

Grading Standards – TCA and TTOS

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Train Collectors Association

The following Condition and Grading standards apply to **all** toy train and related accessory items. The items being evaluated may or may not include the original box. Boxes and other paper are subject to a separate set of grading and condition standards. Standards for all toy train and related accessory items apply to the visual appearance of the item and do not consider the operating functionality of the equipment.

The Standards have been expanded with the introduction of a separate designation for restored/refinished items. Restored/Refinished items must continue to be marked as such using the pressure sensitive labels (Ident Tags are available from the TCA). The Association provides these labels through members of the Standards Committee or the National Business Office.

Condition and Grading are subjective, at best, and are intended to act as a guide. It is important and logical that wishful thinking not be allowed to influence the choice of grade.



Train and Other Model Condition

- C-10 **Mint – Brand New:** all original; unused and unblemished.
- C-9 **Factory new – Brand New:** all original; unused; may evidence factory rubs and the slightest evidence of handling, shipping and having been test run at the factory.
- C-8 **Like New – Complete All Original:** no rust, no missing parts; may show effects of being on display and/or age; may have been run.
- C-7 **Excellent – all original:** minute scratches and paint nicks; no rust and no missing parts; no distortion of component parts.
- C-6 **Very Good:** Minor scratches and paint nicks, minor spots of surface rust, free of dents. May have minor parts replaced.

- C-5 **Good – Sign of play wear:** scratches and minor paint loss. Small dents, minor surface rust. Evidence of heavy use.
- C-4 **Fair:** Scratched, moderate paint loss, dented, missing parts, surface rust. Evidence of heavy use.
- C-3 **Poor – Requires major body repair:** Heavily scratched, major rust and missing parts. Restoration candidate.
- C-2 **Restoration Required.**
- C-1 **Junk – parts value only**

Restored Items

Restored/refinished toy train and related accessory items must continue to be marked as such using pressure-sensitive labels available from the TCA. All replacement parts considered “major component parts” such as an engine frame, boiler or cab that have been used in the restoration of the item must include the required identification marks of the manufacturer.

- R-5 **Professional Grade – Restored in all aspects of finish and detail as when manufactured:** Finished in correct type of paint, color, texture and gloss. All wiring exactly matches the original. All trim in correct finish or plating. Virtually identical to the original. No surface imperfections in the metal work. No wear or evidence of use present. Authentic in all aspects.
- R-4 **Very Good – Restored to a general high standard:** However, noticeable differences exist particularly with respect to the color, finish, and texture of paint when compared to an original piece.
- R-3 **Good – A restored piece that has signs of play wear with minor dents and scratches.**
- R-2 **Fair – A non-professional restoration:** Color, texture and finish clearly different from the original. Other items, such as non-authentic wiring are also evident.
- R-1 **Poor – A poorly constructed restoration in all respects:** May be a candidate for restoration. Includes dents or rust pitting under the finish.

Paper Items and Boxes

- P-10 **MINT – BRAND NEW** Complete and all original as manufactured and unused.
- P-9 **STORE NEW** Complete and all original and unused. May have merchant additions such as store stamps, price tags et al. Boxes must have inner liner/s, if appropriate.
- P-8 **LIKE NEW** Complete and all original. Evidence of light use and aging, additional notations since leaving the publisher or manufacturer. Contents of box may be missing.
- P-7 **EXCELLENT** Complete and all original. Handling indentations, minute edge wear, small creases.
- P-6 **VERY GOOD** Complete and all original. Minor abrasions, creases and/or folds. Small tear, slight color changes, minor soiling. Box may have inner liner/s missing.

NOTE: Any paper or box that has been repaired can be graded no higher than P-5.

- P-5 **GOOD** Items show substantial wear. Moderate abrasions, creases and/or folds; moderate tears and losses. Moderate color changes, staples may be rusty or replaced. May have been repaired with archival tissue and adhesive*.
- P-4 **FAIR** Heavy damage but generally legible. May or may not have been repaired. Paper may be brittle. Boxes may have flaps missing.
- P-3 **POOR** Incomplete, may be very brittle, significant deterioration. Extensive amateur repairs. (Scotch tape or equivalent).

**Archival tissues are Japanese tissue papers used for paper conservation. Archival adhesives include starch pastes, methyl cellulose pastes and archival heat-set tissues such as Crompton coated tissues. Pressure sensitive 'archival' tapes have been shown to be problematic in conservation testing, therefore take this into account before considering using it.*

Toy Train Operating Society

Grading Standards

At the August 14, 2008 board meeting, the Board of Directors of the Toy Train Operating Society decided to return to our previous grading standards for use by TTOS members when offering trains for sale or trade, Effective immediately, please start using these grading standards.

- MINT – Brand new, absolutely unmarred, all original and unused.
- LIKE NEW (LN) – Free of any blemishes, nicks or scratches, original condition throughout, very little sign of use.
- EXCELLENT (EX) – Minute nicks or scratches, no dents or rust.
- VERY GOOD (VG) – Few scratches, exceptionally clean, no dents or rust.
- GOOD (GD) – Scratches, small dents, dirty.
- FAIR – Well-scratched, chipped, dented, rusted , or warped.
- POOR – Beat up, junk condition, some usable parts.

All description standards are mainly in regard to condition of finish. This should be kept constantly in mind. In all categories except MINT and LIKE NEW, parts can and may be missing. Any such missing parts must be noted when describing the piece. Also, any replacement parts must be noted, or exceptions to the state4d category. All restored or refinished items are to be so stated. Note that the standards apply to original items. No grade above EXCELLENT can apply to a refinished piece. We do not here recognize in between or multiple grades, such as EXCELLENT plus, EXCELLENT minus or VERY GOOD to EXCELLENT.