

**American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association
Letter Ballot**

1. **Committee and Subcommittee:** Committee 5 Track, Subcommittee 7 - Track Construction and Maintenance
2. **Letter Ballot Number:** 05-21-09
3. **Ballot Item:** Review and update of Section 5.6 - Track gage
4. **Rationale:** This ballot updates the Section by adding instruction on physical testing of gage measurements, as well as recommendation on tools and frequency of measurements.

Draft Not Yet Approved

SECTION 5.6 GAGE (2023)

5.6.1 GENERAL (2023)

- a. The gage of track is the distance between the heads of rails, measured at right angles thereto, at a point five-eighths (5/8") inch below the top of rail. Standard gage is 56-1/2".
- b. Gaging must be done at the time the rail is laid.
- c. A track gauge manufactured for the purpose of measuring gage should be used rather than a tape measure.
- d. Gage should be checked every 3rd tie.
- e. The rail shall be held to gage while line spikes are being driven.
 - (1) The rail shall be properly seated in the tie plates with the edge of the rail base and the field shoulder of the tie plates aligned and in contact.
 - (2) A minimum of two rail holding spikes is required. These spikes shall be so staggered that all outside spikes are on the same side of the tie and inside spikes on the opposite side of the tie.
 - (3) The rail and tie plates shall be spiked to each tie in accordance with the standard of the railway.
- f. Within proper limits (+/- 1/8"), a slight variation of gage from the standard is not seriously objectionable, provided that the variation is uniform and constant over long distances. For new track construction, see [Part 4, Track Construction](#).
- g. Wide gage, due to rail worn within permissible limits, shall be corrected by regaging or by interchanging the low and high rails, or by replacing the rail.
- h. Under ordinary conditions, where speed does not dictate otherwise, it is not necessary to regage track if the increase in gage is not more than 1/2 inch (12 millimeters) provided such increase is uniform.

NOTE: Old spike holes should be plugged when regaging
- i. Gage rods, gage plates, rail braces, or inner guard rails may be used on curves where it is difficult to maintain gage.