

# Weighing Cars

NMRA tests have shown that "car performance" is best, if they are at an optimum weight" (i.e., they will stay on the track better). For HO scale, they recommend 1oz plus ½ oz. per inch of car length. For example, a 40' box car, about 5 1/2" long, should weigh about 3 ¾ oz. For other scales, see the recommended practices on the NMRA website.

Almost anything can be used to weigh cars, large nuts, washers, fishing sinkers, etc., if they will be out of sight. Stick-on weights are convenient. They are available from A-Line in packages of 12 in ¼ and ½ oz. sizes for about \$7. A more economical source of stick-on weights is auto wheel weights. A package of 360 ¼ oz. weights is available from J. C. Whitney, #1JA814037, for \$33.49 plus \$8.99 shipping, or less than 12 cents each.

My wife has a small digital kitchen scale that reads in oz. and grams that works well for weighing cars.

Based on my experience, mostly with Athearn blue box and similar cars:

Most cars will require ½ to 1 oz. of extra weight.

They can be placed in assembled box cars through the door with a pair of tweezers far enough back toward the ends of the car to be out of sight with the door open.

Assembled tank cars can be pried apart carefully (as long as you didn't glue them) to put weights inside the tank.

Loaded hopper cars are no problem. ¼ oz. weights painted black or to match the inside of the car are fairly inconspicuous in empty hoppers.

Flat cars or gondolas are a problem if there is no load to hide the weight.

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