

REVIEW **HO**

Ring Engineering's bright (EOT) idea

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End of Train (EOT) Device,
MSRP: \$39.95

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WHENEVER I go railfanning, my main focus is on the locomotives; next comes the rolling stock, and then finally, the last rail car with its infamous EOT (End of Train) device. Back in the old days we used to see a caboose at the end of the train. The caboose's main purpose was to

monitor the train from the rear. If there was any trouble, the attendant in the caboose would radio the information to the lead locomotive. Modern

technology has changed things by replacing the caboose with the EOT device. This device monitors train brake pressure and train line voltage and transmits a status message back to the head end unit at a rate of at least once per second. If something happens to the train, the personnel in the lead locomotive will know immediately.

In these days of model railroading we are also blessed with many advances in modern technology. The most

As of the time of this review, all of the EOT devices available have been tied to some sort of battery-powered setup usually requiring a battery to be installed in the same rail car on which the EOT is located.



The rectangular box mounted under the truck included in the kit provides voltage conversion, strobe output voltage, and frequency. The wires to the coupler-mounted EOT device are limited to standard truck/coupler distances. The wires in this picture could be wound tighter by spinning the coupler a few more revolutions.

notable are the recently released sound-equipped DCC locomotives. Outside of locomotives, technologies in many other parts of the hobby lag behind with HO-scale accessories like EOT (End of train) devices being no excep-

tion. As of the time of this review, all of the EOT devices available have been tied to some sort of battery-powered setup usually requiring a battery to be installed in the same rail car on which the EOT is located. Never fear; Ring Engineering has changed all of this with their inaugural track-powered EOT device.

The Model

The new Ring Engineering EOT device kit is comprised of a 100-ton truck with 36-inch wheels and an EOT device mounted on a Kadee #5 coupler. Mounted on the underside of the truck



To remove the truck, the wheelset farthest from the coupler needs to be released from the truck sideframe. The truck then can be swung out to expose the mounting screw. Visible is the four-axle power pickup bushing that provides power to the circuit box.

is a small, flat, rectangular box containing the electronics that take the track voltage and generate a signal to make the EOT flash while operating in both analog and DCC modes. Track power is channeled to this circuit through four power pickup bushings mounted on the truck axles. These bushings are directly connected to the circuit box with small-gauge wire. There are two flexible output wires that run from this circuit box to the EOT device.

Installation of the EOT device only requires the use of a small flat-tip screwdriver and a little patience. Included with this kit are well-written instructions with plenty of pictures that make assembly clear and simple. The installation is nearly as easy as a typical coupler and truck replacement but, in this case, it does require a little more finesse as the wires and EOT assembly are small and can be broken if you are not careful.

This EOT device kit was installed on one of my Athearn Ready to Roll fifty-foot boxcar kits. I initially tried to

mount it on an eighty-five-foot flat car, but it was then I realized there are limits to the type of car on which this product can be used. With this kit, the length of the wires between the circuit box and the EOT device limits its application to standard rolling stock. Once installed, one must be careful when positioning these wires, as they must be as high as possible for track clearance. If left dangling, they will surely hang up on a switch or grade crossing.

Installed, the Ring EOT looks very much like the prototype. The new truck assembly rolls with very little drag and, unlike battery-operated EOT devices, it does not significantly increase the weight of the freight car. When put on the track its performance exceeded all of my expectations. On the analog-powered track, the LED will start to flash when track power reaches approximately 4.5 volts. This is approximately the voltage it takes to get many locomotives rolling in analog. On a DCC system, the LED will start to flash the moment the system is energized and as long as it is energized, the EOT will flash. When this LED flashes, it flashes brightly and at a frequency that looks comparable to the prototype.

Closing Thoughts

This new product from Ring Engineering raises the bar for HO-scale EOT devices. It is easy to assemble, looks great, and has a nice bright flashing LED that makes you stand up and take notice. I consider this inaugural product a complete success for Ring Engineering and I hope to see more of the same available for a wide variety of trucks. One can only hope that this will open the floodgates for more goodies of this sort.



The Ring Engineering EOT device is shown mounted on a standard fifty-foot boxcar. The wiring provided will not allow installation onto an extended-length railcar.



The new Ring Engineering EOT has a prototypical look and function. The red LED can be seen as illuminated through the flash photography.

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