

# Basic Railroad Switch Maintenance Guide



**ALDON<sup>®</sup>**  
Safety on Track Since 1904

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# Products you will need based on this guide:



## Switch Broom

- 4023-21 Aluminum
- 4023-19 Wood



## Lubricant

- 4123-128 Synthetic
- 4124-106 Graphite



## Applicator

- 4123-79 Sprayer
- 4123-80 Brush

# Products you may need based on this guide:

## Screw Spike Sockets

- 4124-272 Rectangle
- 4124-171 Dome



## Spike Plugging

- 4123-84 Plug Driver
- 4124-14 Cedar Plug



## Spiking

- 4123-17 Maul
- 4123-04 Claw Bar

## Bolt Tightening

See website for complete line



Proper maintenance of your yard switches is essential to achieving long switch life and safe operation. Ignoring basic maintenance of the switch will lead to difficult operation of the switch and broken components.

## Step 1: Brush Off Debris

Using a broom sweep off all the exposed areas of the gauge and slide plates along with the connecting rod ends.



Flip the switch handle to the opposite direction to expose additional areas and repeat the brushing process.

## Step 2: Lubricate

Lubricate the switch with a proper switch lubricant. Switch lubricants are formulated specifically for the application in all weather conditions.

Begin by lubricating both ends of the connecting rod joining the switch stand to the switch. Be sure to get the lubricant into the joints.

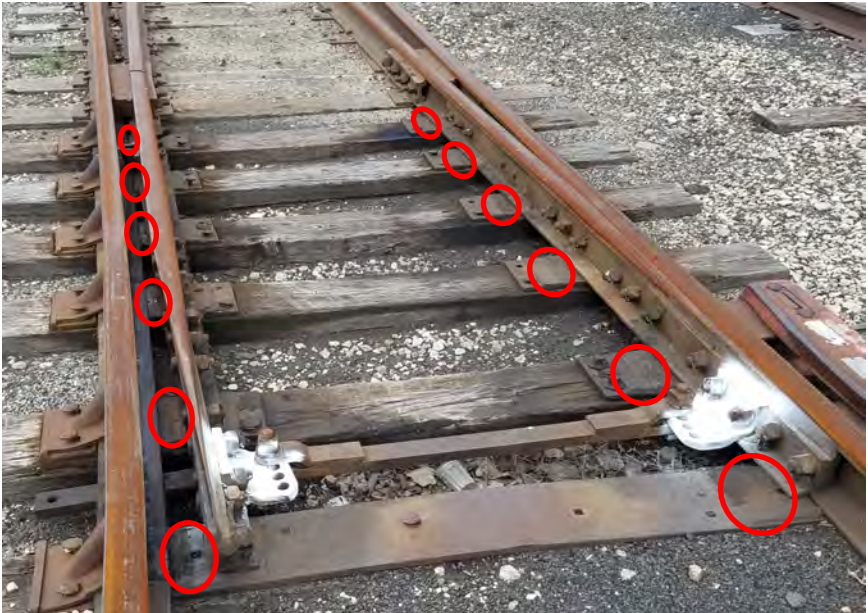




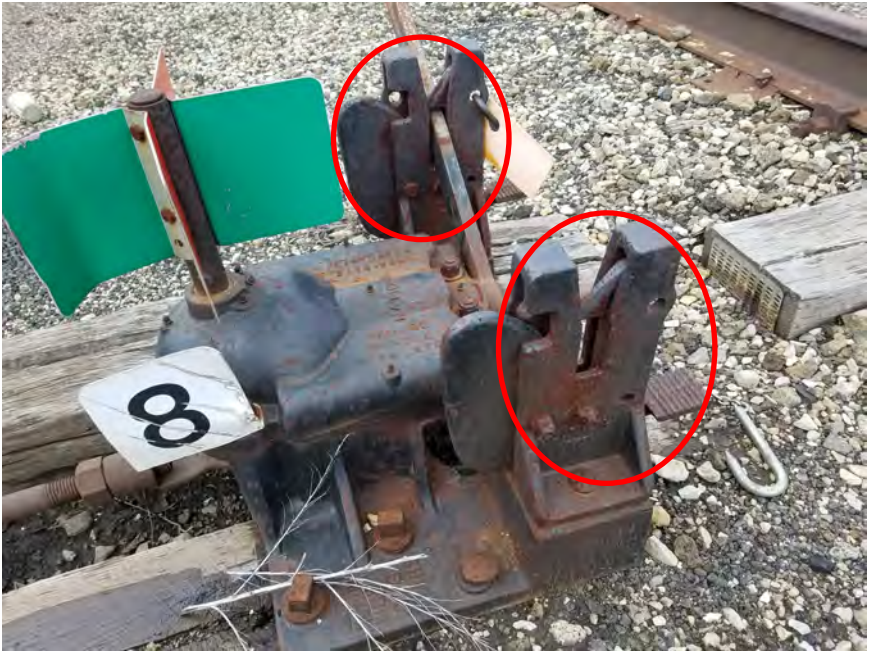
Lubricate the exposed areas of the gauge and slide plates.  
Lubricate every plate from the switch point to the heel block.



Flip the direction of the switch handle and repeat for the newly-exposed areas.



Lubricate the handle latches on the switch stand. Ensure that both latches move freely and return to the latched position automatically.



Lubricate the internal gearing of the switch stand with the manufacturer's recommended lubricant. The stand will have multiple lubrication ports.

Before lubricating, clean off each port to reduce the risk of debris being carried into the gear box. Be sure to lubricate all ports.



Two different switch stand models shown here.



## Step 3: Check Spiking

Loose or missing spikes can cause a malfunction of the switch and derailment of rolling stock. There are no spikes in a track switch that should be loose. Check the spiking of the slide plates, gauge plates, braces, and the switch stand.



Look for any missing or broken spikes. Any spikes that will not reseat must be pulled, plugged, and resealed. Note that plates have multiple spiking holes. Every hole may not require a spike.

Your switch may be constructed with screw spikes (railroad equivalent to a lag bolt), conventional spikes, or a combination of both. The same requirement of tightly-seated spikes applies.

## Step 4: Check Switch Point Rail Bolts

All of the bolts in the switch point rails must be tight. Ensure that all bolts and cotter pins are present.



The bolts that attach the switch points to the head rod should be tight, installed with the nuts up, and cotter pins installed.



## Step 5: Check Connecting Rod Bolts

The ends of the rod that connects the switch stand to the head rod must be tight. The connecting rod bolts should be tight, positioned with the nuts up, and cotter pins installed.



## Step 6: Check Operation

Move the switch stand operating handle back and forth. Ensure that the handle latches in each direction. One of the switch point rails should be tight against one of the stock rails when latched in each direction. Handle effort should be smooth and easy. Ensure that there is no ballast between the switch stand ties interfering with the movement.



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