# Glossary of North American railway terms

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This page contains a list of <u>terms</u>, <u>jargon</u>, and <u>slang</u> used to varying degrees by <u>railfans</u> and railroad employees in the <u>United States</u> and <u>Canada</u>. Although not exhaustive, many of the entries in this list appear from time to time in specialist, rail-related publications. Inclusion of a term in this list does not necessarily imply its universal adoption by all railfans and railroad employees, and there may be significant regional variation in usage.

#### **Contents**

## 0-9

## **3-step protection (US)**

The protection given by a locomotive engineer to an employee working near, between, or under cars to which the locomotive is coupled, via a three-step process:

- 1. Fully apply independent brake.
- 2. Set reverser to neutral.
- 3. Turn off generator field (or notify the ground employee, depending on company-specific rules and locomotive type, that protection is provided).[1][2]

#### 10 wheeler (US)

Cho 10 subs alarwybool arron

The 10-wheeler wheel arrangement

A steam locomotive with a 4-6-0 wheel arrangement[3]

#### 241 (US)

Procession of a train past a stop signal with verbal permission from the dispatcher. [4] Derives from Rule 241, which is used to grant such permission under certain rule sets. [5]

## A

#### A unit (US)



A BNSF RailwayA unit

A <u>diesel locomotive</u> (or more rarely an <u>electric locomotive</u>) equipped with a driving <u>cab</u> and a <u>control system</u> to control other locomotives in a <u>multiple unit</u>, and therefore able to be the lead unit in a <u>consist</u> of several locomotives controlled from a single position[6]

#### **ACe**

A nickname for EMD's SD70ACe locomotive[7][8][9]

Advanced Civil Speed Enforcement System (ACSES)

A positive train control cab signaling system developed by Alstom.[10]

**Advanced Train Control System (ATCS)** 

A system of railroad equipment designed to ensure safety by monitoring locomotive and train locations, providing analysis and reporting, and automating <u>track warrants</u> and similar orders.[11]

## **ALCOhaulic**

A nickname for the DH643 diesel-hydraulic locomotive built by <u>American Locomotive</u> Company (ALCO)<sup>I</sup>citation needed<sup>I</sup>

### **Alligator**

ALCO RSD-15 locomotive, so named for its long, low nose[12][13][14]

#### Amcan

An <u>Amfleet</u> passenger car—named because the car shape is a rounded stainless steel tube[15]

## Angel seat (US)



A cupola-stylecaboose with an angel seat above

The second level seats on a cupola-style <a href="mailto:caboose[16][17]">caboose[16][17]</a>

### Angle bar

A metal plate that joins the ends of rails in jointed track[18]

#### **Amshack**

A small shelter that serves as a train station for <u>Amtrak</u> trains in a small town. Normally, there are no manned services offered at these small stations. [19] More generally, any station built under Amtrak's Standard Stations Program in the 1970s and 1980s. [20][21]

## **Association of American Railroads (AAR)**

An industry trade group representing primarily the major freight <u>railroads</u> of <u>North America</u> (<u>Canada</u>, <u>Mexico</u> and the <u>United States</u>)[22]

## Automatic equipment identification (AEI) (US)

An automatic tracking system using RFID technology[23][24]

### **Auto Train (US)**

A passenger train service first operated by <u>Auto-Train Corporation</u> and then by <u>Amtrak</u> between <u>Lorton</u>, <u>Virginia</u> and <u>Sanford</u>, <u>Florida</u> that carries the passengers' automobiles aboard the same train in <u>autoracks</u>

### **Autorack or auto carrier (US)**



A consist of autorack cars

A specialized freight car for transporting automobiles[23][25]

## $\mathbf{B}$

#### **B-Boat**

<u>GE B23-7</u>, <u>B30-7</u> or <u>B36-7</u> locomotive. By analogy with U-boat, since with the Dash 7 line, the "B" or "C" moved to the beginning of the designation.[26]

#### **B** unit



#### A BNSF Railway B Unit

A cabless booster locomotive, controlled via <u>multiple unit</u> from a cab-equipped <u>A unit</u>, sometimes equipped with limited controls for <u>hostling.[14][27][28]</u>

## **Baby Boat**



A GE U18B locomotive, or Baby Boat

GE U18B locomotive[14]

## **Baby Tunnel Motor**

EMD GP15-1 or GP15T locomotive, so-called because its low air intakes resemble those of the much larger SD40T-2 and SD45T-2[14]

#### **Bandit**

A nickname for <u>Milwaukee Road</u> engines after the railroad was sold to the <u>Soo Line Railroad</u>. The Soo covered up the Milwaukee Road name and logo on the orange locomotives with black paint, causing them to resemble bandits. [29] Also often applied to similarly patched, second-hand locomotives, especially if the patches are crudely applied. [30]

#### **Baretables**

Empty flat, spine, or well cars[31]

## **Beans or Going to Beans**

Taking a break from work to eat[32][33][34]

### **Big Blue**

A nickname for <u>Conrail</u> due to the medium blue livery that their locomotives were painted[35][36]

## Big G



A Guilford Rail System locomotive showing the *Big G*paint scheme

A nickname for <u>Guilford Rail System</u>, in reference to the large "G" emblem on their locomotives and boxcars[37]

2. Great Northern Railway[38][unreliable source?][39][40]

#### Big hole

When a train suffers a loss of all brake air and stops or when the air brakes on the train are placed in emergency. It refers to the air ports in the automatic brake valve, the emergency portion being the biggest port or hole. (e.g. over the radio: "We just big holed.")[41][42][43]

#### Big hook

A railroad crane[44][45]

## **Big Mac**

A nickname given to EMD's <u>SD70MAC</u>, <u>SD80MAC</u>, and <u>SD90MAC</u> locomotive models[46]

#### Billboard

Santa Fe locomotive in the pre-1972 blue and yellow scheme[14]

#### **Black Widow**

Southern Pacific locomotive (all black with some silver)[14]

## **Bloody Nose**

<u>Southern Pacific</u> locomotive (post-1959 gray and red paint scheme where the nose of the diesel locomotive was painted in scarlet red), [14] or Amtrak Phase I paint scheme: reddishorange nose and then the Amtrak Chevron logo on the side of the engine.

#### **Bluebonnet**

One of two Santa Fe paint schemes. The standard freight scheme from 1972 until the BNSF merger was dark blue with yellow on the front, with the same color division as the warbonnet scheme. It is also known as Yellowbonnet. Bluebonnet can also mean a warbonnet unit with only the red painted over, resulting in a silver and blue locomotive; this was used on passenger engines transferred to freight service after the formation of Amtrak.[14]

#### **Bluebirds**

A nickname given to the GE U34CH's because they were delivered in dark blue and silver NJDOT paint

#### **Blueliners**

A nickname given to the <u>Reading Railroad</u>'s heavyweight MU cars, in reference to the bright blue and white paint scheme they wore in later years before being sold to <u>SEPTA</u>

### **Bolster**

A transverse floating beam member of truck suspension system supporting the weight of vehicle body[47]

#### **Booster**

A *cabless <u>B unit</u>* or <u>Slug</u>. Although a <u>Slug</u> and a <u>B unit</u> differ in terms of an engine, both serve the purpose of adding more *tractive effort*.[48][49]

#### **Boxcar**



A boxcar

A type of rolling stock with a flat bottom enclosed on all sides and top, which is loaded and unloaded from sliding doors on each side[50][51]

## **Brakeman (US)**

A train crew member who performs railcar and track management—often a single job description along with switchman ("brakeman/switchman"). A brakeman manually activated brakes on railroad cars before the advent of air brakes.

## Brakeman's caboose (US)

A small hut at one end of a railway wagon to protect the brakeman from the elements **Bright Future** 

The middle <u>CSX</u> tricolor paint scheme (also known as Yellow Nose 2 or YN2)<sup>1</sup>citation needed<sup>1</sup>

## **Buda Car**

A type of inspection car or speeder, typically streamlined, manufactured by the <u>Buda Engine Co.</u> Sometimes built out of an ordinary automobile body, with flanged wheels added. It was driven by small engines from 30 to 200 horsepower.[52]

### **Buggy**

A caboose on the Boston and Maine Railroad[53]

#### Bull

#### **Butthead or Butt Head**

GM Electro-Motive Division model 'MP' or 'SW' endcab switching locomotives[54]

## C

## Cab car (US)

A passenger coach which has a full set of train controls at one end, allowing for the use of push-pull train operation[55]

## Cab unit (US)

A locomotive which derives its structural strength from a bridge-truss design framework in the sides and roof, which cover the full width of the locomotive

### **Cabbage**

Former <u>EMD F40PH</u> locomotives with the diesel engine removed, and a roll-up baggage door installed in the center of the carbody; used as cab/baggage cars in Amtrak push-pull service. <u>Portmanteau</u> of 'cab' and 'baggage'.[56]

#### **Cadillac**

A nickname for <u>EMD SD9</u> locomotives, in reference to their smooth ride quality reminiscent of a <u>Cadillac</u> automobile. This nickname is said to have originated on the <u>Southern Pacific Railroad</u>. I citation needed

## **Calf**

An EMD TR1, one of several models of *cow-calf*locomotives

A cabless switcher[49]

## **Can Opener**

Conrail's herald[57][58]

#### Car knocker

Railroad car repair-person or car inspector. The term is derived from a worker who taps or "knocks" on railroad equipment to check its soundness.[59]

#### Catfish

<u>Norfolk Southern</u> locomotives with white stripes painted on the nose, which are said to look like catfish whiskers<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

#### **Centennials**

Union Pacific's <u>EMD DDA40X</u> locomotives. World's most powerful diesel locomotives, delivered in 1969, the year of Union Pacific's centennial.[60]

#### Centipede

A nickname given to a 12-axled <u>Baldwin</u> diesel locomotive.[61] Also a tender (as on a steam engine) with seven axles (two axles in a truck, followed by five fixed axles).[62][63]

## Centralized traffic control (CTC) (US)

A system in which signals and switches for a given area of track are controlled from a centralized location [64]

#### Cherry

Red colored signal aspects (lights) when mixed with other colors of a signal aspect (e.g. "Two cherries and a lemon" would denote a Red over Red over Yellow aspect colors)<sup>[</sup>citation needed]

## Ches-C

<u>Chessie System</u>'s kitten logo; the profile of the Chesapeake and Ohio's sleeping kitten mascot <u>Chessie</u> appears inside the corporate C logo[65][66]

#### Cinder dick

Railroad police detective. The term is derived from the fact that railroad police have to walk on <u>ballast</u>, which is sometimes known as "cinders" (before <u>dieselization</u>, many railroads used spent steam locomotive cinders for ballast)[67][68]

## **Circus loading**

Loading trailers on flatcars sequentially from the end; the standard method of loading in early piggyback service[69]

## Coal drag

A train loaded with coal[70]

## Coal jimmy

A small, low-capacity hopper car for carrying coal[71]

#### Coffin car

A nickname for a passenger car with an engineer's cab. Also known as a cab car or control car. So named due to the alleged additional danger posed to passengers in such cars (which are pushed by the heavier trailing locomotive) in frontal collisions.[72]

## **Color position light (CPL)**

A type of signal used most prominently by the Baltimore & Ohio and the Norfolk & Western railroads[73][74]

### Conductor (US)

The person in charge of a train and its crew. On passenger trains, a conductor is also responsible for tasks such as assisting passengers and collecting tickets.

#### **Consist**

The group of rail vehicles making up a train, or more commonly a group of locomotives connected together for multiple-unit (MU) operation[75][76]

## Control point (CP) (US)

An interlocking, or the location of a track signal or other marker with which dispatchers can specify when controlling trains[64]

## Cornfield meet (US)

A <u>head-on collision</u> between two trains[77][78][79][80]

### Coupler (US)

An AAR Type "E"railroad car coupler

The mechanical connector at either end of a railroad car allowing it to couple together with other cars to form a train[64]

#### **Covered wagon**

An EMD E-series or F-series locomotive[45][64]

#### Cow

A switcher locomotive, when paired with a calf[49]

#### Cowl unit (US)

An Amtrak EMDF40PH is one of many Cowl units

A locomotive for which structural strength comes from the <u>underframe</u> instead of the sides and roof

#### Critter

A small industrial locomotive[81][unreliable source?][82]

#### Cross-tie (US)

See Railroad tie.

#### Crummy

A caboose[83]

Cut (US)

A set of cars coupled together[84]

## D

#### **Dark Future**

CSX SD40-2 in Dark Future paint

The current <u>CSX</u> paint scheme, also known as Yellow Nose 3 (YN3) or Gold Nose 1 (GN1)[85]

#### **Dark Territory**

Rail lines without wayside (train control) signals[86]

#### **Darth Vader**

Darth Vader signals

The <u>lens hood</u> on a modern style of railroad signals, due to its vague resemblance to the helmet of <u>Darth Vader</u> from <u>Star Wars[87][88]</u>

### **Deadheading**

A passenger train that is traveling along a line but is not carrying passengers[89]

#### **Deathstar**

Illinois Central Railroad *Deathstar*logo

The logo of <u>Illinois Central Railroad</u>, which has the letter "i" inside a circle—based on a vague resemblance to the <u>Death Star</u> battle station in <u>Star Wars<sup>1</sup> citation needed</u><sup>1</sup>

#### **Diamond**

Level crossing of two railroad tracks, at any angle from 15° to 90°[89]

#### Dinky

A nickname given to small locomotives, particularly one running in <u>industrial service</u> or on <u>narrow gauge</u> tracks[90] Also, a small old-fashioned <u>trolley.[91]</u>

## **Distributed power**

Locomotives at the end or in the middle of a train. Can either be manned or automatically controlled. Manned units are preferred to be called "helpers" by railfans and some railroad personnel.[92]

## Double header (US)

A configuration in which two steam locomotives are coupled head-to-tail in order to haul a heavy train up a long or steep hill. In the present day, double headers (and occasionally triple headers) are done primarily on large passenger trains or as a show for railfans.

#### **Draper-Taper**

Nickname for the Canadian-built <u>GMD SD40-2F</u>, <u>SD50F</u>, <u>SD60F</u>, <u>GE C40-8M</u>, and <u>BBD HR-616</u>. These locomotives feature a full-width carbody with improved rear visibility, designed by William L. Draper, an employee of Canadian National Railway.[93]

## **Dynamic braking or dynamics**

A method of braking in which the motors on the locomotive wheels generate electric power from the momentum of the moving train, and this power is dissipated through resistor grids as heat[94][95]

### **Dynamite the train or dynamite**

## Eight and sand

Term used to wish train crews well wishes and quick uneventful journey. Comes from <u>notch 8</u> (the highest power setting of modern locomotive throttles) and to apply sand to prevent wheel slipping.[98]

## Elephant style

Three locomotives coupled *elephant style* 

A consist of multiple locomotives with all units facing forward; resembling the nose-to-tail train of elephants in a circus parade[99][100]

#### **Emeralds**

Clear aspects (green colored signal lights) indicating maximum allowable speed for that section of track or route. Emeralds are the opposite of "Rubies". [citation needed]

### **Emergency**

When a train has made a full brake application due to adverse event, or has lost its train air due to a defective valve (a "kicker"), or a broken air line or train separation. The train crew will normally declare that they are "in emergency" over the train radio, thus warning other trains and the dispatcher that there is a problem.[101][102]

## End of train (EOT) device or <u>flashing rear-end device</u> (FRED)

A form of electronic caboose with a flashing red light mounted on the end of a train. Also monitors various train functions such as brake-pipe pressure, motion, and GPS location.[103][104][105]

## **Engineer** (US)

The operator of a locomotive[103]

### **Espee**

A nickname given to the Southern Pacific railroad by railfans[106]

#### Ex-Con

A former Conrail locomotive[107] or former Conrail employee

F

#### Fallen flag

A defunct railroad, having either merged or discontinued operations[108]

## Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA)

A U.S. federal law that protects and compensates railroaders injured on the job[109] **Federal Railroad Administration** (FRA) (US)

The agency which oversees rail operation regulations and safety requirements for U.S. freight, passenger and commuter rail operations[104]

#### **Filet**

Converting a <u>double-stack</u> container train to single stack by removing the top layer of containers, allowing the rest of the train to proceed along track that lacks double stack clearance. The removed containers can be trucked to local destinations. The opposite process is <u>toupee.[110]</u>

### **Flares**

The EMD SD45, with its dynamic brake blisters and radiators that distinctively flare from the top of the unit. Also *Flare 45*. Both forms distinguish the SD45 from the SD45-

<u>2</u> and <u>SD45T-2</u>, which lack flared radiators.[111] The <u>GP40X</u> and <u>SD70M</u> models also bear similar flared radiators.[citation needed]

## Flatcar (US)

A train of loaded *flatcars* 

A type of rolling stock, which can be a flat-bottomed car with no sides on which freight (including <u>intermodal containers</u>) can be stacked. A bulkhead is a flatcar with walls on the front and rear. A center-beam bulkhead is a bulkhead flatcar with an additional wall dividing one side of the flatcar from the other, but still without any sides.[104]

#### **Flatback**

Industry slang for trailer-on-flatcar service in the 1970s, especially in the trade journal *Railway Age*[112]

#### **Foamer**

A <u>railfan</u>, particularly one whose enthusiasm appears excessive. They figuratively "foam at the mouth" while railfanning.[113]

## Flashing rear-end device (FRED) or end-of-train (EOT) device

A *flashing rear-end device* on a container train

A form of electronic caboose with a flashing red light mounted on the end of a train. Also monitors various train functions such as brake-pipe pressure, motion, and GPS location. [103][104][105]

## Flying switch or drop (US)

The practice of uncoupling a locomotive from a car in motion and running over a switch, whereupon an employee on the ground lines the switch to divert the car onto an adjacent track. [114][115] Once commonplace, this practice has led to several lawsuits against railroad companies and is now strictly prohibited due to the high risk to life and property. [116][117][118][119][120]

## Foreign power

Foreign power from the <u>Canadian Pacific Railway</u> and <u>BNSF Railway</u> on a <u>Norfolk Southern Railway</u> train Motive power from one railroad that runs along another railroad[121]

## Freight (US)

The products which are carried

#### Freight car (US)

A car designed to transport freight

#### Frog (US)

A casting with "X" shaped grooves used in <u>switches</u> and <u>crossovers[104]</u>

### Fucking rail nut (FRN)

A derogatory term used by some railroaders for <a href="mailto:railfans[122]">railfans[122]</a>

## G

#### Gandy dancer

A track maintenance worker[123][124]

#### Geep

A nickname for EMD's GP series of locomotives[124]

#### Gennie

A MetroNorth or Amtrak GE P32AC-DM locomotive citation needed

#### Genset

From "generator set", a locomotive that uses multiple high-speed diesel engines and generators, rather than a single medium-speed diesel engine and a single generator. Sometimes confused with *Green Goat* locomotives; the only similarities between the two types are their outward appearance and that both are designed to reduce air pollution and fuel consumption.[125]

#### **GEVO**

A nickname for <u>GE Evolution Series</u> locomotives, in reference to the GEVO-12 engine used in those units[126]

#### Ghost

An unpainted (but usually numbered) locomotive that has not yet been painted with company's livery. A ghost locomotive can be either in transport from the locomotive builder to the paint shop, or an unpainted locomotive may have been placed in revenue service without livery due to power shortage or, in rare cases, pushed out of the factory preemptively due to an impending labor strike. May also refer to an EMD E8, #4261, belonging to the Boston commuter agency, MBTA. This locomotive was known for its unique, plain light-gray paint. [citation needed]

#### Goat

A locomotive used in yard switching service[38][70][124]

## Gold Nose 1 (GN1) or YN3

The current <u>CSX</u> paint scheme [citation needed]

## Gondola (US)

A gondola car

A type of rolling stock with a flat bottom and relatively low sides, used to haul material such as ore or scrap, and loaded and unloaded from the top which may be covered or uncovered[124][127]

#### **Green Goat**

A demonstrator *Green Goat*locomotive

A type of "hybrid" switching locomotive utilizing a small diesel engine and a large bank of rechargeable batteries[128]

### Guard rail (US)

A double rail section of track, sometimes found in train yards and on bridges to prevent derailments or limit damage caused by derailments, by having rail on both sides of the wheel flange. Also found on curves with a tight radius and switches and crossings[124]

## H

#### Hack

A caboose[129][130]

#### Hammerhead

- 1. A GE locomotive with "winged" radiators, when running long hood forward
- 2. A nickname given to certain early ALCO roadswitchers with a high nose, as well as the GE BQ23-7<sup>1</sup>citation needed

#### Handcar (US)

A handcar

A small, hand-powered railroad car used for track inspection

## Heavy rail (US)

A city-based transit rail system that runs on its own dedicated track and often underground. Subways are considered heavy rail. Refers to <u>commuter rail</u> and <u>inter-city rail</u> when used by the FRA or in other countries.[131][132]

## Heavyweight (US)

During the period between about 1910 and the mid nineteen thirties, most passenger cars in the US were built with three axle trucks, concrete floors, and riveted, double walled sides and often weighed 90 tons or more. Heavyweight construction was used to improve ride quality. [133][134]

## **Helper**

A locomotive temporarily coupled to heavy-tonnage trains to assist them over steep grades[135]

### High ball

- 1. Another term for a clear signal, derived from the days of steam where a station operator would hoist a <u>large wooden ball</u> up a standard, signalling that the engineer was authorized to proceed[38][70][133][136]
- 2. A slang term used among railroad employees to convey to the crew of a train that they were clear to proceed[137][138]

## High cube (US)

A boxcar whose vertical clearance is excessive[139][140]

## Hog law

The federal hours-of-service law that forbids certain classes of railroad employees, including those operating trains, from working longer than a certain time after reporting for duty—currently 12 hours[141][142]

### Hogger

A locomotive engineer[38][70][133][143]

#### Honorary steam engine

Common term for <u>Alco</u> diesel locomotives, due to their tendency to blow clouds of black smoke when throttling up, due to <u>turbo lag[144][145]</u>

## **Hood unit (US)**

TPW 400, an ALCO RS-11, a type of hood unit

A locomotive whose sides and roof are nonstructural and do not extend the full width of the locomotive. Structural strength comes from the <u>underframe.[133]</u>

#### Horsehead or 'Mister Ed'

Norfolk Southern's current locomotive livery with a horse's head embedded in the NS Logo[146]

## **Horsepower hours**

How long motive power from another railroad is used on a specific railroad[121]

## Hospital train

A train composed of defective "bad order" equipment or locomotives that are en route to a repair shop[147]

## **Hot box**

An overheated <u>wheel bearing</u>. This comes from the era before the widespread use of <u>roller bearings</u> where the ends of an axle rested in solid copper bearings housed in a <u>journal box</u> filled with oil soaked cotton waste. An overheated axle led to a hot *journal* box that often ignited the oiled waste. The term is used to refer to a railway wheel bearing that has over-heated due to internal friction caused by some fault in the bearing.[133][148][149]

### Hot rail (US)

- 1. Any section of track over which a train movement is imminent. The closer or faster the approaching train, the "hotter" the rail.[150]
- 2. On some electrified railroads and rapid transit lines, the third rail which supplies power to locomotives or cars[151][152][153]

### Hotel power (US)

Electric power used to provide for the comfort of passengers aboard a train en route[154] **Hotshot (US)** 

A fast, long-distance train given priority on the track over other trains[155][156][157]

I

## **Interlocking (US)**

The interlocking tower and tracks at Des Plaines, Illinois

Any location that includes a switch or crossing of two tracks, derived from the early practice of installation of a system of mechanical equipment called an *interlocking plant* to prevent collisions. See also <u>signal box</u>. Interlocking is also the term for the actual mechanical or electrical apparatus that prevents switch/points and signals from being operated in ways that would allow for conflicting train movements.[158]

J

## Johnson Bar (US)

A preserved refrigerator car that was used on the Juice Train

On a locomotive, a long, heavy lever that operates the reversing gear [159]

### **Joint**

Synonym for the verb "couple" used by brakemen when flat switching a yard. Talking on the radio, they will tell the engineer how many car lengths to back up in order to couple to another car (i.e. "five cars to a joint")[160]

## Joint bar (US)

A metal plate that joins the ends of rails in jointed track

#### **Juice Train**

A unit train of Tropicana cars[161]

K

## Knock down (US)

To pass an absolute signal and thereby change its aspect to stop; originated in the days of <u>semaphore signals</u> whose arms would drop to the stop aspect when passed[162]

#### Kodachrome

<u>Southern Pacific Santa Fe Railroad</u>'s red, yellow, and black paint scheme, which resembled the packaging of <u>Kodachrome</u> color transparency film. This was the scheme instituted when the merger between Southern Pacific and Santa Fe was assumed to be approved. Hundreds of locomotives were painted in Kodachrome colors before the merger was denied. [citation needed]

## L

## Lantern (US)

A brakeman's *lantern* from the <u>Chicago and North Western Railway</u>which burned <u>kerosene</u> to produce light A portable (often handheld) light source that is used to signal train crews[163]

## **Level junction** (US)

A junction in which all track crossings take place <u>at grade</u> and routings must therefore be controlled by signals and interlocking

## Light engine

A locomotive unit traveling to a destination without a train attached. Can be a power pool transfer (relocation of a surplus of locomotives from one location to another), or can be a helper locomotive/locomotives being sent or returning from helping a heavy tonnage train over a grade.[164]

## **Lightning Slinger**

A telegraph operator[70]

## Lineup or lined up

To have switches aligned correctly before a move (e.g. over the radio, "Would you call the dispatcher for a lineup so we can get out of here?")[165][166]

## M

### **Mainline (US)**

A principal artery of a railway system[167]

## Main rod (US)

A westbound Southern Pacific Railroad manifesttrain

The drive rod connecting the crosshead to a driving-wheel or axle in a steam locomotive[168]

## Maintenance of way (MOW) (US)

A spiker is an example of maintenance-of-way equipment

The maintenance of a railroad's rights of way, including track[167]

### **Manifest**

A freight train with a mixture of car types and cargoes. Also known as a Mixed Freight Train.[167][169]

## **Mating Worms**

The intertwined P and C letters of the Penn Central logo citation needed

#### **Meatball or Swedish Meatball**

<u>Amtrak EMD AEM-7</u> or ABB <u>ALP-44</u> electric locomotives; so named for their design being based on the <u>Swedish Rc4.[170]</u>

#### Miniquad

Four permanently coupled ore cars (jennies)[171]

#### **Mother**

A locomotive that is paired with a slug[49]

## Mud hop (US)

Someone who walks in the "mud" along the rails verifying car lineup[172]

#### **Mud Missile**

A derogatory nickname given to <u>GE Genesis</u> locomotives, in reference to one's involvement in the 1993 <u>Big Bayou Canot train disaster citation needed</u>

#### Multimark

Named for the Canadian Pacific paint scheme given from 1968 to 1996[173][174][175]

## **Multiple-unit train control** (US)

The ability of diesel and electric locomotives or multiple units to be joined together and controlled from one driving station. Such a set of joined locomotives is called a <u>consist</u> or (colloquially) "lash-up" and is said to be "MUed together".[167]

## N

## NIMBY (US)

A derisive acronym for "not in my backyard" describing residents who are opposed to trains running through their neighborhoods

#### Nose to ass (N2A)

A group of locomotives that are oriented elephant style citation needed

## O

## Office-car special (OCS)

A train composed of passenger cars that are privately owned by the railroad corporation and which travels along their rail lines, so that upper level management can review facilities, assess the addition or reconstruction of facilities that are needed for expansion or modernization; as well as streamlining of operations or removal of obsolete infrastructure. Also, these trains are used to escort visiting upper level management from other railroads for the purpose of a proposed purchase or sale of a rail line. [176][177][178]

## One-man operation (OMO) (US)

Operation of a train by the driver or motorman alone, without a conductor

### Outlawed

Train crew members who have reached their daily 12-hour maximum of hours worked and must cease working due to regulations[179]

#### **Overhaul**

A train of exclusively locomotives, usually retired, that exceeds the ordinary maximum number of locomotives in one train<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## **Owl-eved Cars**

An uncommon nickname for <u>Pennsylvania Railroad</u>'s <u>MP54s</u> and related heavyweight MU cars, in reference to their distinctive porthole front windows that give the appearance of a pair of eyes when viewed from the front[180][181]

## P

#### Pac-Man

A nickname for <u>Canadian Pacific Railway</u>'s 1968–1996 logo featuring a black triangle within a white half-circle, which resembles the main character of the video arcade

game <u>Pac-Man</u>. It was CP's corporate logo for all business aspects - railway (<u>CP Rail</u>), shipping (<u>CP Ships</u>), telecommunications (<u>CNCP</u>), trucking (<u>CP Express</u>) and airline (<u>CP Air</u>). It was officially known as the Multimark.[182][unreliable source?][88]

## Passenger car (US)

<u>Union Pacific</u> 588—formerly owned by <u>Southern Pacific</u>—showing a *patch*paint job of the new owner's <u>reporting marks</u>

Railway vehicle for use in passenger trains[183][184]

#### **Patch**

A locomotive or car wearing a new reporting mark or number on a "patch" over existing paint, usually of the former owner's[185]

## **Pennsy Style**

A nickname for old Pennsylvania Railroad position light signals [186] unreliable source?

## Pepsi Can

An Amtrak <u>GE Dash 8-32BWH</u>, in reference to the units' original paint scheme with large red and blue stripes. Also referred to as "Cutters" for the striping's supposed similarity to striping on Coast Guard vessels. [citation needed]

### Pig train

A train devoted exclusively to <u>intermodal</u> traffic, generally trailers on flatcars (TOFC) or containers on flatcars (COFC)[187][188]

#### Plate (US)

The measurement of a freight car's vertical clearance. Plate F and above is considered excess height, and such cars must avoid low-clearance routes. [189] See also: <u>Loading</u> gauge

## Pole switching (also called "poling")

Detail of a photo showing the poling pocket on the corner of a freight car in the 1930s.

A method of <u>switching</u> cars on adjacent tracks in which a pole is positioned between the locomotive and car, then the locomotive pushes the car using the pole. The pole is fitted into poling pockets on the locomotive and car to ensure it does not move during the switching maneuver. [190][191][192][193]

#### Pooch

A nickname for the <u>General Electric P30CH</u> locomotives. So termed by the similar appearance of the model name to the word pooch: P30CH / POOCH.[194]

## Position light signal (Pennsylvania)

Signals made by the Pennsylvania Railroad that make use of a circular disc with up to eight lights mounted in a circle, with one light in the center. The lights would line up in a straight line to give the indication. [195][196]

#### **Private varnish (PV)**

Privately owned passenger cars[197][198]

#### **Pumpkin**

- 1. BNSF Railway's current bright orange paint scheme citation needed
- 2. CSX's or Amtrak's maintenance-of-way paint scheme[199]
- 3. Formerly ICG's all-orange scheme citation needed

Shorthand nickname for the old Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy (CB&Q) Railroad[200][201]

## Quarterly inspection, Q-inspection, or periodic inspection (US)

In the United States, a federally-mandated safety inspection performed on a locomotive every 92 operating days[202]

## Quiet zone (US)

A designation by the <u>Federal Railroad Administration</u> that removes the requirement for train operators to sound their horn when approaching each public crossing in a certain area, often near residential neighborhoods who have asked for the status. Because the train does not sound its horn while approaching the crossings, safety upgrades to all of the crossings must be made in order to compensate. These upgrades usually include double gates, additional signage, lights, and bells, if they are not already present. Additionally, the residents requesting the status must indemnify the railroad from any resulting crossing mishaps.[203]

## R

#### Racetrack

- 1. A nickname for a stretch of <u>Metra Commuter Rail</u> line and <u>BNSF</u> freight line between <u>Chicago</u> and <u>Aurora</u> where commuter trains and freight trains commonly attain high speeds.[204]
- 2. The parallel tracks of the O&W and DL&W north of Norwich.[205]

#### Raccoon

Norfolk Southern locomotives that have the entire area around the cab windows painted white, resembling the face of a raccoon [citation needed]

#### **Racks**

- 1. Multiple autoracks
- 2. The portion of an autorack which is attached to a <u>flat car</u> in order to protect the vehicles inside and may contain one, two, or three levels depending on the height of the vehicles being shipped<sup>[]</sup> citation needed<sup>[]</sup>

## Rail sled (US)

A form of <u>wheel chock</u> that slips onto the rail under the wheel of <u>rolling stock</u> which prevents the vehicle from rolling <u>citation needed</u>

## Rainbow consist, Skittles consist, or Skittles lineup

- 1. A group of locomotives of different colors or liveries leading a single train[206]
- 2. A passenger train made up of cars bearing different liveries[207]

### Rare mileage

A passenger train traveling over track that does not have regular passenger service[208] **Red Barn** 

A <u>Canadian PacificGMD SD40-2F</u> Red Barn
Canadian Pacific's GMD SD40-2F locomotives citation needed

#### Reefer

A refrigerator car[209][210]

#### Rent-a-wreck

A (usually old) locomotive owned by a leasing company

## **Reporting mark**

A code assigned by the <u>Association of American Railroads</u> to identify the owners of rolling stock in North America

## Restricted speed (US)

A speed not exceeding 20 mph which allows stopping within half the range of vision short of an obstruction on the tracks[211][212]

## Right way

A "high nose" locomotive running with the long hood facing forward. Reminiscent of the <u>Southern Railway</u> and the <u>Norfolk & Western Railway</u> style of running locomotives. [citation needed]

#### Rhino

Nickname for <u>HHP-8</u> electric locomotives used by Amtrak for <u>Northeast</u> Regional service *citation needed* 

## **Road engine (US)**

The locomotive closest to the train during a double-heading operation

## Roll-by or rollby (US)

Visual inspection of railroad equipment while it is in motion[213][214]

#### **Roster shooter**

Someone interested in photographing every locomotive road number they can[215][216]

## **Rubies or cherries**

Stop signal aspect (red colored signal lights), or a red aspect in conjunction with other colors [citation needed]

## Rule G (US)

The universal rule prohibiting the use of drugs and alcohol

## **Runaround (US)**

Platform track and a *run-round* loop at <u>Toyooka Station</u>, Hyogo, Japan, the terminus of the line from <u>Miyazu</u> The practice of detaching a locomotive from its train, driving it to the other end of the train and re-attaching it, to allow the train to proceed in the direction it has just come from (e.g. when it reaches its destination and forms a service in the other direction).[217][218]

## Run through

A train that originates on one railroad, with its destination on another road, that is simply "run through" to its destination instead of being exchanged for home road rolling stock at the crew-change point, in order to save expense[219][220]

## Running a red signal

An event in which a train passes a <u>signal</u> to stop without authorization to do so <u>citation</u> <u>needed</u>!

#### **Running boards or grating**

Walkboards found on the tops and ends of rail cars[221]

## S

#### Safety Appliance Act (US)

A law mandating air brakes, grab bars, and automatic couplers

## Screamer or screaming thunderbox

A <u>EMD F40PH</u> locomotive, in reference to it operating in a constant state of full throttle (in order to provide head-end power to passenger cars).[222]

## **Sergeant Stripes**

Canadian NationalSD60F 5500 in the sergeant stripes paint scheme

A <u>Canadian National</u> locomotive in the 1970s and 1980s paint scheme featuring light-gray stripes on the locomotive's long hood[223]

### Shoofly (US)

A temporary stretch of track that takes trains around construction or an accident scene[224][225]

#### Shove

To push a cut of cars backward with a locomotive[226][227]

## Shunting neck (US)

A length of track feeding a number of sidings that permits the sidings to be shunted without blocking the main line, or where two lines merge into one before ending with a buffer, to allow a run-round procedure to take place[228]

## Siding (US)

A second parallel track (running for a short distance) on single-track railway lines, allowing a train to pass another

#### Skate

A wheel chock[229][230]

### **Slack action (US)**

Looseness in a train caused by mating clearances in couplers[224]

#### Slug

A locomotive, with or without an operator's cab, which lacks a diesel engine, and draws power for its traction motors from a normal locomotive, known as a "mate" or "mother"[45][49]

#### **Smokestack or stack (US)**

A chimney[231]

#### Snail

A locomotive with a diesel engine, but does not have traction motors, often used for external power for a rotary snow plow[232]

#### Snake head

A section of <u>strap rail</u> that has come loose and curled upward due to the weight of railway cars passing over it[233]

## Speeder, motorcar, trackcar, putt putt, or golf cart

A privately owned *speeder* on display

A small, motorized track inspection vehicle[234]

### Spur (US)

A stretch of rail that branches off the main line[224]

#### Stacks

A nickname for double-stacked cars or trains[224]

### **Steeplecab** (US)

An electric locomotive with a central cab and sloping "noses" on each end **Subway (US)** 

A railroad that runs underground, generally in a large city

### Switch (US)

Points[224]

## **Switcher** (US)

A small locomotive used for assembling trains and moving railroad cars around[224]

## T

#### The T (US)

A nickname for <u>Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority</u> (MBTA)—the Subway service through Boston, Massachusetts

### T-Hog

A nickname for a Reading Railroad T-1 4-8-4 steam locomotive citation needed

#### **Taco Belle**

A nickname for the new *Southern Belle*-inspired paint scheme on <u>Kansas City Southern Railway</u> locomotives assigned to subsidiary KCS de Mexico<sup>[</sup>citation needed]

## Ten-wheeler (US)

The <u>ten-wheeler</u> wheel arrangement

A steam locomotive with a <u>4-6-0</u> wheel arrangement [citation needed]

## **Terminal station (US)**

A station sited where a railway line or service ends or terminates

## **Thunder Pumpkin**

A nickname for the orange paint scheme on the <u>BNSF</u> locomotives<sup>[citation needed]</sup> <u>Tie</u> (US)

Wood (left track) and concrete (right track) ties beneath the rails

Bars of wood or concrete placed beneath and perpendicular to track to support the rails[235]

#### Tie down

To apply hand brakes to the trainset[236][237][238]

#### Tie plate (US)

An iron or steel plate used to spread the weight of rail over a larger area of sleeper (tie) and facilitate a secure, low maintenance, fastening with bolts or clips

### **Toaster**

An Amtrak AEM-7—sometimes called a toaster due to its boxy shape

Amtrak AEM-7, New Jersey Transit ABB ALP-44, or GE P42DC locomotives, due to its visual appearance and tendency to emit sparking and clicking sounds when idling. Also sometimes used to refer to any GE locomotive, due both to their tendency to shoot flames out of the exhaust stack during Turbo Lag and to General Electric's historic involvement in the manufacture of household appliances. [citation needed]

## Torpedo (US)

A small explosive device strapped to the top of a rail to alert an approaching train of danger ahead by creating a loud noise upon contact with a locomotive wheel [235]

## **Toupee**

When a single stack train coming from reduced clearance territory has additional containers placed on top for the rest of its trip; the opposite of <u>filet[110]</u>

#### Trackage rights (US)

The legal right of one railroad company to use the tracks of another, as agreed to by the companies concerned or their predecessors[235]

## **Track warrant** (TWC) (US) or occupancy control system (OCS) (CA)

A system for authorizing main track occupancy using defined points such as mileposts, switches, or stations[235]

## Train order (US)

A system for authorizing main track occupancy using telephone, telegraph, and wayside stations to pass authority to train crews

## **Trops**

Tropicana <u>reefer boxcar</u>. Shortened from Tropicana, referring to the orange or white refrigerated boxcars used to haul frozen concentrated orange juice to packaging facilities north of Florida. Term is specifically used by CSX crews in Cincinnati Terminal where a large such packaging facility is located. [citation needed]

## **Truck**

The undercarriage assembly of rolling stock incorporating the <u>train wheels</u>, suspension, brakes and, in powered units, the <u>traction motors</u>

#### **Tunnel Motor**

Southern Pacific <u>EMD SD40T-2</u> or <u>EMD SD45T-2</u>. Named for the lower-located air intakes to prevent the locomotive from pulling diesel exhaust in with clean air while traveling through a tunnel.[235]

#### Turn

A local freight train that makes a round trip, returning to originating station[239][240]

## U

#### **U-Boat**

A GE Universal Series locomotive[241]

#### **Underliers**

Non-operating railroad companies which own rights-of-way[242]

### UP (US)

The main concourse building and façade of Cincinnati Union Terminal

The common name and reporting mark for the Union Pacific Railroad[243]

#### Union station or union terminal (US)

A railway station or terminal at which <u>tracks</u> and facilities are shared by two or more railway companies[244]

## V

### Van (Eastern CA)

A caboose<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

#### **Vomit Bonnet**

A derogatory name for <u>BNSF</u>'s first attempt at a paint scheme, which used olive and beige as its principal colors but in the configuration of the traditional AT&SF "Warbonnet" scheme[245]

## W

#### Warbonnet

Santa Fe <u>Dash 8</u>#881 at CN's Battle Creek fueling depot, displaying the modern interpretation of the classic red and silver *warbonnet*livery

The combined <u>Super Chief/El Capitan</u> passenger train at <u>Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal</u> in 1966 showing the red and silver <u>warbonnet livery</u>

<u>Santa Fe</u>'s red and silver paint scheme. [246] The scheme first appeared in 1937 on the railroad's E1 passenger locomotives for the <u>Super Chief</u> train. [247] It is widely considered the most famous and the most recognizable of railroad color schemes. [248][249] The Santa Fe phased out its use from the early 1970s on, then revived it in 1989. [250] It has become less common since the <u>BNSF Railway merger</u> in 1995. [251]

#### Washboards

M.U. cars, subway cars, and other equipment made with corrugated side panels that resembled washboards [252][253]

## Water column (US)

A device used for delivering a large volume of water into the tank or tender of a steam locomotive

#### Wet Noodle

Canadian National's stylized CN logo, in use since 1961 citation needed

#### Whiteface

The first version of <u>Norfolk Southern</u>'s "Horsehead" paint scheme. [citation needed] High visibility paint scheme used on various <u>Burlington Northern</u> locomotives, primarily <u>SD60Ms</u>, <u>SD40-2s</u>, <u>GP50s</u>, <u>GP39 rebuilds</u>, and <u>GP28 rebuilds</u>. [254]

#### Wickerliners

A nickname for the DL&W electric multiple unit cars because of their wicker lined seats[255]

## Wings/Flags/Flares (W/F/F)

Characteristics used to designate <u>Union Pacific</u>'s paint scheme and engine type. Wings = "Wing" Decal on the engine nose, Flags = "American Flag" Decal on engine body, Flares = "Flared Radiators" of certain SD70Ms on the long hood. Some UP engines have one or more of these characteristics. [citation needed]

## Wye (US)

A wye

Three railroad tracks in a triangular form with switches at all three corners—can be used to turn a train around[256]

## X

## X-ing (US)

An X-ing sign
Crossing<sup>[</sup>citation needed<sup>]</sup>

## Y

#### **Yellowbonnet**

One of two Santa Fe paint schemes. The standard freight scheme from 1972 until the BNSF merger was dark blue with yellow on the front, with the same color division as the warbonnet scheme. It is also known as Bluebonnet. Yellowbonnet can also mean a warbonnet unit with only the red painted over, resulting in a silver and yellow

locomotive; this was used on passenger engines transferred to freight service after the formation of Amtrak.[257]

#### YN1

<u>CSX</u>'s first yellow-nose paint scheme; gray overall with dark blue on the top half of the cab and yellow on the front of the nose; blue "CSX" lettering[258]

#### YN2

A CSX unit wearing the YN2 paint scheme

CSX's second yellow-nose paint scheme; more yellow on the nose; the whole cab is dark blue, along with a stripe on the side; blue or yellow "CSX" lettering[258]

#### YN3

CSX's third yellow-nose paint scheme; dark blue overall with a yellow nose; yellow "CSX" lettering<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Z

## **Zebra Stripes**

A Santa Fe locomotive in the early black scheme with white warning stripes. [259] CN Rail has also used this scheme on earlier locomotives. [260][261]

#### **Z**-Train

An intermodal train (such as the ZBRLC or ZLTLC). Such trains are commonly operated by BNSF and Union Pacific. Usually the hottest (fastest), highest priority train.[262]

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