

Box Car “Shorthand” Data

There are many types of data painted on railroad rolling stock that all provide useful information to assure safe railroad operation. Many abbreviations are known by railroad personnel and not the general public. Some refer to this data as train car shorthand. This brief writeup summarizes what the shorthand means. The information presented is taken from a presentation by Greg Hurd.

This grouping of data defines the size of box car and usable volume of the cars. It can be at either side of a box car door.

The Box Car's Story

- Friction truck bearings & coil springs
- Extreme width of car above the rails. Height above rails where extreme width occurs.
- Eaves width where roof extends over car side.
- Eaves height above rails.
- Cars inside length
- Cars inside width
- Cars inside height
- Volume of car based on IL, IW, IH
- Mechanical designation of car (X = standard, M = box car)

Built Date

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Frisco's unique truck bearing repack date

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Pictorial Of What The Shorthand Represents

Tack Board

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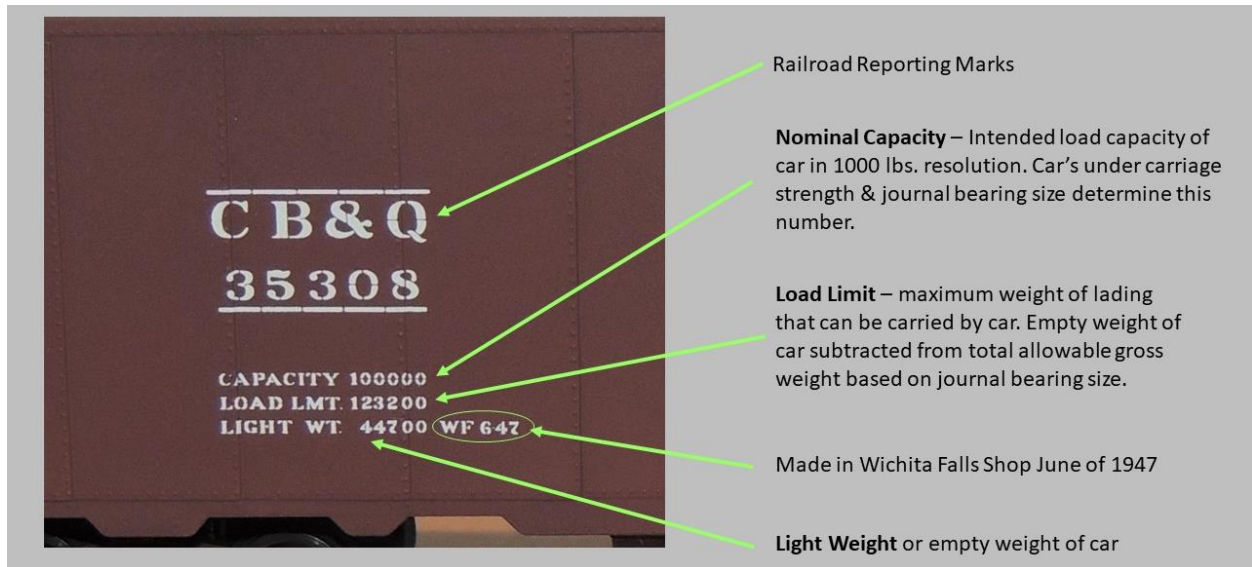
Special Operating Instruction

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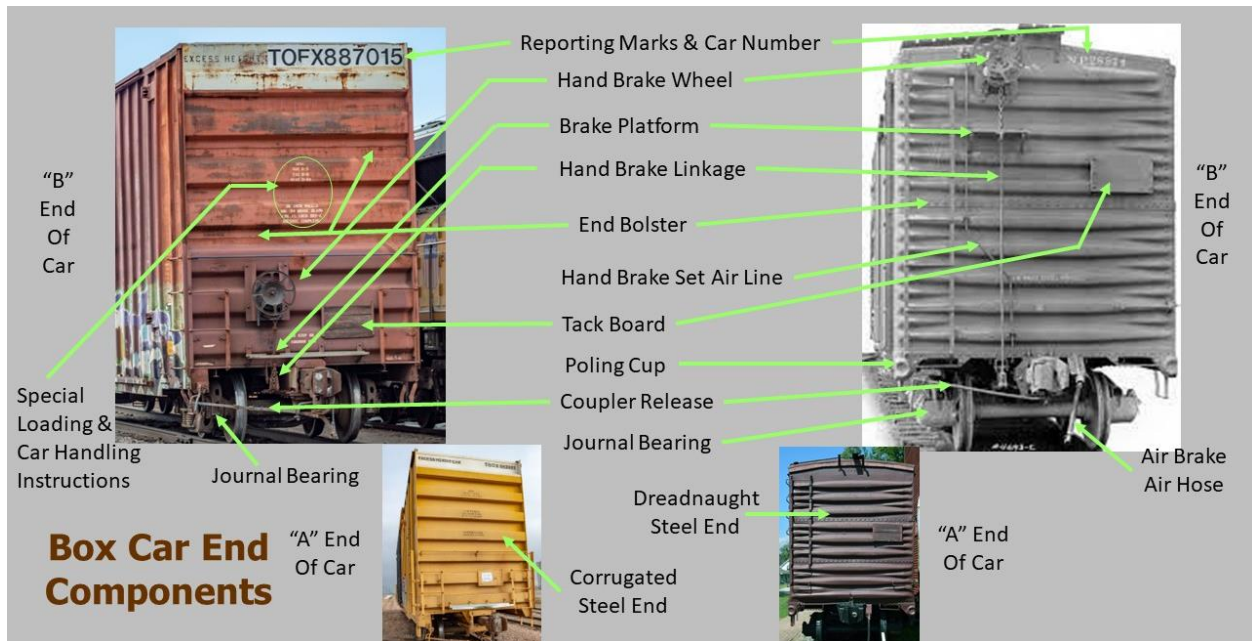
Special Car Feature

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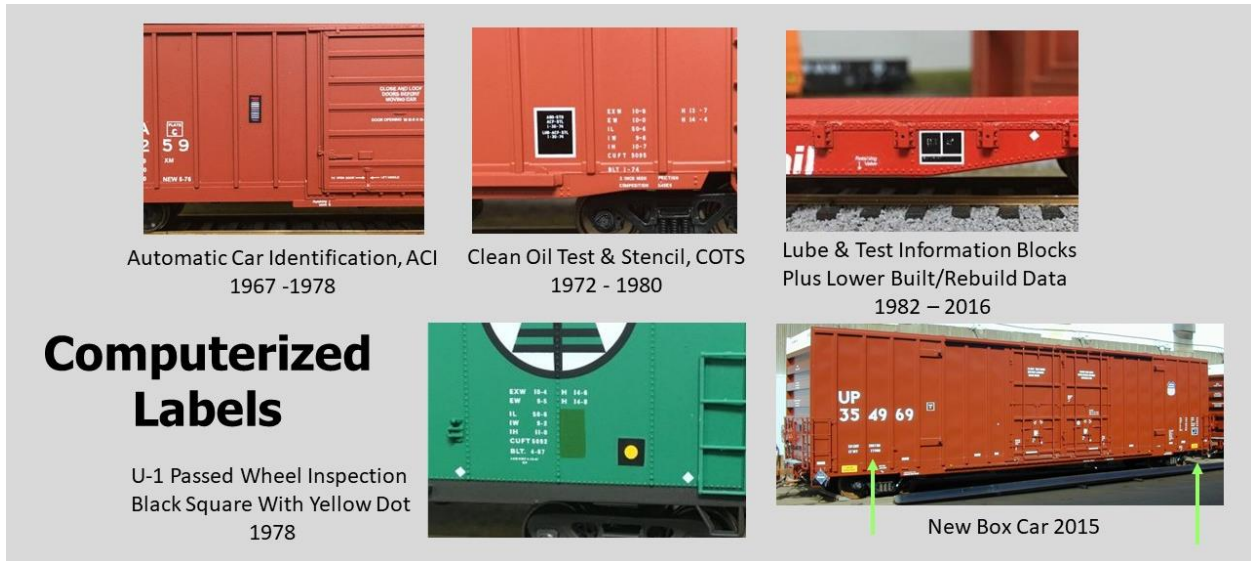
This photo shows where the dimensions apply.



This data contains a unique identification number of the box car and weight capacity of the car. Other information found in this grouping is at the owner of the car’s discretion. This data is most often located at the opposite end of the car as the dimensional data.



The ends of a box car can have data as well as the sides. The B end of a car is where the hand brake wheel is located.



Automatic Car Identification, ACI
1967 -1978

Clean Oil Test & Stencil, COTS
1972 - 1980

Lube & Test Information Blocks
Plus Lower Built/Rebuild Data
1982 – 2016

Computerized Labels

U-1 Passed Wheel Inspection
Black Square With Yellow Dot
1978

New Box Car 2015

Digital technology brought a completely new set of symbols containing the same data as the painted on car data. It is changing as the digital technology advances and is approved by the American Association of Railroads.