

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

## For Railpace Publication-Quality Photos

*OK, don't take this too seriously... this is a helpful Guide to better news photo-journalism intended to help you get your best photos published!*

### I. Newsworthy Subjects

Consider the "news" aspect of your photo— Your image should begin to tell a story even before the reader gets to the caption.

Random shots of trains and "roster shots" of commonly seen and photographed locomotives are usually not "news"

Send us your news photos promptly. Photos of events and trains from a month or more past have likely already been run.

### VI. Sunshine is Best

Events happen and trains run in all types of weather, but since color space in the magazine is limited, and we are so overwhelmed with material, we generally select better-weather photos with good sun angle for publication.

Photograph on the sunlit side of your subject to better show detail, avoid shooting on the "dark side" (shadow side).

### II. Location Identity

Include some "location identity" in your composition; all that is needed is a "prop" or structure which helps show WHERE the photo is taken.

"Train-In-the-Woods, Somewhere in North America" **is the most common reason for non-acceptance of photos.**

### VII. Avoid Summertime Mid-Day Sun

"High Angle" mid-day summertime sunlight produces low contrast, less color saturation, and terrible underframe detail.

Strive to **shoot during early morning and late afternoon "sweet light" during summertime (6-10 AM and 4-8 PM)**, when the sun is lower in the sky; the color, contrast, and detail are improved dramatically!!

### III. Think Composition

An attractive composition wins points, and often results in a photo being run larger. Try to minimize brush, poles and wires. ELEVATION often enhances a train photo, allowing some of the background features/ scenery to show, instead of being completely blocked by the locomotive/train when you stand trackside to get a "wedge" shot. An overhead bridge, embankment, hillside, top deck of a public parking garage, an open window of a building, etc. can be good photo vantage points.

### VIII. Avoid Overkill, Don't Carpet-Bomb

Many of the "regular" organized rail events can get repetitious, year-after-year. One or two images will do.

Keep in mind some subjects such as Heritage units are in serious overkill, ask yourself if your image is something special.

Don't send us large groups of photos, select your **best!**

Please don't ask us to visit your gallery or online site to choose from hundreds of your photos— select your few best and preview those few to us, thank you.

### IV. Don't Cut off the Consist

INCLUDE THE ENTIRE TRAIN in your photo composition— don't crop off the train consist to focus on the locomotives, unless the lead engine is so incredibly rare or really unusual. Dash-9 widecabs, etc., are generally NOT rare or unusual!

Trackside "wedge" shots showing just the motive power and little location or scene in the composition are generally the least interesting and least newsworthy images.

### IX. Coherent Captions and Information

YOU are the reporter; try to gather and confirm as much news and information about your subject, including where it was taken. Don't forget to include the **DATE** of your photo.

Include your name and your postal mailing address with your Upload, so we can send you a complimentary copy of the issue featuring your photo.

### V. Technical Quality

Ensure your camera is set to record at its **highest** resolution. Take a look at your original hi res image to be sure that it is sharp— **in focus, and not blurred.**

Make sure the important elements of your photo are not cut-off or too close to the edge of your frame.

**Don't crop or edit your original image, let us handle that.**

Generally, image file sizes should be more than one megabyte to be usable, even as a smaller "news photo."

### X. Preview and Upload Promptly

Send us low-res "preview" images for approval right away. If we can use your photo, we'll respond with an Upload code so you can Upload your hi res RAW or JPEG and caption.

Be sure to Upload your **un-edited, un-cropped HI RES out-of-the-camera RAW or JPEG image**, not your low-res "preview" image.

Think like a newspaper reporter— you don't want to be "scooped!"