

## **General Questions for All Empire Builder Series Games:**

**Major Cities:** **Q:** *Why is there a cost of 5 to build into Major Cities when I can always just build out of them for free?* **A:** Usually, that is correct. It is very rare that you will need to pay the 5 to build into a Major City. It's really a penalty for poor planning.

Each turn, you can build OUT of any 2 Major City mileposts. No matter what, you cannot build OUT of any more than 2 per turn. So, the only way you will ever pay that cost of 5 is if, for some reason, you are "forced" to connect to more than 2 Major City mileposts on the same turn.

**Q:** *A Major City is made up of 7 mileposts. Do you have to build straight through the Major City and come out the other side? That could make it very difficult for more than three players to connect to the Major City.* **A:** You are not required to drive "straight through" Major Cities. You can connect to any of the six mileposts around the outside of the city. You can even connect to more than one of them. Also, for most Major Cities, you can connect up to three tracks to each of those six mileposts. So there is plenty of room for all the players to connect track to all of the Major Cities. In fact, you can never build any track that would prevent all the other players from connecting to a Major City.

**Event Cards:** **Q:** *If there is a flood in effect (due to an event card), can I still build track over that river in areas that had no track before? In other words, does the restriction against building across the river while the event card is still in play only affect "rebuilding?"* **A:** The entire effected area is blocked until the event is over (at the end of the drawing player's next turn). It does not matter if "old" track was destroyed by the event or not. No track building would be allowed across a flooding river or a desert in a sandstorm.

**Q:** *If I draw an event card that causes me to lose a turn, what exactly happens? Do I lose the rest of this turn? Do I finish this turn and lose my next turn? Or do I lose the rest of this turn AND all of next turn?* **A:** Most events last until the end of the drawing player's next turn. That includes events such as derailment. If you draw an event that causes you to "lose your turn," then you must lose all the rest of the current turn (including any movement and building), plus all of the following turn (until you discard the event card).

**Using Another Player's Track:** **Q:** *One of my opponents is offering to use my track if I build into a small city nearby. Can we negotiate a special price?* **A:** The rules do not prohibit you from agreeing to build the track for your opponent, but you can never ask him for more money than the 4 million per turn fee for using your track. I suppose that the two of you could agree that he would drive back and forth on your track for a few turns to drive up the price, but that would be the limit. Also, you could not force him to honor the agreement. He could say he would do it, but he would be under no legal obligation to do so. Basically, I don't recommend making any negotiations like that. If he

wants to use your track, you can't stop him. Take your 4 million and smile. But if he wants you to build track for him, do it only if it is in your interest to have track there.

**Q: *Can I sell my track to another player? Can I remove track?*** **A:** There are no "official" rules for selling track or removing it (except for natural disasters). However, there are some fans that like to play a little differently. They will allow players to sell track to one another for any agreed-upon price. If you choose to use this optional rule, then after paying for the track you can simply erase it and redraw it in your own color. However, as an optional rule, all players must agree to use the rule before the game begins. Also, the "bank" will never buy back track from any player.

**Winning the Game: Q: *If I have fulfilled the requirements for winning the game when I make my final delivery, do I have to draw a replacement demand card? I might draw an event that will prevent me from winning (such as a flood or taxes).*** **A:** Yes, you must still draw the card. You must ALWAYS have 3 demand cards. The drawing of the card is part of the act of delivering a load. Yes, that does mean that it is possible for an event to prevent you from winning the game!

**Load Tokens: Q: *Is there a limit to how many loads I can pick up in a given city? If the city only produces fish, for example, and I have a Super Freight, can I pick up three fish tokens?*** **A:** You can pick up as much fish as you can carry, even if you don't have any demand cards for fish. The only limit on the number of loads you can pick up in any city is the maximum number of loads your train can carry. You can even "dump" (discard) any loads on your train that you do not want to make room for the new loads that you do want.

**Train Movement: Q: *What does it mean when the rules say "one train may not block another train's movement?"*** **A:** Because trains can always use the same track, and can end their movement on the same spaces, and travel through one-another, there is no way that one train can block another. It is always assumed that there are enough sidetracks in the right places to allow two trains to pass each other.

**Q: *The rules say that my train can't reverse direction during a move, but what if I have a loop or a junction in my track?*** **A:** Yes, a train can double back during a single turn if there is a loop in the track. But if there is no loop or junction in your track, then you cannot change direction except at a city. In other words, you can't just stop in the middle of your track and turn around.

**Optional Rules: Q: *I was looking at the "Challenge Game," and I noticed a comment in the "Branching" section on page 12 that says that "no junction charge is paid." What is a junction charge? If this optional rule has no junction charge, does that mean that there is a junction charge in the normal game?*** **A:** The rule you are asking about is the optional rule that allows you to start new track from any milepost that another player has already connected track to. Normally, you can only start new track from a milepost that you have built track to already.

In the normal game, there is no "junction" fee. You can always cross another player's track without fee. Similarly, if you play with the optional "branching" rules, there is no fee to build new track from an opponent's track.

**Australian Rails:** **Q:** *When the Murray River floods (card # 131), exactly which tributaries are flooded.* **A:** All of the rivers that connect to the Murray are affected by the flood. That includes: Darling, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Warrego, Balonne, Barwon, and Macquarie.

**British Rails:** **Q:** *Card # 94 says that it is a demand for lead in Cambridge, but the picture shows jute instead. What is the correct demand for this card?* **A:** The correct demand is for lead, the jute picture is an error. Must be gremlins...

**Q:** *Card #135 says that it is a demand for lead to Aberystwyth, and the picture shows sheep instead of lead. But neither sheep nor lead makes sense for that payout. What is the correct demand for this card?* **A:** The correct demand for this card should be barley to Aberystwyth. More gremlins ...

**Empire Builder:** **Q:** *The rules say that event cards are discarded one turn after they've been drawn, but what's up with the "heating oil shortage" card? If it's only in play for one turn, how likely is it that somebody can actually use it?* **A:** The Heating Fuel Shortage is an exception to the "one turn" rule. It remains in effect until any player delivers the required load. Basically, it is an extra demand card that is available to all players until it is filled.

**Euro Rails:** **Q:** *There are a few areas on the board where two rivers, or a river fork or loop, falls between two mileposts. If I build track between these two mileposts, does that count as ONE river? In other words, do I only pay an extra 2M ECU, or do I have to pay for each river separately?* **A:** If there are multiple rivers between two mileposts, you only have to pay the bridging fee once (It is assumed that these rivers are relatively small, so the total cost of bridging them is about the same as crossing one large river).

**Q:** *If I buy the ferry to Belfast, do I have to pay for the city too? Do I just pay the 4M ECU for the ferry, or do I pay 7M ECU for the ferry plus the city?* **A:** The cost to connect to the city at the Irish end of the ferry is included in the ferry cost.

**Q:** *Where does the Atlantic begin and end (for purposes of the Atlantic flooding card)?* **A:** The Atlantic coast begins in the south at Gibraltar (that little peninsula due south of Sevilla), and continues all the way along the coast of Spain and France up to the English Channel. It also includes the coast of Ireland. It does not include the coast of Scandinavia.

**India Rails :** **Q:** *When the rivers flood, do the tributaries also flood?* **A:** When a river floods in India Rails, only the tributaries specifically named on the card flood. All other tributaries remain passable.

**Iron Dragon:** **Q:** *Can a ship move through a port without being forced to disembark and draw a new ship? In other words, can I just move through a port milepost on my way to somewhere else?* **A:** Yes, you are not forced to land whenever you move onto a port space. You can just "pass through."

**Q:** *On my turn, how many times can I pay 1 GP to draw a foreman? Can I keep drawing (and discarding potential foremen) until I get the one I want?* **A:** You can draw as many foremen in a turn as you are willing to pay for, as long as you only actually change foremen once that turn. So, if you draw one and don't like it, you can discard it and pay to draw again.

But! Each gp you spend on a foreman counts against your limit of 20 gp per turn spending limit! So if you draw four foremen, then you would only have 16 left to spend that turn.

**Q:** *The "Elven Antirailroad Activists Attack" card is confusing. It says "No railbuilding or movement on forest mileposts." But what does "on forest mileposts" really mean?* **A:** This strike includes both FROM and TO. You cannot do either when the strike is in effect. This means that you cannot move a train onto a forest milepost, and a train that is already on a forest milepost cannot move from that spot. You can neither build track from a non-forest milepost to a forest, or vice versa.

### **Lunar Rails:**

### **Demand Cards and Events:**

**Q:** *I found two cards (#23 and #109) that are both for the same demand (hazardous materials to Carnot), but they have different payouts. Is this correct?* **A:** That is correct. There are a few cases where a particular load is worth more or less than normal, even if it is going to the same place! That's both to keep you guessing, and also to balance other features of the card.

**Q:** *What happens if I "pitch" my cards to draw a new hand, and draw an event such as "Cosmic Rays" that affects my train? Do I lose my turn automatically, or do I have a chance to "run for cover" on my next turn?* **A:** Unfortunately, events like Cosmic Rays take effect immediately when drawn. Which means that if you are unable to move (because of pitching your cards) and you draw the event, you are going to be hit by the Cosmic Rays.

The moral is: don't pitch cards when you are not at a city....

### **Astronomical Events:**

**Q:** *What happens if the meteor strikes destroy the Major Cities? The rules say that you have to connect seven out of the eight cities. What if there are only six cities left?* **A:** Meteor Strikes do not destroy cities unless you are playing with the "New Craters"

variant on page 10. If you are, then it would take a total of 7 meteor strikes in the same area to totally destroy even one Major City. While I would not say that such a thing is impossible (though I think it is), it is highly unlikely. If that should occur, then you would obviously have to connect all of the remaining Major Cities. If the unthinkable happens and two Major Cities are somehow annihilated (though I can't even conceive of that possibility), then you would simply have to connect all remaining Major Cities.

**Q: After a Meteor Strike event destroys my track, when can I rebuild it? Can I do at the end of the same turn that I drew the event card? Or is it like other games in the Empire Builder series, where I have to wait until after the end of my next turn before I can rebuild?** **A:** Unlike most event cards in our train games, the Meteor Shower is discarded after it takes effect. It does not last an entire turn (see "Event Card Effects" on page 7). So, since the effect does not linger, you can rebuild track on your next track building phase.

Of course, this assumes that your train was not actually struck by the meteor directly. In that case, you lose your entire next turn. If that happened, then you would have to wait until your next chance to build before you could rebuild the track.

**Q: If the Cosmic Rays is in play, can I enter the hemisphere being affected? The rules say that all trains must "seek shelter" and you cannot leave a city once you reach one, but it doesn't say if a train in the other hemisphere can enter the area if it can reach a city in the effected area.** **A:** Cosmic Rays are so frightening, that no train may even enter the affected area. The crew will refuse to continue when they reach the last "safe" milepost on the edge of the effected area. Note that if BOTH Cosmic Rays are in effect at the same time (which would affect the entire moon), then you could continue until you reach a city (if possible).

Note that this is the difference between Cosmic Rays and Solar Flares. You MAY chose to enter an area affected by Solar Flares, but you MAY NOT chose to enter an area affected by Cosmic Rays.

### **Bonus Payouts:**

**Q: How do the bonus payout events work? Let's say I have a load of beer and a demand card for a Major City. The event comes up that grants a bonus payout of \$20M for the delivery of a beer to a Major City. Do I get \$47M for my one load of beer? Or do I choose between the two payouts? If I have two beer, can I get both?** **A:** The bonus payout for the event card is treated like a special "demand card" that is available to all players. The first player to deliver a load of the commodity listed to the city indicated receives the bonus payout. This is separate from any other demands that you may have.

So, in the example above, you would have to have 2 loads of Beer in order to fill both demands. Since you only have one Beer, you would have to choose one of the demands to fill. You cannot fill both demands with the single load of Beer you have.

**Q: If I drop off a load in a Major City, and the next card is the “boom” event that allows me to deliver a load for \$20M to that city, can I make that delivery (assuming that I have the load in question on board) BEFORE drawing a card to replace the event drawn? I don’t want to risk drawing an event that will prevent me from making the delivery.** **A:** You may not make any deliveries of any kind unless you have three demand cards in front of you. It does not matter if the delivery is on a different demand card, or because of a "boom" event card. You must finish drawing cards until you have three demand cards before you can make the other drop off.

### **The Map:**

**Q: Exactly which mileposts are the “lunar mare” or “clear” mileposts? Is it the ones in the light grey area?** **A:** All round milepost dots are "Lunar Mare" and "Clear Mileposts." It does not matter if there is a dark grey field behind it or not. EXCEPTION: Round mileposts that are on a RED field are NOT clear: they are city mileposts.

**Q: How much, exactly, does it cost to build track through a crater? Do I pay \$1M extra to build, or do I have to pay \$2M to build all the way across?** **A:** The extra cost for a crater must be paid each time you build track "through" a crater wall or valley rille. It does not matter if it is part of a crater you are building through or not, you must pay the extra cost for each wall or rille. So, for example, if you build track into a crater, across the bottom, and out the other side, it would cost you a total of 2 extra millions (one for each wall). Now some craters have "openings" in the crater wall, which would allow you to enter the crater along a flat region, but exit through a wall. In this case, the cost would only be 1 million. And, of course, if you only build track into the crater (such as connecting to a crater city), then you would not pay for exiting the other side.

Just remember: each crater wall or valley rille line on the map costs +1 million to build across. It does not matter where else your track runs, each line on the map is treated separately.

**Q: What part of the map is the equator in? Is it Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, both, or neither?** **A:** The equator counts as part of both hemispheres. So, if there are Cosmic Rays in effect, then you cannot leave a city onto a milepost that is on the equator. But, as long as you don't leave the Major City, you are still safe. So, if you are on the southernmost milepost of Hertzprung, you could move north to the other end of the city, and then leave into the unaffected area of the Northern Hemisphere.

### **Wrap Letters:**

**Q: The rules state that I can use wrap letters for “East/West” connections only. Does this mean that I can connect to them and use them only by going Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast, but not North or South? This would make some Wrap Letter spaces worthless, such as Y, or BB.** **A:** The rule that you are asking about does not involve movement TO or FROM the wrap letters. Like all other mileposts, they are approached in the normal fashion (North, South, Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and

Southwest). The limitation on moving "East to West" is for movement BETWEEN wrap letters. In other words, if you build track to the "B" letter, you can only connect it to the matching "B" letter on the other side. You cannot connect it to the "-B" letter, because that would be wrapping "North to South." So, since you can connect TO a wrap letter by moving North or South (just not BETWEEN wrap letters), you can still access letters Y and BB, by moving North or South as appropriate from the nearby mileposts. You can still only connect East-West to the other Y or BB circle on the other side of the moon.

**Q: *It looks like DD and DD' can only be reached through Peary. Theoretically, you could build from near-side Peary, through DD, and into far-side Peary at the cost of one space of building! Is this legal? The same situation applies to the area around Scott.*** **A:** It is true that the wrap letters immediately adjacent to Scott and Peary are of little use. But they were included for the sake of completeness and because there may be a very rare circumstance where a player wishes to use them. In reality, the milepost in the center of Peary and the one in the center of Scott is the same milepost on both sides of the map. So, you can always move from one side to the other for free.

**Nippon Rails: Q: *It costs ¥20 billion to build the tunnel. But the tunnel has 4 mileposts. Do you pay the entire tunnel cost all at once, or is it broken down by milepost?*** **A:** The ¥20 billion for the tunnel is paid all at once, and it covers the cost for the entire tunnel. The mileposts shown on the tunnel are used only for movement.

**Russian Rails: Q: *Card #15 doesn't seem right. Is it really consumer goods to Moscow for 16?*** **A:** Those darn gremlins again! It should actually be tractors to Kirov for 13.

**Q: *There are two different cards that have "tea to Tashkent" demands, but they are for different payouts. What gives?*** **A:** Sometimes, that's just the way it turns out. Think of it as different types of tea.

**Play Overview:** Some of our newest players have a little trouble with their first game of Empire Builder, so here's a brief explanation that we hope will help: At the beginning of the game, you have a map of the U.S. with cities marked on it. There are no tracks. Each player is given a pawn (which symbolizes their train) and a crayon of the matching color. Then each player is given 3 "demand cards." The demand cards show three "contracts" that you can try to fill. Each contract shows a destination city, the type of product demanded, and the amount of money you receive upon delivery.

Let us consider an example:

Card number 117 shows a contract for corn to Dallas for 11 million. Let's suppose that you decide you want to deliver this load. In order to deliver corn to Dallas, you first have to move your train to a city that has corn. St. Louis is a fine choice, because it is close to Dallas and Kansas City. Once you have picked up a load of corn, you then will need to drive your train to Dallas. Obviously, you must have tracks to do so.

The first two turns of the game are "track-building" turns. Each turn you may spend 20 million dollars to build track. When you build track, you can either add to track you have already built (by extending a line or creating new branches), or you can build OUT OF up to two Major City mileposts (the Major Cities are the large red hexagons). So let's build our track so we can make the corn run. Since you have no track at the beginning of the game, you need to start from a Major City. Kansas City is a fine choice. So, first you would build track to St. Louis. Taking your crayon, you draw from milepost to milepost, counting the costs as you go. So if you built along the south bank of the Missouri River, you would build through three "clear" mileposts (for 1 million each) and into St. Louis from the southwest (for 3 million). Total cost so far: 6 million dollars. Now you could then extend your track out of St. Louis, south along the Mississippi, and then west into Dallas, but I recommend that you build south out of Kansas City again, west of the Ozarks, and into Dallas from the north. This would require 8 "clear" mileposts and one city milepost for a total cost of 11 million.

So far you have spent 17 million dollars. You could spend 3 million more this turn, extending either end of your track or opening a new branch. Or you could save the money for later. For now, let's save the money.

At the end of your second building turn, you get to place your train pawn on any city on the board that you have track in. So, you could place your train in St. Louis and immediately pick up a load of corn. You could pick up two loads of corn, or a corn and a pork, even if you have no demand cards for corn or pork. We call this "speculation." You can carry speculative loads in the hope of drawing a demand card for it later. Since you can drop loads in any city, there is no risk to carrying speculative loads. Starting with your third turn, each turn has two "phases:" Operation, and Building. In the Operation Phase, you have a chance to move your train, deliver and pick up loads, and make money. At the beginning of the game, you have a "Freight" train. It can move 9 spaces per turn. Since you want to get to Dallas, you need to move your train to Kansas City, and then south along your tracks to reach Dallas. Your 9 movement points allows you to move 9 mileposts: four back to KC, and then five towards the south. This puts you two mileposts northeast of Oklahoma City. That ends your Operation Phase for the turn.

After your Operation Phase, you get a building Phase. During the Building Phase you can once again spend up to 20 million dollars to build new track. Of course, you probably spent all your money during the two building turns at the beginning of the game, so we'll skip that phase for now.

On your next turn, you get to move your train 9 more mileposts. This puts you into Dallas with 4 moves to spare. Now that you are in Dallas, you get to deliver your corn. Return the corn load token to the bank, take your 11 million dollars (woohoo!) and discard your demand card (you can only complete one contract on each demand card!).

Then, draw a new card (before you do anything else). If that card is an event card, then it takes effect immediately. If it is another demand card, you could then complete your movement for the turn. For example, you could pick up a load of oil (hoping to fill the



Boise oil demand on card #23) and then move your last 4 spaces back north towards KC.

Let's suppose, instead, that you drew an event card. For example, let's say you draw card number 146: Tornado. It says that all trains within 7 mileposts of Oklahoma City (which unfortunately includes you) move at half rate. Also, no movement or rail building is allowed in the "clear" mileposts of this area. That means that you are stuck in Dallas until the storm clears. Event cards last until the END of your next turn. So you would not only lose the last 4 moves this turn, but you would not be able to move your train at all on your next turn either. During your building phase, you could build track in a different part of the country that was more than 7 mileposts away from Oklahoma City (such as extending your line from KC to Boise to deliver that oil). If you do draw an event card, you must resolve it, and then immediately draw another card. If it is also an event, then it too must be resolved. You must always have 3 demand cards in front of you, so keep drawing until you do.

That, basically, describes the game. Players take turns moving their trains and building track until someone has an unbroken network of rails that connects 5 or more Major Cities AND has 250 million dollars in cash. That player is the winner.