

Fitting Micro-Trains Couplers to MDC/Roundhouse Husky Stacks

By Dr Phil Hendry

The MDC/Roundhouse Husky Stacks are fine models, let down only by their light weight, which more or less precludes running them as empties, and the difficulty of fitting Micro-Trains couplers.

Part of the difficulty in fitting Micro-Trains couplers lies in the close tolerances the models are made to - in order to keep the car down to the correct height above the rails, the coupler pocket is too shallow to allow fitting of a truck-mount Micro-Trains coupler of the #1128/29/30 style. Body mounting a coupler is also difficult, because the 'beam' at the end is thin and there isn't room for a 00-90 screw. There seem to be two methods prevalent at the moment. Both methods involve cutting away the beam, or part of it:

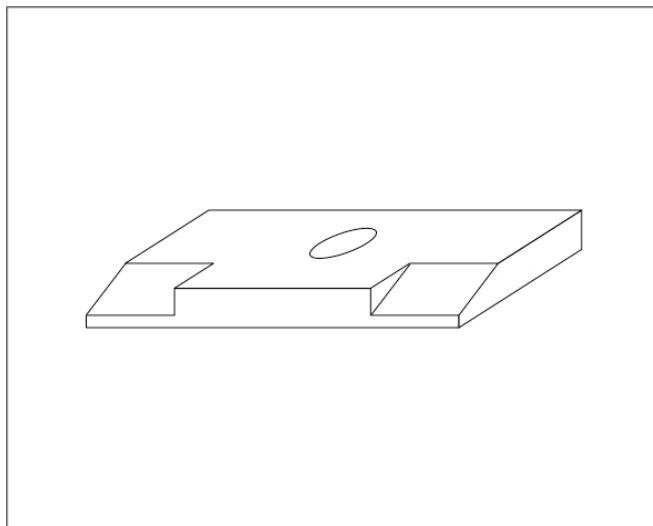
- 1) using a Micro-Trains truck with coupler - either a #1035 or #1037;
- 2) using a #1015 body mount coupler under the walkway.

Method (1) results in a slightly higher ride height, as bolster height on the Micro-Trains truck is higher than the MDC/Roundhouse truck. Method (2) involves fitting the coupler to the walkway. The walkways are 'bendy' and it seems rather imprecise to me. Method (2) also precludes using the Gold Medal Models etched walkways to upgrade the model. So I decided to spend some time thinking about the problem to see if I could find a solution which seemed better to me.

One thing I noticed was that the 'beam' at the end of the car was at the right height to mount a #2004 coupler to it when the car was mounted on the original trucks. The only problems lay in getting enough material in the right place to glue or screw the coupler in place and in checking that there was enough clearance between the original truck (with the coupler pocket cut off) and the #2004 coupler pocket.

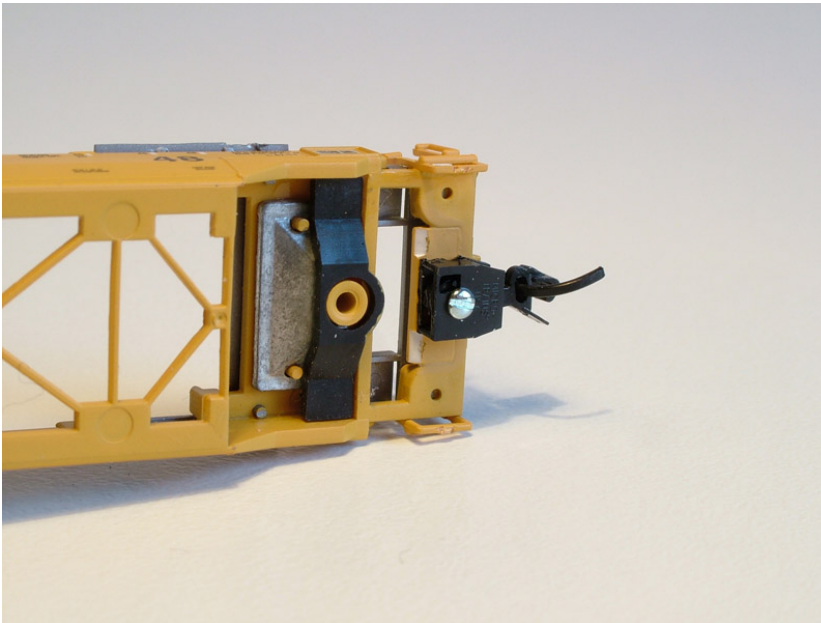
Measurements seemed to indicate that there was adequate clearance, so all that remained was to get enough material in the right place to provide a surface on which to mount the coupler.

First of all, pop the walkway off the car, to give yourself room to work. Then carefully scrape the paint off the inside face of the 'beam' and the supports for the walkway, making sure that the resulting surfaces are smooth, flat and perpendicular. Then fabricate a piece of styrene strip to make a coupler mounting



plate, 1mm x 3.125 x approximately 9.5mm - the approximate dimension being filed to be a sliding fit between the walkway supports. Drill and tap a hole for a 00-90 screw, centred and 1.8mm from the inner edge. Scrape or file two chamfers, as shown in the diagram, to allow room for the truck to rotate - if you don't do this, the wheel flanges will bind on the coupler mounting plate. You

should finish up with a piece similar to that shown in the diagram above.



Glue the plate in position, being careful to get it horizontal, and mounted at the right height. Wait for the glue to dry, then paint it the appropriate colour - TTX yellow in my case. Once the paint has dried, screw the coupler in place. You will need to shorten the threaded part of the screw to approximately 3.5mm long, or it will foul the walkway.

Trim the coupler pocket off the truck, refit the truck and test-run. You may find that you need to scrape a bit more off the chamfer - particularly if you have tight curves on your layout.

