

Sleeping

Often modelers overlook the action that priority (first class / passenger) trains can impart. "Sleeper.scarm" suggests a manner that a Sleeping Car setout can be incorporated into a layout, while still using only traditional toy-train accessories.

Larger towns and smaller cities will typically have a medium sized brick or stone station, staffed by more than just a lone station agent. Stations such as these (especially in affluent communities) would sometimes offer sleeper setout service, where a Sleeping Car would be conveniently parked to allow leisurely evening boarding. Later that night, while most of the occupants were asleep in bed, their train would come by and pick up the sleeper. An early morning train might also drop off a sleeper, allowing leisurely disembarkation after the occupants awoke from their nights slumber.

Like at any motel, sleeping car rooms also require cleanup. The porter would change the bed linens and hand towels. They would also restock any consumables, such as hand soap. Floors, windows, and furnishings would also receive a general cleaning.

Model Scenario

This model provides a setout spur to allow the parking of a sleeping car, as well as a nearby station for use by regular (including regular sleeping car traveling) passengers. We are assuming that the station is not a train terminus, so it is not supported by a separate coach yard like you would typically find near a big city terminal.

A substantial station will face the main line. The Plasticville Union Station is suitable for the purpose, although you could substitute a Lionel City Station #115. Inside will be a ticket agent, who can also assist with minor travel planning and local attraction advice. Toilets and a few self-serve coin lockers will be available for passenger use. Private vendors of magazines, refreshments, or shoeshines might also service the waiting area. A "red cap" will be normally be on duty to assist passengers with their luggage.

A stub setout track capable of handling any passenger car (the turnout is O-54), branches from the main line and gently (O-81) curves beside the station. If sleeper service is only a few times a week, the spur can on other days be used for parking "private varnish" (business cars), or perhaps even idle maintenance-of-way equipment.

Alongside the spur, near the turnout, will be located a small dedicated platform for use by the setout sleeper passengers. The Plasticville Station Platform #1200 is suitable for the purpose due to its short length (passengers will load through only one sleeper car end), although you could substitute a Lionel Station Platform #156. Taxis, limos, and cars are able to pull up on the opposite side of the platform to unload the passengers and their luggage. To aid in vehicle unloading at the sleeper platform, a street light of some sort, such as the Lionel Highway Lamp Post #64, will be located on the turnout side of the platform. The placement is such that the street light will not directly shine into the windows of the sleeping car extending beyond the opposite end of the platform.

When all passengers have left the sleeper, the porters will get to work cleaning. There are connectors for electric power along the spur, so when a sleeper (or a business car) is setout, its lights and power outlets can continue to function. Unlike at a coach yard though, there is no separate Pullman building. Dirty laundry will be bagged for placing on a local laundry service delivery truck. Inside the station will be a large storage closet for use by Pullman staff, and here is where the returned clean linens and sleeper consumables are stored. Vacuums and cleaning carts will also be kept here. Outside the station will be kept a long handled sponge/squeegee and a barrel of window cleaner, similar to what you find at gasoline stations, for wiping the sleepers exterior windows.

Operationally, a setout sleeper will never be the end-of-train Observation Car. For that reason, the road engine will have to break the train in order to setout or take the sleeper (interesting passenger car switching action for you). Private Varnish carried by a train on the other hand, will almost always be attached to either the head or tail of the trains regular consist, to prevent passenger walk-through (more switching opportunity).