

# National Model Railroad Association

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## Achievement Program

### Master Builder - Cars

A "Car" is just about anything that runs on rails and is NOT self-propelled (if it's self-propelled, it's Motive Power). This includes freight cars, passenger cars, maintenance of way cars (including equipment such as cranes), cabooses, cable cars, unpowered (dummy) locomotives, etc. Actually, if you have a model which is self propelled, but is a model of something that was designed to carry something (besides itself), such as a rail car, it can be used as one of the qualifying models for either Motive Power or Cars, BUT NOT BOTH.

Contact your [Regional AP Manager](#) if you have a question about which category a particular model would fall into.

To qualify for the Master Builder - Cars certificate:

1. You must build eight operable scale models of railroad cars:

"Operable" means that they must be able to roll on the track, negotiate a curve, be pulled by something, etc. It doesn't mean that every door, valve, or other moving feature of the car must work as the prototype does. (However, any operating features that you can include in your car are likely to increase your score.)

- A. There must be at least four different types of cars represented in the total of eight. One of these must be a passenger car.

The intent of this requirement is show that you can model a variety of types of cars, not just several variations of the same type. For example: a 40' steel-side box car and a 36' wood side reefer would be different types of cars, but a 40' steel-side box car and a 50' steel-side box car probably would not (unless you can show that there was a substantial difference in what it took to build them). Similarly, a wood deck flat car and a steel deck flat car would not be considered "different" types of cars, but a regular flat car and a depressed center flat car would, because it is a substantially different type of car to build.

"Passenger cars" include anything that would normally be found in a regular scheduled passenger train including baggage cars, express reefers, business cars, or other passenger carrying cars like drover's cabooses.

Remember, it is only four different types that are required: you could build a set of five identical passenger coaches, a box car, a tank car, and a gondola, and satisfy the requirement.

- B. Each of the eight models must be [super detailed](#) with either commercial parts or scratch built

parts (for extra points).

When looking for ways to super detail your cars, brake wheels, grab irons and ladders are good places to start - particularly by replacing the "molded on" ones that the car came with. That's where many judges start looking. Another area that many judges look for is the under-frame brake gear.

- C. In addition to being super detailed, at least four of the eight models must be scratch built. The term "scratch built" implies that the modeler has done all of the necessary layout and fabrication that produce the final dimensions, appearance, and operating qualities of the model.

This is a good statement of the intent and spirit of the "scratch built" requirement. Notice that it does NOT say that the use of a few commercial detail parts will disqualify the model as being "scratch built". In general, the same standard applies that is used in contest judging: "Completely Scratch Built" means that 90% or more of the model was scratch built.

The following parts are specifically excluded from the scratch built requirement:

- Wheels
- Couplers
- Light bulbs & electronics.
- Trucks.
- Brake fittings.
- Marker lights & drumheads.
- Paint, decals, etc.
- Basic shapes of wood, plastic, metal, etc.

("Basic shapes" are things that the builders of the prototype would have used as raw materials. For example, an "I" beam would be a basic shape; a commercial door or window casting would not.)

Something that you should remember if the idea of 'scratch building' intimidates you: There is very little difference between scratch building and building most craftsman kits. The big difference is that in a kit, the manufacturer has assembled the materials that you will need for you. Only the construction needs to be done from scratch. If you take someone else's plans and instructions (even those from a kit) and go to the hobby shop and buy the materials yourself and assemble them, that qualifies as scratch building. On the other hand, if you do develop your own plans, make sure that you tell the judges that, as it will earn you extra points.

2. You must earn a score of at least 87-1/2 points on four of the eight models in either an NMRA sponsored contest or in AP Merit Award judging.

Note that only four of the eight must earn 87-1/2 points. The others don't even have to be judged! They do all have to be described on the Statement of Qualification (see below).

3. You must submit a Statement of Qualification.

(The SOQ forms are also available from your Regional AP Manager ) which includes the following:

- An attachment giving a detailed description of each of the eight models, including:
  - Identification of all scratch built features
  - All commercial components used
  - Materials used in building the model
  - If the model is a kit, whose kit is it?
- Verification of the Merit Awards (photocopies of the certificates)
- Photos of the model are helpful, though not required.

Remember that your eight cars do not have to be from the same era, or part of the country. They don't even have to be the same scale. You also don't have to earn your four Merit Award certificates at the same time - you can earn one this year, another two years from now, and another the year after that.

#### Further Information

For further information contact National Achievement Program General Manager, Paul Richardson, MMR, [achiev@hq.nmra.org](mailto:achiev@hq.nmra.org) , or your Region or Division Achievement Program Manager.

Also refer to the articles "[Master Builder - Cars](#)," NMRA Bulletin, February 1992, and "[Merit Award Winning Cars](#)" NMRA Bulletin March 1992.

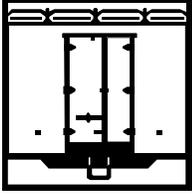
Forms available for this category:

- SOQ Form: [\(PDF\)](#)
- Record and Validation form: [\(PDF\)](#)
- Judging Form: [\(PDF\)](#)

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# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM MASTER BUILDER CARS STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM May 2006

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Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

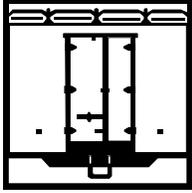
Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP/PC: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### To qualify for this certificate you must:

1. Build eight operable scale models of railroad cars. There must be at least four different types of cars represented in the total of eight. One of these must be a passenger car and at least four must be scratchbuilt. The remaining four cars, if not scratch built, must be superdetailed either with scratchbuilt parts or with commercial parts as defined in the "DEFINITIONS" section.
2. Earn a Merit Award with four of the above models either via an NMRA sponsored model contest or AP Merit Award Judging.
3. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) which shall include the following:
  - Attachment giving detailed descriptions of the models.
  - Identification of the scratchbuilt features.
  - List of all the commercial components appearing on each model.
  - Materials used in building the models.
  - Verification of the Merit Awards.



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM  
 MASTER BUILDER CARS  
 STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM  
 May 2006**

	Description of Model	Scratch Built	Merit Award	Verified By	Date	NMRA #
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

**Member's 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.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Certification of Regional Achievement Program Chair**

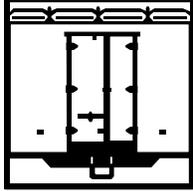
As the NMRA Regional Achievement Program Chair of the \_\_\_\_\_, I certify that I have examined this SOQ and, having compared it to the stated requirements for this certificate, I am satisfied that the stated requirements have been met.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Region Cert #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval by AP National Executive Vice Chair**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM MASTER BUILDER CARS RECORD AND VALIDATION FORM May 2006

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO A COMPLETED STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ) FORM.

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

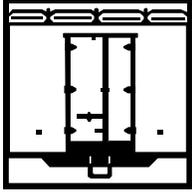
Region: \_\_\_\_\_

To qualify for this certificate you must:

1. Build eight operable scale models of railroad cars. There must be at least four different types of cars represented in the total of eight. One of these must be a passenger car and at least four must be scratchbuilt. The remaining four cars, if not scratch built, must be superdetailed either with scratchbuilt parts or with commercial parts as defined in the "DEFINITIONS" section.
2. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points with four of the above models either via an NMRA sponsored contest or AP Merit Award Judging.
3. Submit a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) which shall include the following:
  - Attachment giving detailed descriptions of the models.
  - Identification of the scratchbuilt features.
  - List of all the commercial components appearing on each model.
  - Materials used in building the models.
  - Verification of the Merit Awards.

DESCRIPTION	SCRATCH BUILT	MERIT AWARD	VERIFIED BY	DATE	NMRA #

REGIONAL AP CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_ REGION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM MASTER BUILDER CARS JUDGING FORM May 2006

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO A COMPLETED STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ) FORM.

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Model: \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned judges certify that the model or railroad rolling stock described above, built by the above named NMRA member, has been personally examined by two or more judges appointed by the Region AP Chair; that the model is either scratchbuilt or is superdetailed (as defined in the NMRA AP Regulations "DEFINITIONS" Section); is operational and meets all applicable NMRA Standards; has earned a minimum score of 87.5 points; and has been awarded a Merit Award.

### MERIT AWARD SCORING SCHEDULE

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	SCORE
CONSTRUCTION	Workmanship	0-40	
DETAIL	Quality & Amount	0-20	
CONFORMITY	Prototype Practice	0-25	
FINISH & LETTERING	General Appearance	0-25	
SCRATCHBUILT	Amount of Parts Built by the Modeler	0-15	
		Total	

#### NOTE

Exempted Parts: motor, gears, wheels, couplers, light bulbs, trucks, marker & classification lights, brake fittings, basic wood, metal and plastic shapes. The above commercial parts may be used on a model and the model is still considered to be scratchbuilt.

JUDGE'S NAME	SIGNATURE	NMRA #

REGIONAL AP CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_ REGION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_