

Logan Square Z and N FIRST-AID KIT

Every layout we sell we know worked well in our shop—but what if it doesn't work well when you take delivery? Or, what if it used to work, but now doesn't? Because Z Scale is so different from the larger gauges, we wanted to provide some guidance the kind of problems you can encounter.



1. Locomotives

- If you have a NEW locomotive, make sure to give it a full 15-minute break-in period. Sometimes a new locomotive will frequently stall, and, normally, all that is needed is to push just a little bit down on it so that it will take off and run again. Perhaps only to later stall again—but eventually hopefully you will complete a full lap. Once that happens, things should only improve as you complete the 15-minute break-in.
- Curve “intolerant” equipment. We at LoganSquareZandN never want to run a locomotive on the tightest tolerance a manufacturer lists—we just have had too many problems. If you do have a layout with 145 mm curves or tighter, Rokuhan or “short” Marklin locomotives are the best we have found for that. The Rokuhan T012-10 is our absolute favorite for curves as tight as 95 mm (we do NOT ever use a Rokuhan Shorty).
- The risk of buying USED. We personally long ago gave up buying used locomotives from vendors who don't take returns. We do love to buy used—but only through TRAINZ.com or any vendor who accepts free returns. Please!!! Never buy from a vendor who doesn't stand by each piece of equipment they sell.
- Dirty Wheels. If you have N-Scale, we say that you will be cleaning track all the time. But, with Z, you should expect that dirty wheels are often the bigger problem. Our “Are You New To Z Scale?” primer on our YouTube channel ([@BILLBEIN](#)) has more info on this.

2. Track

You would be surprised how easily a ‘bump’ can form at the joint between two tracks. And, especially on curves, the slightest bump can cause catastrophic problems.

At LoganSquareZandN we never ship unless we can get several different pieces of equipment to all be able to successfully run for several minutes on the layout without mishap.. But, in shipping, damage can occur—and problems with track can pop up just putting a layout into and back out of storage or letting it get cold or hot or bumping it.

Here is the critical test: if it is a track problem, the problem should always occur at one specific spot. Sometimes, however, it might be a sporadic problem, and you may need to spend more time identifying the spot. When you have found it, you should be able to feel it with your finger. The easy solution is a set of sanding pads that let you smooth out the bump. Amazon sells them cheap—the one you see here goes from 80 to 3,000 grit. If it is NOT a bump, it could be track that is out of level. Prying loose one side and adding a shim may be what it takes to fix it.



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3. Couplers and Trucks

Our primer on our website and YouTube ([@BILLBEIN](#)) that is called “Are You New to Z Scale?” talks a lot about this. For the purpose of this First-Aid kit, we will just say your first job is to get a train – literally, any train—to run well. If you are having decouplings or dropped trucks, just keep removing problem equipment until you prove to yourself that you can run a train perfectly. Then start re-introducing equipment that was having a problem, one a piece at a time. Sometimes turning a car around mysteriously makes the problem go away – or just not have two particular cars connect.

Other times you will conclude that it is a bad car (and sadly we say, “Just throw it away”).

As for trucks, our primer called “Are You New to Z Scale?” talks a lot about why we love Marklin and Rokuhan but will never use MicroTrains or AZL couplers.

4. Power Control

First of all, be sure that the TRACK CONNECTION of the power supply didn’t get jiggled loose. Just push it in and it should not move. If it did move, even a little, your problem may be solved.

Rokuhan, for instance, sells a Y-Cable connector that lets you run two tracks from one controller, but if you are having problems, it may be that trying to power two tracks at once is causing the problem -- please be sure to test each track independently. A second power supply would be a very cheap solution if that is what would solve your problem

IN CLOSING

www.LoganSquareZandN.com is our website.

Our **YouTube channel** ([@BILLBEIN](#)) has playlists for both for Z and N, and some for just for good information.

Most importantly, I want you to know how to contact me directly. My name is Bill Bein, and I am the creator of **Logan Square Z and N**, and my email is info@LoganSquareZandN.com