

Why use control panels with my model railroad?

Control Panels are a functional and aesthetically pleasing way to control turnouts on a model railroad. Using a schematic diagram on the user interface of the control panel allows operators to easily identify which turnout to operate. Control panels make operation more effective and safer.

Why not make my own control panels?

Well ... you could! However the task is complex, problematic, and takes a considerable amount of time to design, build and test. Many beautiful model railroads are let down by unsightly panels or layout fascia's with out-dated and ineffective turnout controls.

What are the benefits of using CPD Control Panels?

1. CPD Control Panels are aesthetically pleasing and functional. They enhance and highlight any model railroad. Schematic diagrams on the control panels help all operators to understand the layout, and operate it more effectively.
2. The CPD modular design negates the need for complex wiring. Wiring is kept to a minimum, which makes installation quick and easy. Under the layout is also much tidier and less confusing.
3. Turnout motors can be controlled easily and intuitively making operation a pleasure. Routes for trains can be set very quickly and accurately.
4. Built in LEDs within tactile switches mounted in the user interface of the control panel make route identification much simpler. Operators can select and identify chosen routes much easier. Therefore risk of damaging expensive models is reduced.
5. CPD Control Panel schematic diagrams are designed by the end user. That makes every CPD Control Panel a unique solution for your model railroad.
6. CPD Control Panels contain solid state electronics within a sturdy attractive enclosure that can be mounted on a layout table or bench, or fixed to the layout fascia. The convenient size of the enclosure means CPD Control Panels can be applied to virtually any model railroad of any size and of any scale.

What if I expand my layout?

Because of the modular nature of the CPD Control Panel solution, additional control panels can be mounted on the layout at any time, and connected to the existing control panel bus. This modular approach provides the flexibility needed to address virtually any layout and any track plan.

Additional control panels can be purchased at any time in the future.

Can CPD Control Panels be controlled remotely?

Yes. CPD provide optional input modules that can be connected to the control panel, and used to control the turnouts remotely. This is done by signalling the Input Module ports which are associated with turnout switches on the control panel. So the turnouts can be controlled remotely, just like they are controlled locally by pressing tactile switches in the user interface. Third party control systems, such as CTI Electronics (<http://www.cti-electronics.com>) and Digital Command Control (DCC) can be used with CPD Control Panels. Customers can also create their own control systems and connect to the CPD Input Module.

Can I use DCC with my CPD Control Panels?

Yes. DCC can be used with CPD Control Panels. By connecting a DCC Accessory Decoder to our Input Module, DCC commands can be converted by the accessory decoder into signalling that directs the control panel to change turnouts. This negates the need to connect the DCC system directly to the turnout motors, and also provides for both local and remote control of turnouts without having to solely rely on a Personal Computer interface or DCC Cab to control turnouts all of the time.

Can I lock specific turnouts on the control panel remotely?

Yes. CPD Control Panels allow Central Traffic Control (CTC) operators to lock nominated turnouts remotely such that a local operator would not be able to override a given turnout locally without CTC releasing the lock on the control panel. This is achieved by using an optional Input Module port to map an incoming signal to the locking function of the control panel. End users can determine which of the turnouts associated with a given control panel can be locked. Turnout selection is done during setup.

What modules are included in a CPD control panel solution?

CPD provides the control panels (CP) themselves. We also provide Input Modules (IM), Turnout Controllers (TC), Turnout Motor Adapters (TMA), and Turnout Solenoid Adapters (TSA).

What components are NOT included in a CPD control panel solution?

Customers are required to source commonly available power supplies to power the control panel and Ethernet cabling to connect the supplied modules together. Standard electrical wiring is then used to connect the turnout motors to the Turnout Adapters. By using commonly available power supplies, customers can conform to their own country's power supply idiosyncrasies and form factors. By not shipping power supplies and Ethernet cabling, weight of the packaged solution is reduced, and therefore shipping costs are reduced. Customers can source these components locally, or build the components themselves, and at lower costs.

Please explain what is meant by 'custom made'?

'Custom made' refers to the fact that theoretically every CPD Control Panel is unique. Your track schematic is used in the manufacturing process to produce your user interface that faithfully represents an area of track on your layout, or indeed the whole layout in some cases.

How do “I” create the track schematic?

The CPD web site will soon have an online tool that can be used to design your panel track schematic, to add text symbols and labels, and to review the design before submitting for manufacture. Using the online tool, a designer ‘drags and drops’ track segments into tiled regions of the control panel. That’s it, because, tactile switch locations for the control panel are automatically displayed and plotted for manufacture based on your track schematic.

In the meantime, customers can download the Design Template and Design Guidelines, draw their desired schematic on the template and fax or email the design to us for quotation or order.

How long does the manufacturing process take?

The lead time required to manufacture a batch of control panels for a large layout is currently about two weeks from when the design is submitted. Shipping is approximately 3 – 10 days depending on location.

What are the default settings for turnout switches on a new control panel?

There is no default turnout setting. However, you can set which way turnouts should be routed on control panel power on. A configuration switch on the side of the control panel enclosure is used determine default routes for turnouts and which turnouts can be remotely locked and/or controlled.

Can I have a Control Panel without any of the electronics?

Yes. Please refer to the module price and information page on the web site. You can order a “Fascia + Enclosure” only option. This option does NOT include any electronics. The customer must provide their own electronics, switches and LEDs.