

PSLTC Standards - Overview

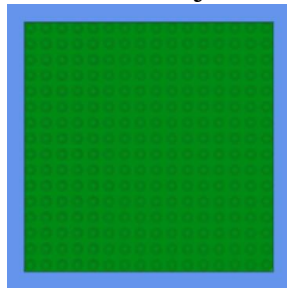
Thomas Garrison

First Published: May 26, 2022

Last Updated: May 26, 2022

Modules

For this article's purposes, "module" refers not to a full-blown NTrak-style complete section of layout with standardized dimensions, but to any creation on the layout that is designed to be a fixed component, such as a building, landscape, road, bridge, scene, or even "loose" structures arranged on particular baseplates. The desire to completely cover the benchwork with modules (possibly supplemented with baseplates), the size of standard baseplates, and the geometry of 9V Lego track dictate that modules should in length and width be multiples of 16 studs (nominally 5 inches).



Benchwork

PSLTC uses tables that are module-friendly. The standard size table is (nominally) 30x60 inches. Other custom table surfaces are 30x30, 15x60, 30x45, and 60x45 inches. Off-the-shelf tables, frequently provided by show venues, tend to be 30x96, 30x72, or 24x96 inches. In practice, we treat such tables as dimensioned in multiples of 5 inches by either leaving space on the table (96 inches becomes 95 inches usable) or gapping tables (two 24-inch tables together becomes 45 inches).

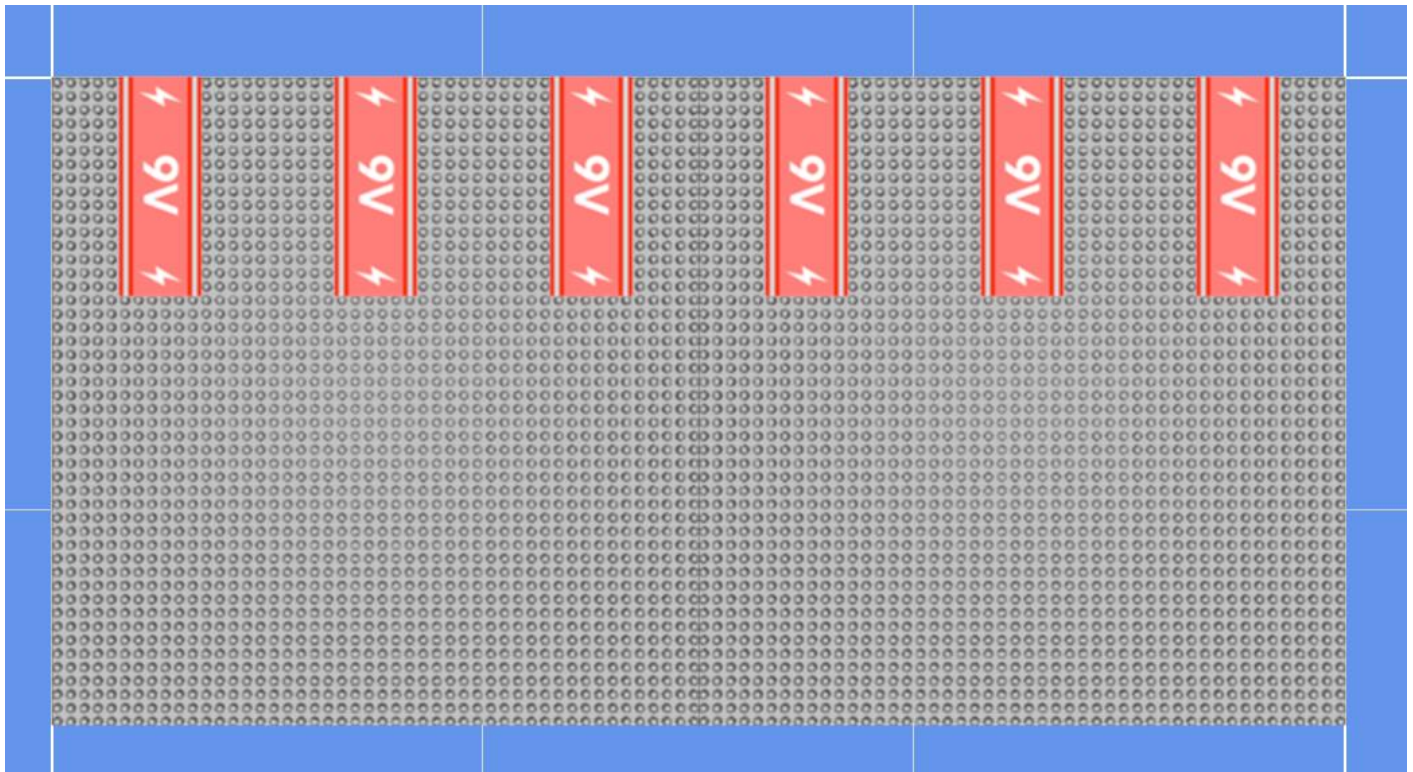
Tables are usually arranged one- or two-deep for a total depth of 30, 45, or 60 inches. A depth of more than 60 inches causes reach problems with detailing, fixing details that fall over, accessing battery boxes, or reaching derailed trains.

Standard table height (which is also the standard ground level for the layout) is the nominal 30-inch height of off-the-shelf tables, which in practice tends to be 29 or 29.5 inches. Variations in table height are multiples of 6 inches (16 bricks) or sometimes 3 inches (8 bricks). Variations in table height must be carefully planned in the benchwork and should be planned before constructing modules requiring non-standard heights. Venue-provided tables can be unpredictably challenging to adjust in height (and tend to be large), so height variation should typically be done with custom tables and use tables

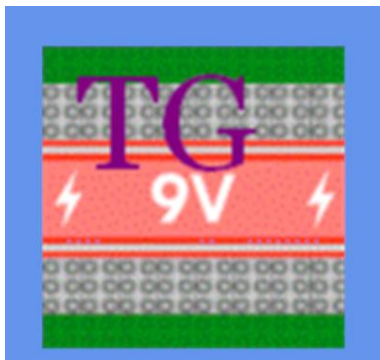
owned by the module creator for module sizes other than 30x60 inches; in any case, the module should completely cover the table of different heights.

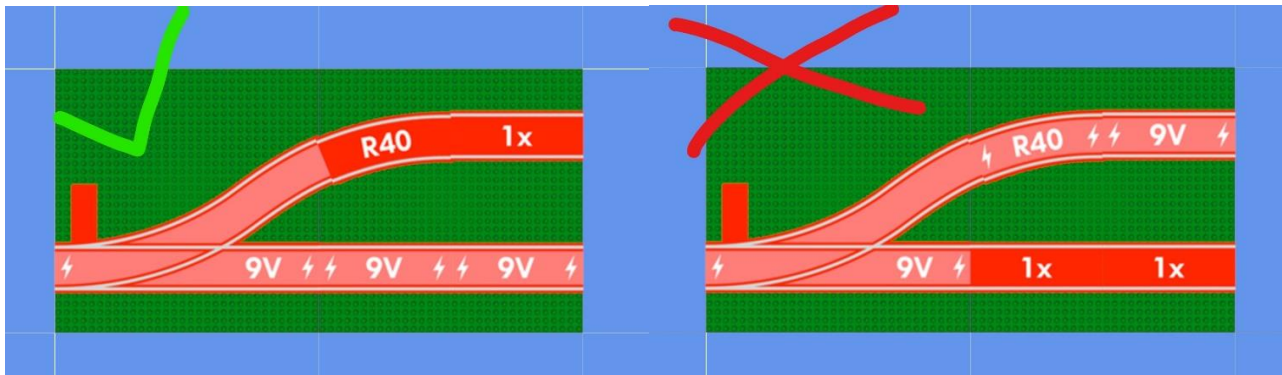
Track

PSLTC mainline track is 9V Lego track. As explained on the Brickpile Track Layout Geometry page (<https://www.brickpile.com/articles/track-layout-geometry/>) this means that mainline track should, at the edges of modules, be placed at the positions defined by (centered) 8 studs from the front and every 16 studs thereafter.

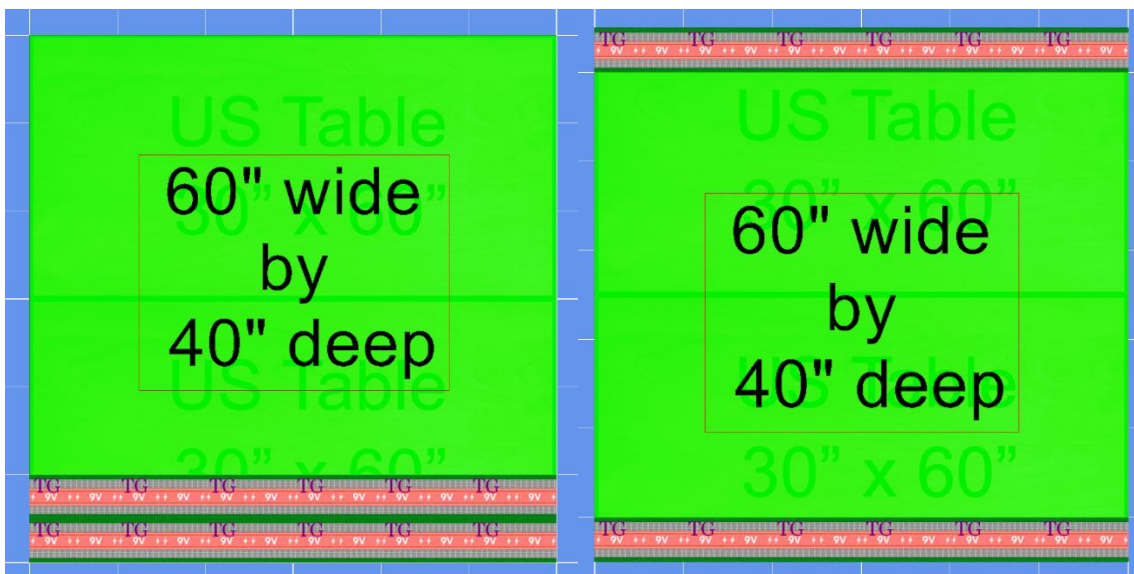


These are often referred to as track positions 1 through 6. PSLTC ballasted track, in particular, is permanently attached to (usually green) baseplates in these positions. In a module, track that may be mainline track should be 9V in an appropriate position at the edges. Track that will not be mainline track but will interface with it (such as a siding or a connection to a local loop) can be post-2005 plastic track in an appropriate position at the edges. Mainline track should avoid geometries that may lead to derailment when trains are moving at high speeds, such as S-curves or running through the diverging side of a switch.





On a typical 60-inch deep PSLTC layout, mainlines run doubled in front (track positions 1 & 2) or in front and back (track positions 1 & 6). A module that includes mainline track should anticipate one of these cases. A module that does not include mainline track can safely be up to 40 inches deep (keeping in mind that the track running in front of in front and back of the module will likely be on green baseplates).



Trains

To run on a PSLTC layout, trains should have L-gauge wheelsets, be no more than 8.5 studs wide, and be no more than 13 bricks tall. Trains should expect track pieces to be built up with a plate on the ties (possibly a plate plus a tile) and should be able to navigate crossings, R40 curves, and R40 switches. Larger radius curves may sometimes appear on PSLTC layouts but are not the norm. Power Functions-controlled trains should have the receiver accessible so that channels can be changed.



Tunnel Entrance

Roads

PSLTC roads are based on 10-inch square roadplates, with DkGray road and Gray 7-stud studded sidewalks or DkStone road and MdStone 7-stud studded sidewalks. Alleys, when available, are 8-stud black-tiled. Road typically appear adjacent to railroad tracks, which on a 60-inch deep layout results in rectangular city blocks 20x30 inch or 30x30 inch. Alternative geometries or block sizes require brick-built roads.

