

## Santa Fe's EB Box Car Special Freight Train - Final Report

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09/29/19 [#22120](#)

To all:

It's time to edit the final report now, so here goes:  
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**Train:** ATSF's Box Car Special (BCS).

**Direction:** Eastbound only.

**Description:** Train of mostly semi-priority empty boxcars eastbound from SB or LA. These were solid the system. They consisted of hot empties to supply Santa Fe's eastern shippers. Although not as hot as

BCS stood for "Box Car Special" and (in the 1950s) it was the Hill version of the Valley BDK/BDJ "Bul LA.

**Origin:** Los Angeles as of 1947, but San Bernardino in the 1950s.

**Destination:** Barstow and points east.

**Railroads Represented:** ATSF and railroads from all over the country, but especially the Northeastern empties returning to Midwestern connections

**Products:** Mostly empties. Not many loads and no priority empties (such as auto cars).

**Train Length and Weight:** Typical postwar train lengths were 70 to 90 cars, average weight was about

**Car Types:** Almost all boxcars.

### Typical Schedule:

1947:  
Depart LA at 6-9 am. Travel time 4-5 hours to SB.

circa 1950:  
Normally passed Summit in the early afternoon.

1955: (sample times)  
Lv. San Bdn. 2:15 a.m. Ar. Bar. 6:50 a.m.

1956: (sample times)  
Lv. San Bdn. 11:20 a.m. Ar. Bar. 3:20 p.m.

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Lv. San Bdn. 1:30 a.m.  
Lv. San Bdn. 7:40 p.m. Ar. Bar. 11:30 p.m.  
Lv. San Bdn. 10:40 p.m.  
Lv. San Bdn. 7:40 p.m. Ar. Bar. 11:30 p.m.  
Median time leaving SB: 7:40 pm

**Road Power:** 4-unit freight FT sets, until 4-unit freight F3/F7 sets arrived in 1948-53. 2-10-2s during the 1940s.

**Helper Power:** 2-10-2s, 4-8-2s, 2-8-2s (often 2 or 3 steam helpers), also FT sets (full or partial), until G depended on train weight.

### **Operations Details:**

Westbound loads greatly outnumbered eastbound loads, so a lot of foreign-road cars were returned empty trains at frequent intervals, empty cars to be returned east were collected at Hobart Yard, adjacent to the station, stopped there on the way out of town and picked up enough empties to bring them up to full tonnage for the next trip.

As of July 1947, the Box Car Specials originated in Los Angeles at 1st street yard, and most of the empty Box Car Special was numbered consecutively from January 1, and sometimes it ran alone, and other times in a train of only empties.

July 3, 1947, BCS 222 leaves LA with 88 empties and arrives in SB—waits for 5 hours and leaves for B  
July 4, 1947, BCS 223 leaves LA with 74 empties and arrives in SB—waits almost 5 hours and leaves for B  
July 4, 1947, BCS 224 leaves LA with 90 empties and arrives in SB—waits almost 9 hours and leaves for B

There were two ways it was spelled out in the dispatcher sheets (leaving LA):

July 24, 1947	Box Car 242
July 25, 1947	BxSpl 243/Bulldog
July 26, 1947	BxSpl 244/Bulldog
July 27, 1947	BxSpl 245/Bulldog
July 29, 1947	Box Car 246

The two different names appeared to have been written by the same two individuals. The Box Car Special and Bulldog were both running in a single day.

The rest of July 1947 shows the same pattern -- each of the BCS trains was also listed as a Bulldog while the Bulldog system appears to be in use. The empties are carried to SB in Bulldogs and then over the First, Second, and third section of train 88, all carrying a large number of only empty cars.

September 1945 train sheets show 1-4 Bull Dogs operated each day from LA, and at that time there were

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symbol of these trains was BD) ranged from an equal number of loads and empties to all empties with up for eastbound trains with mostly or all empties during this same time period.

It seems that practices changed from time to time depending on what symbols were being used at the time vary from dispatcher to dispatcher. It is possible that a Bull Dog out of LA that was made up of all east also be referred to as a BCS on the Third District DS sheet by the dispatcher.

The "Bull Dog" trains (also called "BDX") were solid consists of clean empty box cars for eastern points originated at Los Angeles and carried that symbol to San Bernardino where they got a new symbol BCS

The Bulldog was a long drag freight, about 100 cars long, mainly empties for the east. It was a long, slow (in the 1950s), and got into SB around 9 or 10 p.m. It ended in the B yard, so there were no "Bulldog" trains Northeastern railroads. It carried whatever garbage cars were left in the middle of the night or late afternoon

If they originated in First Street yard with cars cleaned and inspected there, they carried the symbol BDK repaired, they carried the symbol BDJ. This was because the alpha symbol for First Street was K and the

Los Angeles was Santa Fe's largest originating point for cleaned, inspected, and repaired empty box cars system. The Hobart rip track, built in 1951, devoted its entire operation to keeping the Santa Fe running cars. In addition to "repairing in place," it also cleaned the dunnage out of recently unloaded boxcars.

The afternoon rip track job pulled the repaired and cleaned cars, while the midnight job spotted the ones It must have taken about a full shift to assemble the cars in trains for the east. SB also had a rip track to c

The trains called BDJ "Bulldogs" out of Los Angeles and BCS "Box Car Specials" were not at the bottom tonnage capacity would be used to move hot loads from originating points along the way.

Although symbolized as a BDJ, 1952 photos show that one train had two gondolas behind two outside truss mixed hoppers and dirty boxcars, before a solid cut of clean boxcars completed the train. Apparently it was set out enroute or taken off at San Bernardino. At any rate, those Bull Dog trains would continue on east

Eastward trains ran out of the B Yard in San Bernardino and were called about one hour before departure departure time at San Bernardino was from the B Yard, with 10 or 20 minutes required to get from there running time began.

The arrival time shown by the crews was the time they hit the heading in switch at the old West Tower a diesel facility next to the diesel shops and tie up.

**Modeling the Train:** Use a mix of ATSF boxcars and boxcars from all over the country, especially the cars of all types on the front.

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Please send any additions and corrections.

Thanks,  
John Thompson

