



HOn3 reefer is the first ready-to-run narrow gauge car from Micro-Trains

This diminutive ready-to-run model of a narrow gauge composite-frame wooden refrigerator car is a well-detailed plastic and metal car. It has a molded styrene body, a die-cast metal floor, and many separate detail parts that come factory installed. The car marks Micro-Trains' entry into the ready-to-run HOn3 market, so it includes trucks and delayed-action Magne-Matic knuckle couplers.

A 20-car group of these narrow gauge 30-foot wood refrigerator cars was built by the Colorado & Southern RR shop in 1909. These ice-bunker reefers had a new type of composite underframe that used wood and Bettendorf steel components to eliminate the need for truss rods. Each car had a 25-ton load capacity and a light weight of 27,600 pounds.

The cars were upgraded to meet new federal safety appliance standards adopted in 1911. It took the C&S almost 10 years to get the original widely spaced grab-iron ladders replaced with new ladders bolted onto the sides and ends. The model reflects this rebuilt version as it appeared around 1935-1938.

The model matches the dimensions listed in *The 1930 Official Railway Equipment Register*. It's 30'-0" long, 7'-11½" wide, 10'-2" high at the running board, and 12'-0" over the brake wheel.

This narrow gauge car follows the same style of construction used in most of Micro-Trains' N scale models. It has a one-piece molded styrene body with simulated tongue-and-groove siding that includes wood-grain detailing. The ladders, ice hatches, and running boards are separate parts held in place with friction pins and latches. Some of the more delicate parts are molded in tough acetal plastic.

The floor is cast zinc alloy detailed with a plastic underframe and air brake system. It provides most of the car's 2-ounce weight, which is ¼ ounce under the National Model Railroad Association's Recommended Practice 20.1. The HOn3 Magne-Matic knuckle couplers are body-mounted at the proper height in coupler boxes attached with screws.

The model rides on a pair of simulated cast-steel Bettendorf narrow gauge trucks that are equalized to keep all four wheels on the rails. The excellent sideframes include the manufacturer's name and casting marks in readable letters so tiny I had to use 8X magnification to even see them.

Each wheelset has an acetal plastic needlepoint axle with metal RP-25 contour wheels spaced at the correct scale 36" gauge. These wheelsets match the NMRA's HOn3 fine scale standards.

Our sample reefer came painted in the standard C&S colors of the 1930s with clean separation lines between the boxcar red and yellow areas. The lettering is extremely sharp and opaque with excellent alignment within the heralds.

Micro-Trains has brought the hobby a good-looking HOn3 model of a historically accurate freight car. With its combination of good looks, automatic knuckle couplers, and excellent trucks, this model is truly ready to run. —J.D.H.

▶▶ HOn3 refrigerator car

Price: \$31.95 each

Manufacturer

Micro-Trains Inc.
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www.micro-trains.com

Description: Plastic and metal ready-to-run freight car

Road names

Colorado & Southern (two road numbers), White Pass & Yukon

Features

Individually applied details
Magne-Matic knuckle couplers mounted at the proper height
One-piece body shell
Ready-to-run
Weight: 2 ounces