STEELWHEELS.CO™ | CHANGE THE QUESTION.

ADVISORY · OPERATIONS · IN THE FIELD

THE FIRST CAR · READ 27 RUN SHEET

The working pages of Read 27, for whoever runs them on the property. The section numbers are the Read's.

ISSUED BY
© 2026 SteelWheels.Co. All rights reserved.
v.18 · draft of 15 NOV 2026 · the current edition comes from solutions@steelwheels.co

§ CONTACT
solutions@steelwheels.co
928.605.7984

§ 02 THE SEVEN

ANSWER THEM FROM YOUR OWN PAPER · YOUR SCORE IS THE READING

	THE QUESTION	WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR, AND WHAT A BAD ANSWER MEANS
01	Which paper governs our traffic: a contract, an exemption or a tariff, and do we hold a copy of each?	Each sets different liability, different claim terms and different charges. Ask the serving carrier for its rates and service terms in writing; it must give them to anyone who asks (49 U.S.C. 11101(b)). **If nobody at the plant can name which paper applies to the next car out, the carrier's version of the answer is the one you have agreed to.**
02	What is our service window and our cut-off, and where is each written?	The Board defines both for the Class I railroads, which report each week the share of requested spots and pulls performed inside the planned window, by division and system and not by facility (49 CFR 1251.1, 1251.2(b)). A window that is not written down is whatever the local can manage that day. **The only count of your own door is the one you keep.**
03	Who orders cars, against what forecast, and what does an empty we cannot load cost us a day?	Put a number on it from the tariff. Order against a forecast, and match the car to the commodity, the loading method and the receiver's unloading equipment. **A car order placed on hope is a demurrage invoice placed in advance.**
04	Who decides how a car is loaded, blocked, braced and secured, to which AAR rule, and who weighs it?	Open-top loads follow the AAR Open Top Loading Rules; closed-car loads follow AAR Circular 42-P and the part of the Closed Car Loading Guide for the commodity (§ 06). Weigh every car against its stenciled load limit, on a scale tested to the AAR Scale Handbook. **A load that moves in transit is the shipper's load wherever the car is stopped, and an untested scale makes the weight on the bill an estimate.**
05	Did we receive actual notice of the demurrage tariff before the first placement, and who reconciles the invoice?	You can be held liable under the tariff only if the carrier gave you actual notice of it, in writing or electronically, before it placed the cars (49 CFR 1333.3(a)). Find the notice. **Then take one invoice and check every car against your own log of placements and releases.**
06	Is anything we ship hazardous, even as residue in a returning car, and is every person who touches it trained and on record?	The shipper classes, describes, papers and placards the material (49 CFR 173.22, 172.200), and every hazmat employee is trained and retrained at least once every three years, with a record kept (172.704). **A residue car is a hazardous materials shipment, and the training record is the first thing asked for after anything happens.**
07	Who files a claim, by when, and from what record?	The carrier may not give you less than nine months to file or two years to sue (49 U.S.C. 11706(e)). A bad order report or a damage notation is not a claim standing alone (49 CFR 1005.2(c)). **If the damage is not recorded at the door, the claim is a recollection.**
Rule		A question you cannot answer from your own paper and your own records is already an answer. It means nobody at the plant owns the railroad, which means the railroad's paper owns the plant.

§ 06 LOADING AND SECURING THE CAR

THE CHECK BEFORE EVERY CAR IS RELEASED · ONE SHEET PER CAR

Car initial and number _____ Commodity _____ Figure or method _____ Date _____

	THE CHECK	WHERE IT IS WRITTEN	CHECKED BY · TIME
A	Car inspected at the loading point: roof, sides, floor, end walls and doors sound, or the car rejected	AAR Circular 42, Rule 1.A	
B	Last shipper's dunnage, blocking and strapping gone, or the car rejected	Your carrier's tariff	
C	Load at or under the lower of the stenciled and UMLER load limits, and no more than half of it on either truck	Circular 42, Rule 2	
D	Weight spread evenly lengthwise and about equal side to side, with secured ballast where needed	Circular 42, Rules 3 and 4	
E	Center of gravity calculated for a tall or top-heavy load	Circular 42, Rule 7	
F	Loaded to the AAR figure or method for the commodity, or to the carrier's written approval	OTLR; Closed Car Loading Guide; your carrier's tariff	
G	Blocking and bracing lumber sound; tall or narrow-based items secured against tipping	Circular 42, Rule 5	
H	Crosswise space secured where it adds up to more than 18 in., or 6 in. for primary metals	Circular 42, Rule 4.C	
I	Strapping, webbing, chain binders and air bags on AAR's approved or verified lists, applied as the method calls for	AAR approval tables; Pneumatic Dunnage Product Verification List	
J	Doorway protected where lading could fall out or come against a door; nothing touching a door other than a plug door	Circular 42, Rule 6; UFC 6000, Rule 27	
K	Hazardous materials packages unable to fall or slide, orientation marks upright, doors not used to hold the load	49 CFR 174.55	
L	Doors closed and locked without a forklift; car weighed on a tested scale	Circular 42, Rule 9; AAR Scale Handbook	

Any check you cannot initial holds the car. Release it when every line is signed.

Rule numbers are those of Circular 42 as read in the 42-N text of October 2019. We could not confirm them against the current 42-P; our reading is that the duties carry forward, with lines E and I the ones to check in 42-P itself. Checking your methods against it is part of our paid work.

§ 11 THE WORKSHEET

PRINT THIS PAGE AND FILL IT IN

Answers held in somebody's head are not answers. *Write them down, cite where each came from, and date it.*

	THE QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER, IN WRITING	DOCUMENT OR LOCATION	CHECKED BY · DATE
01	Which paper governs our traffic?			
02	What is our window and our cut-off?			
03	Who orders cars, against what forecast?			
04	Which AAR method, which securement, which tested scale?			
05	Where is our demurrage notice?			
06	Is anything hazardous, and is everyone trained?			
07	Who files a claim, and from what record?			

Answered from our own records, of the seven: held in writing _____ · known but not written _____ · not held _____

Any row you cannot complete is the finding. It does not mean the answer is bad. It means nobody at the plant currently holds it. Put a name against the blank rows before the first car.

Plant · location _____ Completed by · title _____ Date _____

Signature _____

STEELWHEELS.CO · POINT OF CONTACT *Where the Wheels meet the Steel*

Write and say what you found, or call 928.605.7984 and say it. Not an impression: what the seven returned at your own plant, your score, and which one you could not answer. The one you could not answer is the finding. You will have a reply within one business day, from the principal and not from a form. Writing puts you on no list. If what comes back says you have no problem, you will be told so. What comes back sets the next stage, or the work stops there.

solutions@steelwheels.co · **928.605.7984** · **steelwheels.co** · Flagstaff, Arizona · For circulation inside your own operation.

FIND IT. NAME IT. DISSOLVE IT. · READ ON THE BALLAST, NOT THE CHART.

This document is a guide, by no means to be construed as comprehensive, and it replaces no statute, regulation, rule, order or industry standard. Every statute and regulation cited here was read in its current published text as of the edition date, and the law changes after it; read the current text before relying on any of them. SteelWheels.Co makes no warranty that this document contains no error. An error reported to solutions@steelwheels.co is corrected in the next edition, and the correction is noted there. Nothing in this document is legal, accounting, engineering or investment advice, or a certification of any kind; nothing in it creates a relationship; and nothing in it is drafted to any particular matter.