

Weathering Steel Gondolas
Hands-On Make and Take Clinic
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This by far is not the only way to weather train cars; there are many options and I would recommend that you try different methods from time to time. Some prefer air brushes, while others like oil paints to do weathering. This will vary your freight car fleet so that they don't look all the same, because most train cars (with the exception of unit trains) travel across the nation and can be exposed to different weather conditions.

Supplies needed:

- Soldering Iron, Wood Sticks along with Files, Sanding Sticks or Sand Paper;
- Water or lacquer based Red Zinc Chromate Primer, Rail Brown or Rust Colored paints;
- Alcohol and India Ink mixture;
- Weathering Powders and a container to catch any left-over powders for later reuse;
- Paint brushes and Cotton Swabs; and
- Acrylic or Lacquer Flat Spray Finish.

Next:

- Decide how many years of service you want your gondola to represent. This will determine how much distress you want to inflict on the model;
- Is your gondola new and restricted to clean loading such as new steel shapes, pipes, crates, LCL containers or lumber;
- Is it going to be the beat up like an old reliable pick-up truck use to haul anything from coal, ballast, rocks, scrap metal, telephone poles, junk cars, etc.;
- Will it be somewhere in between; or
- Has the car been shop repaired or repainted.

Optional: Use a soldering iron to heat the top rails on the gondola and gently bend them ever so often to show the impacts of loading and unloading equipment. Heat the side panels between the ribs and then gently push outward to show damage loading, unloading and shifting loads.

Many gondola insides were either not painted or just received a coat of zinc primer. If the inside is wood, it was normally just left bare or just treated with a preservative. Why waste the cost of paint when it would be worn off quickly. The finish color of the car was primarily applied only to the outside of the car. There are always exceptions. Paint the inside of the gondola a rust, mineral red, iron oxide or zinc chromate primer. A car that is being preserved in a museum would most likely be painted inside and out with the finish car color.

Apply a coat of India ink and alcohol wash to create shadows and bring out the details of the flooring. Then apply weathering powders of various shades of rust, red, brown, gray and black randomly through out the car. For a newer car the rust would be a yellow or light orange in color. Older cars would have darker shades of rust along with grime, oil and other residues of the loading and unloading process.

Spray a coat of flat finish to secure your weathering. If you want, another optional technique is randomly reapplied a wash of India ink and alcohol, which will create a oxidize look to the rusty area, especially on the floor. Addition weathering powers can be applied to blend things together and add additional texture. Your ready to move on to weathering the outside of the car.

