



June 11, 2004

To potential users of Railroad Dockboards:

Thanks for your interest in our steel railroad dockboards. A little background information about truck and rail applications is in order so we can better serve you.

In using a board for railcars the application is much different than truck applications. In a truck application the forklift goes up the board and straight into the trailer, grabbing a load and then backs down the board to the dock. At a rail siding the forklift needs to turn 90 degrees inside the boxcar. Many times the forklift is actually turning on the dockboard. The ideal situation is to try and make this turn on as level a board as possible. That is why railroad boards are custom built around your specific dock.

We do this to minimize the bends in the board and to make the board "fit like a glove". When done correctly, the board will make the transition from dock to boxcar almost unnoticeable and speed your operation tremendously. If done incorrectly or if dock conditions are horrible, you can have a board that has improper bends, is hard to use, or even one that doesn't fit. In any event, it is extremely important to get the proper information at you railroad siding in order to be sure your board fits properly.

Basically what is needed is to determine what board is needed are five things:

1. What capacity is needed
2. How wide do you want the dockboard,
3. Exactly how far away are the boxcars coming in from the dock?
4. What height differentials do you have between the dock and boxcar
5. What options do you want

Let's look at each of these.

The largest lift truck basically determines the capacity needed. It's weight plus it's capacity. If your people are extremely abusive then maybe you should go to the next higher capacity.

The width of the board is determined by a couple of different factors. Are you going thru a doorway at the dock location? If so, how wide is the doorway? The board should be at least 12" less than any door opening it is going through. (I have seen many people put in new doorways because the original door was too narrow!) Secondly, how wide are the doors of the boxcars you are getting in? Most people get 10' door openings – but there are a few 9' and even 8' door opening on boxcars. They do exist, are you getting any of these? Some people get nothing in but double door cars with openings of 15' or more. Obviously the wider the board the easier it is for your drivers to make this turn into the boxcar. We recommend you do not skip on the width of your board.

In making a railroad siding most contractors are smart enough to make the tracks parallel with the dock. If this is not the case then you really need someone to come in and help speck out your dockboard.

If the tracks are parallel then you can determine how far away and how much higher or lower the boxcars are coming in. Enclosed please find a work sheet for railroad dockboards. There are two dimensions, which we need at the railroad siding. They are what we call the R (distance from top of rail to top of dock) and the D (distance from face of dock to inside of nearest rail) (**See Railroad Dockboard Work Sheet**). We also need to know if you are getting in regular or refrigerated boxcars or both. With these dimensions we can determine exactly where the edge of the boxcars are going to be away from the dock and how much higher/lower they will be. This determines the length of the board needed.

And lastly what options do you want? The boards come standard with lifting chains. But using chains on large boards are cumbersome at best. Most people opt for the optional lifting loops to handle the boards quickly and safely. Also do you want the automatic locking rings that take up any slop between the understructure and dock? This is a safety feature you should not be without if you are using your board more than once in a blue moon.

This really is a lot of information to grasp and that is why we normally sell through distributors. They can come out you your location and make the necessary measurements to be sure you are not forgetting something. They then get back with us for the recommended board. This takes a little of the pressure off you for getting the proper board specked out.

Once we have all this information, we come up with a proposed board. We will let you know of any shortcomings when using this board at your dock. (Sometimes we just cannot fabricate a board to handle the many different boxcars the customer will see. We will try and point out these potential problems before construction, because once the board is made it can be a nightmare modifying it to a different size. Boards are non-returnable) .

Once we have an order, please allow 2 weeks for fabrication. Prices are F.O.B. Coloma, MI. Thanks for your interest and I hope we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert Conner

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# Work Sheet — RAILROAD DOCKBOARDS

In order to select the correct dockboard you will need certain measurements and information. Fill in the appropriate blanks on this page. Then refer to pages 2 and 3 of our Steel Railroad Dockboard literature for additional information in order to develop the desired model number...OR call us for assistance.

**If the Dock is not straight . . . . . STOP & CALL THE FACTORY!**

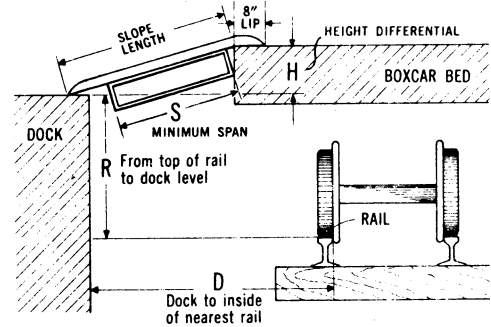
IF THERE IS NO TRACK OR DOCK CURVATURE, all you need is the "R" & "D" dimensions.

"R" is the height of the dock above the top of the tracks.

"D" is the horizontal distance from the inside of the nearest rail to the dock. This includes the width of the rail.

R =  inches      D =  inches

If the board is to be used along a long dock area, be sure to measure the R & D dimensions at various locations to be sure they do not vary!



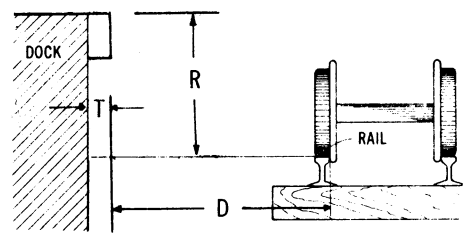
**IF THERE IS NO DOCK BUMPER OR OVERHANG, ignore this section.**

IF THERE IS A DOCK BUMPER, OR OVERHANG, measure "D" from the outside edge of the bumper, and also measure the thickness of the bumper "T". The dockboard length will have to be increased by the value of "T".

R =  inches

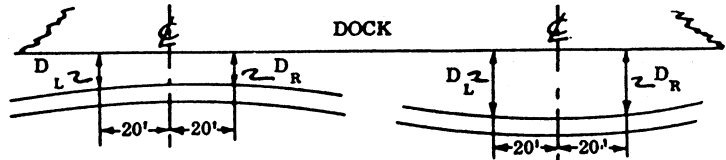
D =  inches

T =  inches



**IF THERE IS NO CURVATURE OF TRACKS, ignore this section.**

IF THERE IS TRACK CURVATURE, (curved toward the building or away from the building) measure the value of D at two places, 20 ft. left and right of car door centerline. Then the adjusted value of D, which corrects for the curvature,



$$D_A = \frac{D_L + D_R}{2} \quad D_A = \frac{\quad}{2} + \frac{\quad}{2}$$

$D_A =$   in.

$R =$   in.

Top of Rail to top of Dock

## VEHICLE & LOAD INFORMATION

Type of Vehicle

Overall Width  in.      Wheelbase  in.

Underclearance of truck or load, whichever is the lowest.  in.

If pallet trucks are used, what is the overhang of the load past the center of the front wheels?  in.

Slope angle that can be cleared. See page 6 of Catalog (both sides).  deg.

lbs. Weight of Vehicle

+  lbs. Maximum load

lbs. Total x .90 =

Capacity  
Wanted

lbs.

## RAIL BOXCAR INFORMATION

Type of cars  Regular boxcars  
 Refrigerator Cars

If refrigerated cars are used, are they getting any of the older style cars? (Could be as high as 60".) Newer cars have bed heights from 48-54".  Yes  No

Do you have double door cars, requiring a cutout in the lip of the dockboard for clearance of the latch mechanism?  Yes  No

Width of the smallest boxcar doors.  inches

