

Notes on Scratchbuilding HO FL9 locos from Atlas FP7s

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1 Introduction

I recently scratchbuilt a pair of HO scale FL9 locos using the article *Modeling the New Haven – The FL-9* in issue 3 of volume 15 of the *New Haven Shoreliner*¹. This article was published in Sept. 1984. Since then, Atlas has made some changes to their FP7s. I was also interested in modeling present day AMTRAK FL9s, as used between Albany-Rensselaer, NY and NYC., and AMTRAK re-built its units and made some modifications too.

2 Front Truck Variations

Modifying the front trucks from the stock Blomberg to Flexicoil B is slightly trickier than the Shoreliner article suggests. I did it by filing off the brake cylinders and the hanger spring of the Blomberg truck (both sides). Then slicing off the side frames from an SD side frame assembly and then sanding it down from the back until only brake cylinders and upper frame remains. Then the center axle section is cut out and the remaining pieces are glued onto the filed down Blomberg truck.

¹This magazine is available from the New Haven Historical Society, P.O. Box 122, Wallingford, CT 06492

3 AMTRAK HEP Gear vs. Steam Generator

I was modling AMTRAK's FL9s, which have a diesel HEP generator-set installed instead of the steam generator. I took some pictures of an FL9 sitting at Albany-Rensselaer, NY while I was traveling from Rochester, NY to Springfield, MA. It appears that instead of the steam exhaust and ventilator, there are two 34" flat top fans, so I got a package of Detail Associates 34" flat top cooling fans, number 2001 (package of 4, enough for two locos). To install these, just remove the steam vents (filling holes with body putty) and filing a flat spot to hold the fans.

4 Third Rail Gear

Modeling the third rail pickup assemblies was one of the more challenging parts of this project. As far as I could tell from my *Walthers 1995 HO Catalog*, none of the details makers make any sort of third rail pickup gear, so I was on my own here. What I ended up doing was taking measurements from blowups of the pictures I took at Albany-Rensselaer, NY of an AMTRAK FL9 and writing a small Tcl/Tk program to draw HO scale drawings of the third rail assemblies, which I printed out and gave to a local machinist, along with a piece of K&S brass. See Figures 1 and 2.

I had these pieces machined flat and then bent the "tongue" up 90° to form the third rail pick up shoe. The electrical box I made with a piece of brass rectangular tubing, filled with solder and filed to size.

5 Reference Materials

In addition to the *New Haven Shoreliner* article, a copy of *Model Railroader Cyclopedia – Volume 2 Diesel Locomotives* Compiled by Bob Hayden² was very helpfull. It contains an HO scale drawing of a FL9 – usefull for making sure of lengths and positions. Also it contains a good photo of an EMD Flexicoil B truck, something missing from the *New Haven Shoreliner* article.

²Available from Kalmbach Publishing Co., 21027 Crossroads Circle, P. O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187 for \$27.95. ISBN: 0-89024-547-9

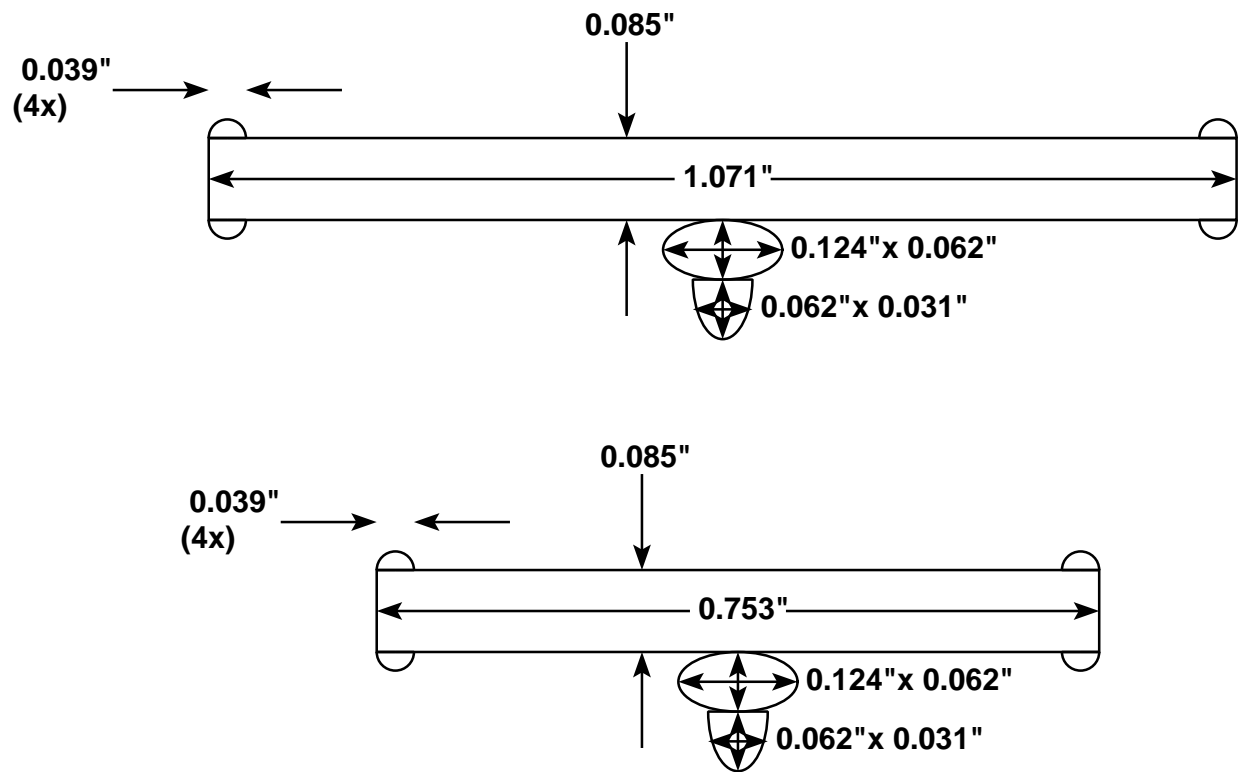


Figure 1: Third rail assemblies, 5x HO scale, with dimensions (real inches).

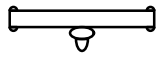
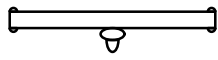


Figure 2: Third rail assemblies, HO scale.