

## Measuring Turntable Height

by Kenneth Huffines

The new NARCOA rules require that turntables, when fully retracted, must be a minimum of two and one half inches (2 1/2") above the railhead when the motorcar is sitting on the track.

That sounds simple enough, until you think of how to measure it. You can't check with the car sitting on the garage floor, because the wheel flanges lift the car up some distance above the wheel's tread, and the tread/rail interface is the base point specified by NARCOA rules. If we knew how high a wheel flange is, we could take it into account. But since wheel flange heights tend to vary, there's a simpler way to check your turntable's clearance that gets around this problem.

Actually, checking the clearance is easy with a couple of 2x4s and a flat surface (garage floor). And because the NARCOA rules look for a minimum distance, we'll make a gauge block that allows simple go/no-go checking.

Start with a couple of 2x4s long enough to use as rails. Measure their thickness, as you want them equal and you'll need the thickness to make a gauge block. Mine turned out to be 1.5" thick. Whatever number yours comes out to, add 2.5" and cut off that much from one 2x4. In my case, I need 4.0" (1.5" + 2.5" = 4.0"). Try to get the cut square and accurate as you can. It's important, as this will be your gauge block.

Use what's left of the 2x4s as a pair of rails. Put the wide side down and roll the car up on them, keeping the flange well clear.

Now see if the gauge block fits between the turntable and the floor. Unless you have super-long arms, a small diameter dowel attached to the block makes it easy to reach all areas of the turntable's foot. Be sure to check all the way around the foot just in case it's not parallel with the floor. For sprung cars, you might want to check with the car loaded. In my case, I invited a couple of heavy friends over and had them sit in the car.

If the gauge block fits under the turntable, it means you have met the rule and your turntable is high enough. If it does not fit, your clearance is inadequate and you'll need to raise the turntable up somehow.

This method may not work for heavy cars like Fairmont A-cars, especially if you have wimpy lumber that crushes easily. If you believe your heavy car lacks clearance due to the wood crushing, your local steel supplier will be happy to sell you a 2" square tube with 1/4" inch walls, which will hold the weight nicely.

