



# The Kipper

## Operating on the Easton & Potomac

ABOVE: A CEO-special is running on the Easton & Potomac. When it is run, operating rules require that that train must always have green signals when approaching a tower. *Keith Stillman*

### by Keith Stillman

The CEO was not happy! Specific instructions had been given to make sure she (yes the CEO of the E&P is female) was not held up for any reason and here she sat in Flat Top looking at a red semaphore!

The conductor was sent into the FT tower to find out why she was being held only to find it empty. A search of the area located the tower operator in the outhouse. After getting the operator back into the tower the semaphore was set to green and the CEO left Flat Top.

Once back from her trip a call was placed to the superintendent. The superintendent, not really enjoying these calls, decided something needed to be done to prevent these calls and more importantly prevent the CEO from being held up in transit. The solution was the purchase of a maintenance of way vehicle and implement new procedures around CEO movements.

The new procedures require all moves of the CEO between White Hall and Hood to be preceded by the M-O-W vehicle. This vehicle stops at each tower. The towers, in order WH in White Hall, FT in Flat Top and H in Hood, sets the switches to the proper routing for the CEO and then sets the semaphores to clear. The tower operator is instructed not make any changes until the CEO passes. The M-O-W crew then moves on to the next tower down the line. The M-O-W vehicle and job came to be known as the Kipper after the tower operator found in the outhouse.

Why did I institute the Kipper? It is all about operational variety. During every session I try to run a railroad not trains. So when something like the situation that held up the CEO occurs I think about what management might do to address the issue. The superintendent--wanting to ensure as few CEO visits as possible--would do whatever it took

to make sure this did not happen again. Having a dedicate crew assigned to ensure the routing and clearance for the CEO was in place seemed like a logical solution. (To management anyway.)

The addition of the Kipper to all CEO moves outside of White Hall adds variety to the operating sessions and provides an additional job to be manned. Since no traffic can move between White Hall and Hood once the Kipper is on the line, this also significantly reduces the use of White Hall yard it can cause quite a disruption to the schedule.

And since the departure time of the CEO is random and controlled by the traffic generator, these disruptions can occur anytime during the session. However they are know in advance via the session instructions provided to the dispatcher, operator, and any other affected employee. This gives



**ABOVE:** To warn towers of an approaching CEO train, the E&P purchased this rail-vehicle to run ahead of the train to ensure clearance is given to the CEO special. *Keith Stillman*

the dispatcher and White Hall yardmaster a challenge to keep as much of the schedule intact as possible. It also results in several train orders to control the moves of the M-O-W vehicle and possibly

alter the moves of other scheduled trains.

So as you hold operating sessions keep an eye out for opportunities such as this to introduce variety. It

adds a lot of fun; At least management thinks it does.

The E&P is on the web at [www.easton-and-potomac.com](http://www.easton-and-potomac.com) and <http://eastonpotomac.blogspot.com/>

**BELOW:** The M-O-W vehicle pauses at the Hood depot. *Keith Stillman*

