

National Model Railroad Association

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Achievement Program

Chief Dispatcher

To qualify for the Chief Dispatcher certificate you must:

- A. Have participated in the operation of a model railroad, either home or club, for not less than fifty hours. A minimum of ten hours each must have been served in three of the five categories listed below, one of which must be #5, Dispatcher:

1. [Engineer \(mainline freight, passenger, or wayfreight\)](#)
2. [Yardmaster \(or station master\)](#)
3. [Hostler \(or power desk\)](#)
4. [Towerman \(or traffic manager, or road master\)](#)
5. [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 car movements, including road switching, shall be used for controlling train activity.

The following descriptions are not designed to list ALL of the things that a particular job must involve - they list things that are typically involved in each job. Naturally, jobs, duties, and overall operating complexity will vary from one model railroad to another.

1. **Engineer:**

a. Mainline Passenger or Freight Engineer:

Shall run their train in a manner that simulates the prototype, following the rules of the model railroad being used, and operating according to the signal system (if present) or by direct instruction of the Dispatcher.

b. 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 not to adversely affect the overall railroad schedule or operations.

Operating in a prototype manner includes no 'jack-rabbit' starts or sudden stops during normal operations.

2. **Yardmaster:**

a. 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 other yard engineers.

b. Station master:

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

3. Hostler:

a. 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 locomotives shall be simulated. Returning locomotives are placed in their appropriate stalls or tracks. On layouts with advanced control systems, the Hostler can handle assignment of locomotives to the appropriate engineer's throttle.

b. Power Desk:

Decides what is the correct motive power for each train. Assigns throttle control to the motive power. When assignment is finished, he or she returns control of that motive power to the Hostler, or to off.

4. Towerman:

a. Towerman:

Operates one or more towers (control panels) on a layout. He or she sets up appropriate routes at the correct time under direction of the timetable or the Dispatcher. Reports train passings to dispatcher if required.

b. Traffic Manager:

Determines which cars come and go from each industry, and the amount and location of traffic, and specifies the route. May create a computer program to do this automatically.

c. Road Master:

The operating trouble-shooter and repair person. He or she keeps things moving smoothly. Can take track in or out of service.

5. Dispatcher:

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

B. Documentation

The applicant shall also do the following: (please note that the use of a computer to accomplish these requirements is acceptable)

1. Prepare a schematic drawing of a model railroad layout meeting the operating conditions described in (A), and indicating all pertinent simulated distances.

Normally, this would be a diagram of one of the layouts you put in your qualifying time on - but there is no requirement that it must be. The drawing must be neat and readable, but it does not have to be in ink.

2. Develop a timetable appropriate to this model railroad, simulating prototype time, covering a period of eight hours or more, during which at least three scheduled mainline trains move in each direction.
3. 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 in (B-1) above. Show the position of the trains involved and describe the action, giving pertinent time and movement data to effect the meet.
4. Develop or adapt a system of operation for the layout in (A), including all the necessary forms and explanations for their use for controlling car movements, train makeup, and operation in a prototypical manner.

Members of the same club or home layout operating group who are applying for the Chief Dispatcher certificate can use copies of the same paperwork for requirements 1 and 4, but each must develop and submit their own timetable and train chart (even if they are all copies of the same one). Another possibility would be to have all the members who qualified submit their application at the same time. and just use one set of the paperwork for #'s 1 & 4.

C. Statement of Qualification

The applicant must submit a completed Statement of Qualification (SOQ) ([PDF](#)) which shall include the following:

1. The forms and drawings meeting the requirements in (B).
2. Description of the jobs held and the approximate number of hours in each.
3. The signed witnessed "Certification of Operation" showing that all the requirements have been met and the applicant has operated a model railroad in a prototypical manner.

Further Information

Contact National Achievement Program General Manager, Paul Richardson, MMR achiev@hq.nmra.org, or your [Region or Division Achievement Program Manager](#) for more information.

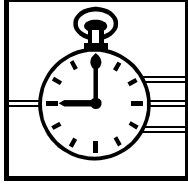
Also refer to the article "[Chief Dispatcher](#)", NMRA Bulletin, May 1991.

Forms available for this category:

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

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[Email Contact List](#)



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM CHIEF DISPATCHER STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM May 2006

page 1 of 5

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. Must have participated in the operation of a model railroad, 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.

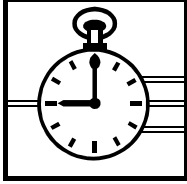
2. The use of a computer to accomplish the following requirements is acceptable. The applicant shall also do the following:

- 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
- 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 in 2a 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 the 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
May 2006**

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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.

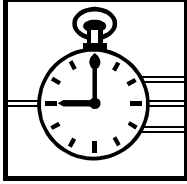
C.2 - POWER DESK decides what is the correct motive power for each train and assigns throttle control to the motive power. When the assignment is finished, he or she returns the control of that motive power back to the Hostler throttle or to off.

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 May 2006

RECORD OF OPERATIONS

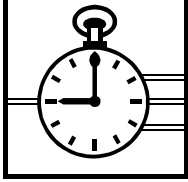
The undersigned judges certify that the Dispatcher options shown below have been earned on one or more model railroads for a minimum of 50 actual operating hours by the above named NMRA member and have been personally observed by two or more judges appointed by the Region AP Chair.

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

JOBS WITNESSED

TITLE	JOB	HOURS SERVED	DATES (FROM-TO)
A. ENGINEER	A.1 Mainline Freight		
	A.2 Mainline Passenger		
	A.3 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		

JUDGE'S NAME	SIGNATURE	NMRA #



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
CHIEF DISPATCHER
STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FORM
May 2006**

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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.

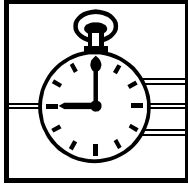
NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Region Cert #: _____

Approval by AP National Executive Vice-Chair

NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

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ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM CHIEF DISPATCHER 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: _____

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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.

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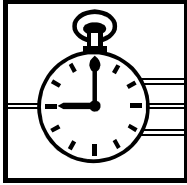
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E. DISPATCHER coordinates all train movements, either by sequence, timetable and fast clock or other operating system.



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM CHIEF DISPATCHER CERTIFICATE OF OPERATION FORM May 2006

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

Member's Name: _____

NMRA #: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Region: _____

The undersigned judges 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 two or more judges appointed by the Region AP Chair.

JOBS WITNESSED

TITLE	JOB	HOURS SERVED	DATES (FROM-TO)
A. ENGINEER	A.1 Mainline Freight		
	A.2 Mainline Passenger		
	A.3 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		

JUDGE'S NAME	SIGNATURE	NMRA #

REGIONAL AP CHAIR: _____ REGION: _____ DATE: _____

