

## **What Do I Need to Get Started?**

This section assumes you have studied other sections to learn about the various components discussed here. If you have questions about the components in general, click the highlighted component name to read more about it.

### **Starter Set**

A starter set contains almost everything you need to get started including a throttle (hand held cab), command station/booster, one decoder, and a video. Starter sets are priced lower than if you purchased all the parts separately. Digitrax offers [Zephyr](#) starter sets.

### **Decoder Installation**

For the most part, decoder installation is straightforward. And the starter set includes general decoder installation information. But, many people are skittish about doing their first installation. For this, the video helps a lot. While this video does give a cursory view of layout wiring, the most important part of this video is the installation of decoders in several different locos. It can provide the first timer with the courage to get started.

For further information on decoder wiring and installation, please refer to our section on Decoder Installation.

### **Decoder Tester**

Most manufacturers warranty their decoders only until they are installed. This means that if a decoder is defective when you get it (an extremely rare occurrence), you must detect that fact before you install it. Otherwise, the assumption might be that you damaged it during installation. Digitrax includes a decoder test kit to test one decoder feature at a time (motor, lighting, and functions). While this method works, Loy's Toys offers a Decoder Tester that allows you to hook up all wires at once, then test the entire decoder as if it were already installed in a loco.

### **Reverse Sections**

If your layout has reverse sections, you'll probably want some way to control them automatically. An additional Digitrax DB150 booster, or Loy's Toys ARSC can do it. Either of these devices can control all of your reverse sections. But, if you have one train leaving one while another train is entering another, there will be a short circuit. To avoid this, you will need one of these devices for each reverse section.

### **Power Supply**

If you already have an adequate power supply to get started, you're all set. But, if you don't have one, or wish to get started with a transformer suited to the needs of your new system, you will need a transformer with adequate power for the booster's full capability. Further, if your layout is so large that you need slave boosters, each one must also have a suitable transformer. And, boosters used for reverse section control must have a suitable transformer, too.

Loy's Toys offers two power supplies: the MTF-V-5 5. amp model for Digitrax's 5-amp boosters, and the MTF-V-10 10.5 amp model for Digitrax's 8-amp booster or Wangrow's dual 5 or 10 amp booster. Since boosters are most efficient with a specific voltage for whatever scale they are set for, we had these power supplies designed with three different voltage capabilities; one for each scale. Simply wire them for the scale you use. These power supplies are open frame transformers. They need to be mounted in a box of some kind, with a power cord and fuse. Instructions are included.

We also have a custom housing made specifically for these power supplies: the MTFT. It has all the holes pre-cut for power cords, fuses, etc. We also have the hookup kit to fill all those holes, with power cords, strain relief's, input fuse, output circuit breaker, toggle, pilots, etc.: the MTFH. You can get the housing and hookup kit combination: MTFC. This is all that's needed to get

started. However, there are many other items that you may want now, or want at a future date. They are...

### **Additional Throttles**

Running trains is more fun when running them with friends. You will need another throttle for each engineer.

You have three throttle choices with any Digitrax system: the DT400, UT2, or UT4.

### **Throttle Network**

If you're going to have additional throttles, and want to use them as walk-around throttles, you need a throttle network to provide places to plug them in. The throttle network for any Digitrax system is nothing more than six-wire phone jacks connected by six-wire phone cable. Refer to the Throttle Network list.

### **Turnout Control**

You may choose to control your turnouts or other animation from your hand-held walk-around throttle. You may also want to create some automated animation. Digitrax's DS54 switch decoder would suit this. Use Digitrax's BD1 or BD4 block detector to trigger the DS54 to operate animations automatically.

### **Sound System**

Low-cost DCC compatible sound systems are available, and controllable via your hand-held throttle. SoundTraxx offers two different sound units: the DSD with motor and light drivers to act as the decoder and sound unit, and the DSX sound only unit. These come in first generation EMD, Alco, Fairbanks-Morse, and a variety of steam. Soon, they will have others. ITTC offers some low cost sound units with bells, whistles or horn, wheel screech, and other railroad sounds, as well as nature and other sounds to complete your diorama scenes.

### **Computer Control**

Digitrax offers the MS100 computer to LocoNet interface. This device is designed to plug into a DB25 comport. If your serial communications port has a DB9 connector, you will need a serial port adapter.

There are software packages available, with instructions on how to connect your DCC system to a computer. We currently carry WinLok for Digitrax, Lenz, and many other systems.

### **Train Detection Systems**

If you want to control signals, grade crossings, or have track occupancy lights at a control panel for yards or interchanges, there are many ways to do it. Any of the reed switch or infrared systems will not affect DCC operations because they don't touch, or have anything to do with the track power. Because reed and infrared units do not affect DCC, we do not carry any of them.

However, if you want the most accurate and fullest block coverage detection, you need a current sensitive unit. Most current sensitive block detectors are DCC compatible, but some aren't.

Digitrax offers a block detector, BD4 that works in unison with their turnout decoder. With this combination, you can automate turnout control, grade crossing gates, lights and sound, and even send train position information back to your computer. Digitrax is also working on a complete integrated signaling system that will work with their BDL162 or BDL168 block detectors.

For more information, refer to the Detection & Signaling Price List section.