

Switching Tracks

A freight hauling game for 2-5 players ages 10+

Explore the great American railways as you deliver sheep and textiles from city to city. Throw the right switches to get where you need to go, and deliver goods to the cities that need them. Use the rewards from successful deliveries to upgrade your train, or compete for valuable contracts. Acquire offices to give your trains special abilities. The first player to fulfill five contracts will go down in history as the most successful railroad executive.

Components:

1 - Game board

9 - Switch tiles

25 - Switchmen tiles

20 - Train car tiles (5 flat, 10 box, 5 caboose)

5 - Player stations, in 2 parts

18 - Goods cards

27 - Office cards

70 - Contract cards (15 orange, 20 green, 20 purple, 15 brown)

90 - Goods pieces (15 ea. of 6 different types)

25 - Demand Disks (black)

35 - Office Activation Disks (white)

5 - Dice

5 - Train figures

1 - Rule book

Setup:

Place the board in the middle of the table. Place one switch tile on each switch location. (Initial orientation should be random.) Place one brown contract card face up on its location on the board, and the deck face-down next to it. For each of the other three contract decks: Shuffle the deck, turn three contract cards face-up and place them on their locations on the board, and place the deck face down next to them. Place the Flat cars, Box cars, and Switchmen tiles in stacks near the board.

Place the goods pieces in a pile next to the board. Shuffle the goods cards. For each city on the board, draw one goods card. If the good shown doesn't match the color of the city, fill the city with three of the goods shown on the card and put the card in a face-up discard pile. If the good on the card matches the color of the city, set aside the card and place two Demand Disks in the city. Once all of the cities are filled, shuffle these set-aside cards to make the draw pile. (NOTE: In later turns when you refill empty

cities, you will shuffle these set-aside cards into the draw pile. But for initial setup, all eighteen cards will be used, so there will be no draw pile to shuffle them into.)

Each player chooses a color and takes the train figure in that color, along with the matching colored caboose tile and station pieces, and one die and one switchman tile. Assemble the station by folding up the sides and sliding the front piece into the slots. Place the die on the engine with "2" facing up, and put the caboose behind the engine. The switchman should go beside your station.

The player with the best model train set should be first player. (Or use any other method to choose.) Lay out one copy of each of the nine office cards for everyone to see. Complete setup in reverse order: Starting with the LAST player (the player to the right of the start player) and going in counterclockwise order, each player:

- Chooses a starting city and places his train in it. You may not start the game in the same region (colored area) as another player. After the game starts, players are allowed to be in the same region, and even in the same city.

- Chooses ONE of the following upgrades: add a flat car, add 1 to their speed (start with the die on "3" instead of "2"), or add two more switchmen (starting with three switchmen).

- Chooses one of the nine offices. You may not start with the same office as another player. Place Activation Disks on all the empty spaces of your office.

Once all players are set up, take the remaining offices, shuffle them all together, and place them in three evenly-divided piles (as close as you can get) in the open spaces beside the orange, green, and purple contract decks. The first player now starts the game.

PLAYING THE GAME

Overview: Players will run their trains, picking up goods from the board and delivering them to same-colored cities. When delivered, these goods will accumulate in the players' depots. Players may trade in these saved goods to upgrade their train or to fulfill contracts. The first player to fulfill five contracts, including one orange, green, and purple contract, wins the game.

On your turn

Each turn has five steps, which you should do in order. Afterwards, the next player (in clockwise order) will take his turn. The five steps are: Refill Cities, Change Switches, Run Train, Upgrade, Fulfill Contract.

[1] Refill Cities:

Each city that has neither goods pieces nor Demand Tokens needs to be refilled. Draw one goods card. (If the draw pile is empty, shuffle the discard pile.) If the good shown doesn't match the color of the city, place three matching goods pieces in the city and put the card in the face-up discard pile. If the good on the card matches the color of the city, set aside the card and place two Demand Disks in the city. Once all of the cities are filled, shuffle these set-aside cards into the draw pile.

Special case 1: If there are only two goods to place in a city, then the city only gets two. The number of goods is limited by the pieces in the game.

Special case 2: If there is only one good of the right type left in stock, or if there are none, then treat a draw of that card as if the color matched the color of the city: Set aside the card, place two Demand Tokens in the city, and shuffle the set aside card back into the draw pile.

Special case 3: It is possible, though unlikely, that you will draw a card matching the color of the city, when the other two cities of the same color already have Demand Disks on them instead of goods. It is not allowed for all three cities of the same color to have Demand Disks. If this happens, set aside the card and draw the next card instead. Then shuffle the set-aside card back into the draw pile.

[2] Change Switches:

There are nine switch tiles on the board. For each switchman token you own, you may change one of these tiles. Tiles may be rotated or flipped, but must end up aligned to the space they sit on. All tiles are the same, and all three possible connections (turn left, turn right, and straight through) are available at each switch location. You do not spend or discard your switchman tiles when you use them, you will keep them throughout the game. You do not have to change all the switches you are entitled to. In fact you don't have to change any switches at all. But unless you have the Communications Office, this is the only time you will be able to change switches. Once you start moving your train, the switches are set.

[3] Run Train:

When you run your train, it will move from city to city along the track. Other trains don't hinder your movement, and you may end your move in a city with another train. As you move, you will pick up goods from the cities you visit, and deliver them to other cities.

Picking up goods: When you visit a city, you must pick up one goods piece from the city if your train has space for it. Each car in your train - flat car, box car, or caboose - can hold one goods piece. Take the good from the board and place it on the train car. Your engine can not carry goods. Note that you **MUST** pick up a good if you can, but you can not pick up more than one good each time you visit a city. (Unless you are using the Executive Office.)

Delivering goods: When you visit a city, you must deliver one good to that city if you are carrying a good that matches the color of the city. Take the good off your train and place it in the depot behind your station. (The hidden area behind the walls of your station piece.) As with picking up goods, you must deliver a good if you can, and you may only deliver one good per visit. Note that when you visit a city, you will deliver before picking up, so if you make a delivery, you will always have an empty car for picking up a good.

REMINDER: Delivered goods do not go back onto the board or into the pile of goods beside the board. They go in your depot.

Demand disks are not goods, and they can not be picked up or delivered. Instead, whenever you deliver to a city with a demand disk, take the disk from the board and put it in your depot along with the good you delivered.

To move your train, first choose which direction you want to go. Regardless of which way you entered the city last turn, you may leave the city in either direction. You may also pick up one good from the city you start in. (This is optional.) Then follow the tracks, through switches, to the next city. Pick up and/or deliver in that city and then continue on to the next city. The number of cities you visit equals your speed. (The number on top of the die on your engine.) You do not roll the die to determine your speed, it is set and will remain the same until you upgrade your train (or use the Equipment Office). Once your train has started moving, you must continue moving in the same direction until you have gone the entire distance. You may not backtrack or stop early. Leave your train in the last city you visit.

[4] Upgrade:

After running your train, you may do one upgrade. You may upgrade your speed, your length, or your switchmen.

To upgrade your speed, spend 2 goods. (Take them from your depot and put them in the pile beside the board.) Then increase the number on the die on your engine by one. Note: You may never have a speed more than six.

To upgrade your length, spend 2 goods. Take a Flat Car or a Boxcar from beside the board and add it to your train between your engine and your caboose. Each train may only have one Flat Car, but may have as many Box Cars as you wish. However, Box Cars are heavy, so each time you add a Box Car to your train, your speed goes down by one. (Change the die on your engine.) If your speed is one, you may not add a Box Car.

To upgrade your switchmen, spend one or two goods, and take one or two more switchmen tiles (the same as the number of goods you spend).

You may only do one upgrade per turn (although buying two switchmen is considered one upgrade). When spending goods on an upgrade, they may be the same or different, and you can spend Demand Disks as if they were goods.

[5] Fulfill Contract:

You may fulfill one contract from among the ten face-up contract cards by the map. Spend (discard from your depot) the correct combination of goods, as depicted on the contract. Then take the contract and place it near your station where all players can see it. Immediately flip up a new contract of the correct color to take its place.

A demand disk may be spent as a good for the generic good symbol on purple and brown contract cards. More than one demand disk may be spent this way. You may also spend TWO demand disks to substitute for a SINGLE specific good that you are missing. You may do this more than once if you have enough demand disks.

When you fulfill a purple, green, or orange contract card, you will also receive a new office. Look through the stack of office cards next to the draw pile for the contract color you fulfilled, and choose one. Place it next to your station and place Activation Disks on all of its empty spaces. You may not have more than one of the same office. If you wish, instead of choosing a new office, you may refill the Activation Disks on one office you already have. You may decide to do this after looking through the stack of office cards.

Offices:

Each player starts the game with one office. You can gain another office when you fulfill a purple, green, or orange contract. An office starts out fully loaded with Activation Disks, which must be spent when you use the office. Once they are all spent, you may no longer use the office unless you choose to refill its Activation Disks instead of gaining a new office.

Many offices say "THIS TURN" at the top. This means you may spend one Activation Disk and then use the office's ability for the rest of your turn without spending more disks. The other offices have Activation Disks that are spent each time you use the office, which may be several times in the same turn. The offices are explained in detail below:

Administrative Office - Spend one Activation Disk to substitute one goods token for another when fulfilling a contract. You may do this more than once, but you must spend one Activation Disk for each good that is substituted.

Advertising Office - Spend one Activation Disk and for each delivery you make this turn, you receive one Demand Disk from the supply beside the board. If you deliver to a city that has Demand Disks on it, you do not take one from the board. Instead, you receive one from the supply beside the board.

Communications Office - Spend one Activation Disk and for this turn, every time your train approaches a switch tile, you may change that switch before crossing it.

Equipment Office - Spend one Activation Disk and for this turn you may change one extra switch, move one space farther, and carry one more good. If you end the turn with one extra good, do not discard it. On your next turn if you activate the Equipment Office again, you will keep this good. If not, then discard it to the goods pile.

Executive Office - Spend one Activation Disk and for this turn, every time you pick up goods, you may choose to pick up one good, two goods, or no goods from the city. You must still be able to put the goods on your train. And you will still deliver exactly one good to each city whenever possible.

Express Office - When moving your train, you may spend an Activation Disk to go through a city without stopping. This means you do not pick up or deliver there, and you do not count that city when determining how far your train will travel. You may do this more than once per turn, spending one Activation Disk for each city you skip over.

Logistics Office - Spend one Activation Disk to place your train in any city you choose, before you start moving. You may pick up one good from your starting city, but you may not deliver there unless you loop back to the city later in your move.

Manager's Office - You may spend an Activation Disk to deliver a different colored good to the city your train is visiting. If there is a Demand Disk there, you will take it as if you had delivered the correct colored good.

Storage Office - There is a Warehouse printed on the Storage Office. This Warehouse may hold an unlimited amount of goods. If you spend an Activation Disk, then for this turn you may move as many goods as you wish from your train to the Warehouse. (Place them on the card.) Goods in the Warehouse will stay there until you choose to bring them out. At any time on your turn, you may place a good from your Warehouse onto an EMPTY car in your train. You may do this on any turn, not just on a turn when you spend an Activation Disk. REMEMBER: You need to spend an Activation Disk to move items into your Warehouse, but not to move them out of the Warehouse.

End of the Game:

The game will end as soon as one player has achieved the contract goal: You must have five contracts, and at least one of them must be orange, at least one green, and at least one purple. As soon as a player has achieved this, that player wins!