DOCUMENTATION

Timetable

					WESTBOUND (READ DOWN)			EASTBOUND (READ UP)		
Speed Factor	→				1.25	1.5	1.75	1.25	1.5	1.75
	STATION NAME	RUNNING TIME		ABV.	Train 400	Train 300	Train 200	Train 401	Train 301	Train 201
Pass - 1.00	Littleton Junct	80	1.33	LJ				5:40 PM		
Fast Frt - 1.25	Joyceville	70	1.17	JV	6:00 PM	7:00 PM		4:00 PM	7:00 AM	
Norm Frt - 1.50	Barrtow	10	0.17	B	7:27 PM	8:45 PM	2:45 PM	2:32 PM	5:15 AM	7:45 PM
Slow Frt - 1.75	Littleton	10	0.17	L	7:40 PM	9:00 PM	3:02 PM	2:20 PM	5:00 AM	7:28 PM

OPERATIONS DOCUMENTATION

String chart



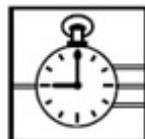
**Meet
between
Trains 201
and 401**

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATION

3. You must submit a completed Statement of Qualification (SOQ). The SOQ form is available in a fillable form on the NMRA website at:

<https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/education/achievement/pdf/2025-soq-dispatch-fillable.pdf>

- a) Attach the drawings and other documentation for the model railroad developed or created.
- b) Attach a form showing the jobs held and approximate number of hours accrued in each position. (**Record of Operations - Summary**)
- c) Provide a signed “witness form”, available from the Division or Region Achievement Program Manager. (**Operating Logbook**)



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
CHIEF DISPATCHER
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
JANUARY 2025**

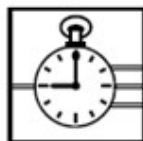
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Member's Name: _____ NMRA #: _____ Exp: _____
Street: _____ City: _____ State/Prov: _____
ZIP/PC: _____ Country: _____ NMRA Region: _____ Division: _____
Date Submitted: _____ E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

To qualify for this certificate, you must:

1. Must have participated in the operation of one or more model railroads, either home or club, for no less than fifty hours. A minimum of ten hours must be served in each of three of the five categories listed below, one of which must be DISPATCHER. They are: ENGINEER - Mainline, Freight, Passenger or Wayfreight; YARDMASTER, Station Master; HOSTLER, Power Desk; TOWERMAN, Traffic Manager, Road Master; DISPATCHER. This experience shall be accumulated on one or more model railroads having at least two mainline trains plus yard switching in simultaneous operation. Some system of freight and passenger train and car movements, including road switching, shall be used for controlling train activity.
2. The use of a computer to accomplish the following requirements is acceptable. The applicant shall also do the following:
 - ☐ Prepare a schematic drawing of a model railroad layout meeting the operating conditions described in Section 1 and indicate all pertinent simulated distances.
 - ☐ Develop a timetable appropriate to this model railroad, simulating prototype time and covering a period of eight hours or more, during which time at least three scheduled mainline trains move in each direction.
 - ☐ Develop an operating train chart (graph) which interprets the above schedule for timetable operation of the model railroad. Indicate at least one train meet on the schematic drawing required above. Show the position of the train(s) involved and describe the action, giving pertinent time and movement data to effect the meet.
 - ☐ Develop or adapt a system of operation for one layout in Section 1 above, including all the necessary forms and explanations of their use for controlling car movements, train make-up and operation in a prototypical manner.
3. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) which shall include the following:
 - ☐ Attachment of the forms and drawings in Requirement 2.
 - ☐ Description of the jobs held and an approximation of the number of hours accrued in each position.
 - ☐ The signed witnessed Certificate of Operation form showing that all the requirements have been met and that the member requesting certification has operated a model railroad in a prototypical manner.

These requirements can be met on one or more model railroad layouts, either privately owned or club layout(s).



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
CHIEF DISPATCHER
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
JANUARY 2025**

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A.1 - ENGINEER; PASSENGER OR FREIGHT shall run his or her train in a manner that simulates the prototype, following the rules of the model railroad being used, operating according to the signal system (if present) or by direct instruction of the Dispatcher.

A.2 - WAYFREIGHT ENGINEER will meet the requirements of Mainline Engineer. In addition, he or she shall perform all required switching with approval from the Dispatcher in a manner to not adversely affect the overall railroad schedule or operations.

B.1 - YARDMASTER runs the freight yard. He or she makes up trains with the appropriate cars in the desired numbers to have trains ready when the timetable or Dispatcher requires them. Generally, the Yardmaster operates the switch engine but in a large yard could direct several yard engineers.

B.2 - STATIONMASTER is in charge of the passenger station and all passenger switching. He or she makes up trains with the appropriate consists so the trains are ready when the timetable and Dispatcher requires them. Terminating trains are broken down appropriately and the cars serviced and stored as needed. Through train switching is accomplished.

C.1 - HOSTLER shall run the engine facilities. He or she shall have each locomotive facing the correct direction, double headed or lashed up, ready for the Engineer to easily leave the engine area. Service to the locomotives shall be simulated. Returning locomotives are placed in their appropriate stalls or tracks. On layouts with advanced control systems, the Hostler can handle the assignment of locomotives to the appropriate Engineer's throttle.

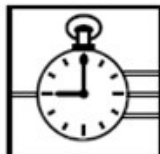
C.2 - POWER DESK decides what is the correct motive power for each train and assigns throttle control to the motive power. When the assignment is finished, he or she returns the control of that motive power back to the Hostler throttle or to off.

D.1 - TOWERMAN operates one or more towers (control panels) on a layout. He or she sets up the appropriate route at the correct time under the direction of the timetable or Dispatcher. He or she reports train passings to the Dispatcher if required.

D.2 - TRAFFIC MANAGER determines which cars go and come from each industry, and the amount and location of traffic. He or she specifies the route and may create a computer program to do this automatically.

D.3 - ROAD MASTER is the operating session trouble-shooter and makes repairs. He or she keeps things moving smoothly. He or she can take track in and out of service.

E. DISPATCHER coordinates all train movements, either by sequence, timetable and fast clock or other operating system.



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
CHIEF DISPATCHER
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
JANUARY 2025**

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RECORD OF OPERATIONS - SUMMARY

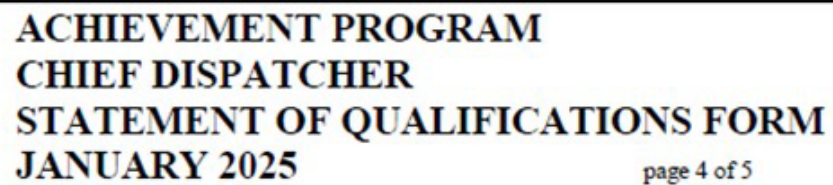
The undersigned witnesses (any NMRA member can be a witness) certify that the Dispatcher options shown below have been earned on one or more model railroads for a minimum of 50 actual operating hours by the above named NMRA member and have been personally observed by the witness(es) approved by the Division AP Chair.

Member's Name: _____ NMRA #: _____ Exp. _____

JOBS WITNESSED

TITLE	JOB	HOURS SERVED	DATES (FROM-TO)
A. ENGINEER	A.1 Mainline Freight or Passenger		
	A.2 Wayfreight		
B. MASTER	B.1 Yard Master		
	B.2 Station Master		
C. HOSTLER	C.1 Hostler		
	C.2 Power Desk		
D. TOWERMAN	D.1 Towerman		
	D.2 Traffic Manager		
	D.3 Road Master		
E. DISPATCHER (Mandatory)	E. Dispatcher		

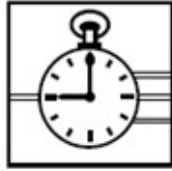
WITNESS NAME(S) FOR SUMMARY	SIGNATURE	NMRA #

[illegible]

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATION

Take your logbook and have the Layout owner sign off on your hours as you go along your journey. Don't try to go back and complete the form after you were there a few months ago.





ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM CHIEF DISPATCHER STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM JANUARY 2025

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Member Statement and Agreement:

I certify that I have completed all of the requirements for this Certificate of Achievement as listed above and that I will agree to assist other members in this subject whenever possible, whether or not they are participants in the Achievement Program. ☐ Check here if this is the member's first award.

NAME: SIGNATURE: Date:

Division Achievement Program Chair Review (optional): Reviewed for compliance and completeness.

NAME: SIGNATURE: Date:

Certification of Region Achievement Program Chair

As the NMRA Region Achievement Program Chair of the , I certify that I have examined this SOQ and, having compared it to the stated requirements for this certificate, I am satisfied that the stated requirements have been met.

NAME: SIGNATURE: Date:

Region Certificate #:

Approval by AP National Executive Assistant Manager

NAME: SIGNATURE: Date:

Questions/Comments