

Train Room Comfort for You and Your Trains

It may be tempting to start in on you layout without thinking about preparing the space to serve as a train room, but it will be a lot easier to make improvements before it is filled with trains.

Environmental controls are an essential, both for your comfort and protection of your trains. In our climate, both heating and air conditioning are necessary. A dehumidifier is a good investment since moisture is an enemy of trains and the layout.

Dust control should be considered, as cleaning a layout is difficult. My train room can be completely sealed off from the rest of the house. I have an electrostatic filter on my duct system. I have a box fan on a timer set to run for several hours a day to circulate air in the train room. I tape a furnace filter to the back of the fan to catch the larger dust particles. I have an Ionic Breeze air filter to take care of the smaller particles. Any HEPA filter will do as well. With these precautions, I hardly ever have to dust the layout.

Completely finishing all surfaces of the room also helps with keeping out dirt. It also makes the train room a more pleasant place to be.

Lighting should be planned to best show your trains and layout. While the current trend is to fluorescent lighting for energy savings, this lighting can eventually cause fading of the colors of your train collection. I prefer track lighting as it can be aimed precisely where you want it. Consider providing lighting under the layout to make it easier to work there.

I suggest at least two 20 amp. circuits in the train room for layout power and a separate circuit for lighting. Large train rooms and layouts may require more circuits. Preferable all transformers and power supplies should be controlled by wall switches with pilot lights. This will remind you to turn off the power when you leave the room and as long as the pilot lights are out you don't have to worry about any transformers being left on.

Skirting of some sort can be used to screen the space under the layout and provide out of sight storage. Solid removable panels or fabric skirting can be used to provide access to the space. I use fabric panels velcroed to the front edge of the layout. I also have a base type kitchen cabinet under the layout to provide additional storage. Shelves can also be placed behind the skirting as long as you leave access spaces so you can get under the layout when necessary.

A pleasantly finished space will add greatly to your enjoyment of your trains.