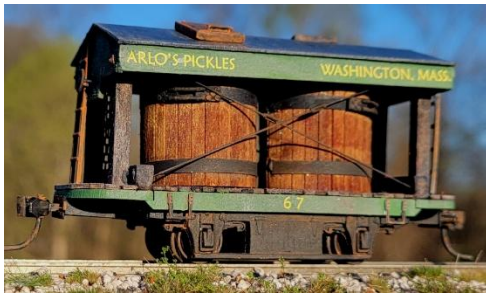


# Conowingo Models



## Bobber Pickle Car

HO Scale



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May, 2025

**Thank you for purchasing this kit!**

Supplied are the basic directions. For more tips and some additional instructions, please see [conowingomodels.com](http://conowingomodels.com). These instructions skip around in an attempt to keep you building and complete the model faster. Also see [conowingomodels.com](http://conowingomodels.com) for the latest revision as we are constantly seeking to improve the instructions. Additionally, this kit went through many revisions, so you may notice some laser-cut holes, etc. in the photos that are not on your kit.

### **BACKGROUND**

From [trains.com](http://trains.com) – According to Heinz “The car was spotted on an elevated grade track next to the canning factory and the cucumbers along with the brine were siphoned out with a hose. The last few cukes were dipped out with buckets by a crew that entered the car. When empty and cleaned out, the car returned to the brine plant for a refill.

They said that the 'pickles' weren't pickles until they were processed, as cucumbers were used in other products. The cars were called “*Pickle Cars*” because of

the Heinz Pickle advertisement on the sides, but they were really used to haul cucumbers in brine.

They also noted that some cars had wooden sides like refrigerator cars for cold climate shipments, (in answer to my question about freezing in the winter).

So that's how it was done and though it seems ridiculous, the 'pickle cars' were really 'pickle-less' - *hauling cukes was the reason they were built...*”

Our take on the pickle car took a while because we wanted to do something unique, yet still be true to the pickle car design. We think of a pickle as being somewhat whimsical and wanted to convey that in the car.

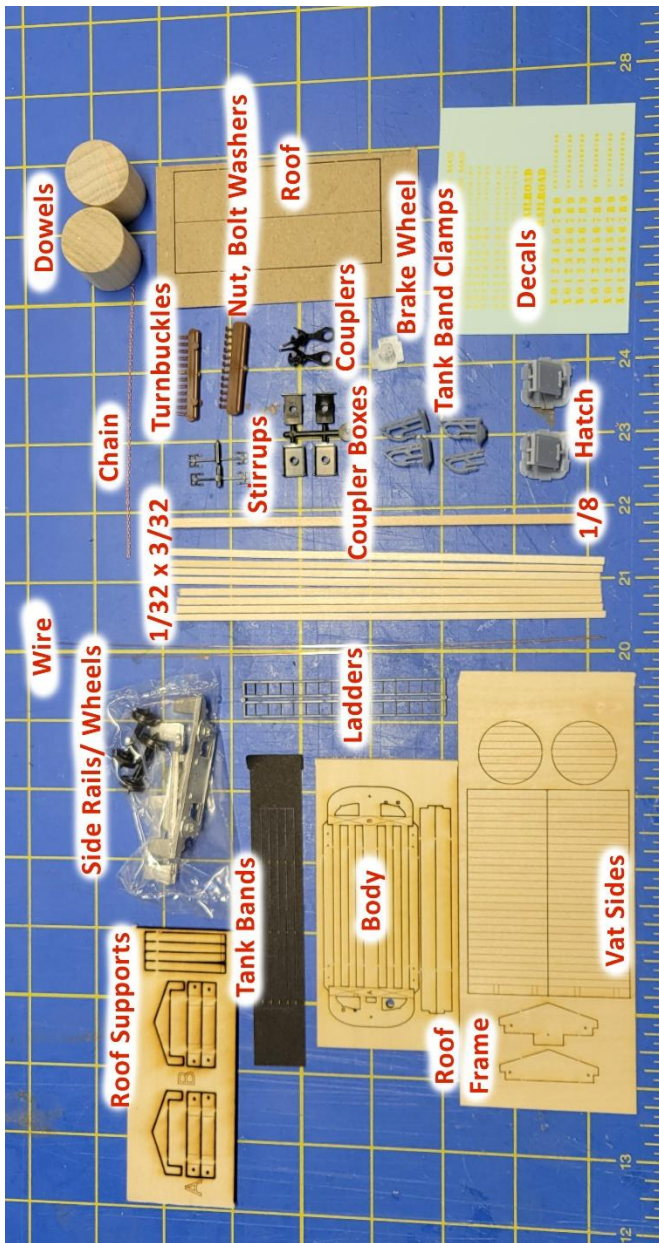
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### **WEIGHT CONSIDERATIONS**

1. This car is pretty heavy- the final pilot model weighed in at 2.0 oz. Plan out where you'll want to add weights. We suggest drilling into the dowel and adding weights there. The NMRA, in RP-20 (essentially) states that Pickle Car should weigh 2.7 ounces. Failure to add weight will result in a very uncooperative car that doesn't stay on the tracks. We don't feel that they need that much weight, but our operational experience with them is very limited. See the Instructions Help file on our website for weight suggestions.

## PARTS DIAGRAM



## STRIPWOOD/ COLOR CHART

The below chart should be used as a guide. The stripwood lengths are approximate. **We do not recommend precutting all of your stripwood.** Always cut from the largest piece, down to the smallest piece in order to conserve wood. Everyone cuts and builds a little differently. We don't want to see people cutting too short and prematurely running out of wood because what works for someone might not work for others.

This color chart assumes that you are planning to finish your car the way we did. Creativity is strongly encouraged, as we're not a fan of "make it look like the box".

We have included a column for pre-painting. Most items in this kit can be pre-painted/stained, while there are others that will warp if not braced first. If you prepaint/ stain, we recommend leaving the stripwood whole for this step.

Stripwood Cut / Parts and Color Chart					
Wood/ Part	Length	Qty	Purpose	Color	Prepaint
Brake Wheel		1		Black	Yes
Chain		1		Black	Yes
Couplers/ Coupler Boxes		2		Black	Yes
Hatches		2		Black	Yes
Ladders		2		Black	Yes
Nut, Bolt, Washers		4		Black	Yes
Restraint Rods	Cut in half	2/4	Mark the cut end	Black	Yes
Roofing Material		1	Top, edges and underside	Black	Yes
Side Rails		2		Black	Yes
Stirrups		4		Black	Yes
Tank Band Clamps		4		Black	Yes
Tank Bands		4		Black	Yes
Turnbuckles		4		Black	Yes
Body		1	3 pieces.	Green	Yes
Roof Frame		4		Green	Yes
1/8" x 1/8"	1.2 inches	4	Vertical support for roof	Stain Black	Yes
Roof Supports		8	4 horizontal and 4 vertical	Stain Black	Yes
Vat Sides		2		Stain Brown/Grey	No
1/32 x 3/32	1.25 inches	A/R	Decking	Stain Grey	Yes

For the body, we recommend painting the underside black and all of the edges green.

With the decking, we recommend using multiple shades of greys and browns to achieve a weathered, used and abused look.

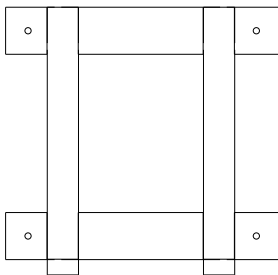


### ROOF SUPPORT ASSEMBLY

This kit contains two different sets of vertical supports for the roof. We noticed some buckling when the wires were installed. Using the stripwood seemed to minimize that.

The tank cars have nearly the same support structure but do not suffer from this issue due to the application of the tank between them.

**Make sure you keep the A pieces together and the B pieces together on the same ends.** This will come into play when it comes to putting the truss rods together. If done incorrectly, the rods will contact each other.



1. Choose the vertical support you desire and assemble the end supports as shown above.

If you go with the 1/8-inch option, ensure that you leave a little room on the bottom to engage the body of the car.

If you go with the laser-cut option, notice how the vertical supports have a laser-etched line at the bottom to denote where it should engage the body of the car.

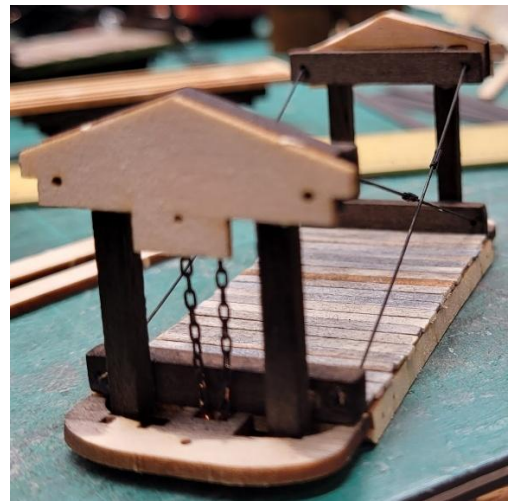
Note how the lower ends of the vertical supports protrude below the horizontal support.

Also note how the horizontal supports are inboard of the vertical supports as shown below.

Assemble the supports as squarely as possible.

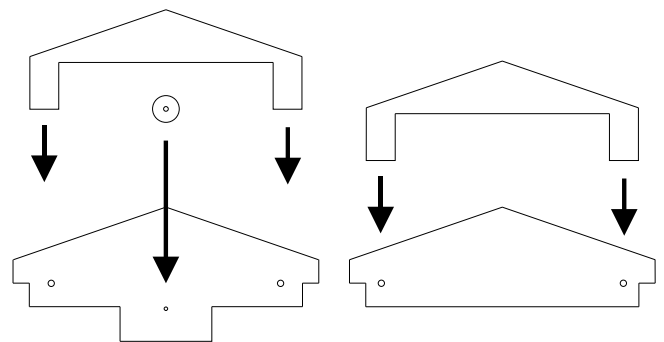
We highly recommend **not** using a fast-acting adhesive on this step, because if it's not square, the car looks terrible. Ask us how we know....

2. When dry, install the braces on the body.



3. We recommend adding 3-2-1 blocks between the supports to help them dry as perfectly vertical as possible.

### ROOF SUPPORT COVER ASSEMBLY



1. Glue the support block into place behind the end roof covers, ensuring that the roof lines are even and centered.



This assembly will eventually sit on top of the top horizontal support.

Notice that there are ears on the sides of the thinner, outboard pieces. The 1/8-inch block should not interfere with the ears.

2. Install the wheel for the brake chain on the inside, centered on the hole for the brake wheel.

The wheel is cut into the piece with the main body. In the event it fell out and we located it, it will be in the small bag with the small parts.

In the event that this piece is not in the kit, we recommend cutting a small block off the end of the 1/8 stripwood.

The purpose of the wheel is so that the brake chain can hang on either side, as if it were on a gear connected to the brake wheel.

### **BODY ASSEMBLY**



2. Attach the two body sides as shown above. Notice how they interlock with the ends.

We recommend adding a little wood filler to cover the small gap between the sides and ends. However, **do not fill** the two holes at each end of the car, as they are for the stirrups- unless you want to omit those.

### **DECKING**

1. Install the decking, beginning nearest the roof supports and working your way inward.

We recommend leaving a little bit of room between the boards for expansion and contraction.

2. Add decking material at the supports and making your way outward. Don't cut the contour yet.

For the space between the vertical supports, we recommend adding a single deck board to the end without the brake wheel.

On the brake wheel end, we recommend holding off until the car has been fully assembled before deciding whether or not to include decking.

3. We recommend adding weights to the deck so that the deck will dry flat.
4. When the entire deck is dry, cut the contour for the ends.
5. We recommend using a sanding block to ensure the deck boards are relatively uniform all of the way around.

### **BUILDING THE VATS**

1. Prepare the dowels. Ensure they relatively smooth all the way around and that the ends are even.
2. Cut out the large pieces of 1/32 scribe wood. The non-scribe side is the inside. This is your tank wrap.
3. Soak the tank wraps in water until they warp.
4. We recently learned a technique where you use boiling water to warp your tank wraps.

If you don't want to try the technique described below, use room temperature water. It will just take longer to curl the wood.

**BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL** if you try this technique. You could get burned if you're not careful.

Microwave two cups of water on HIGH for 3 minutes. It will boil.

Pour the water into a flat pan and soak your tank wraps in it until they curl.

Beginning with step 5, only work on one tank at a time.

5. Carefully, ensure the tank wrap will fully conform to the tank.

If it comes out a little off, you can trim it.

If it's a little uneven, you can compensate for that by cutting a piece of excess to fit. If this is necessary, do that later after the tank is dry.

6. **Tank Bands** - Cut the metal bands from the piece of construction paper.
7. One band at a time, locate the starter points on the tank. They are laser etched. Using one drop of CA, glue an end to the starter point.
8. Wrap the band around tightly and evenly.
9. Using one drop of CA, glue the end back to the starter point, ensuring there is no slack.
10. Glue the hose clamps to their desired locations on the bands. It may help to cover the ends with the clamps. We recommend using CA to glue the clamps in place.

Plan this step out, as you will want the clamps to be visible to the viewer in the interest of making it look interesting. We've additionally found that putting the seams towards each other in the middle will hide them.

### RESTRAINT ROD INSTALLATION



(Photo of 24 Foot Tank Car shown for clarity)

For those familiar with our tank cars, this step builds up exactly the same way as the tank car, minus the nut, bolt, washer assemblies on the tank car.

You will probably lose some of the paint from the wire. The important part is that you have a base coat.

Do this assembly one rod at a time.

1. Cut each wire in half and mark it with a Sharpee or similar marker. **This is important.** Failure to do so will make adding the turnbuckles not fun.

Wire cutters will leave a slightly upturned end, which will not allow you to add the turnbuckle because the clearances are that tight. Then, cut the wire in half.

2. Add a turnbuckle to the uncut end and thread that end through one of the four upper holes in the supports.

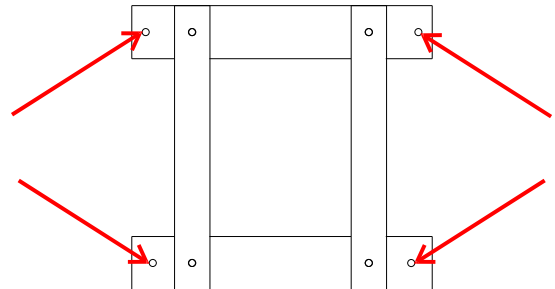
The turnbuckle should be on the inboard side with a small piece of wire protruding from the outboard side.

Obviously, you do not want the turnbuckle to go through the hole.

Do not add glue yet to the turnbuckle as it will gum up your work.

3. Use needle nose pliers to and a very small bend to the outboard side of the supports.

The point of the bend is to prevent the wire from sliding back through the hole.



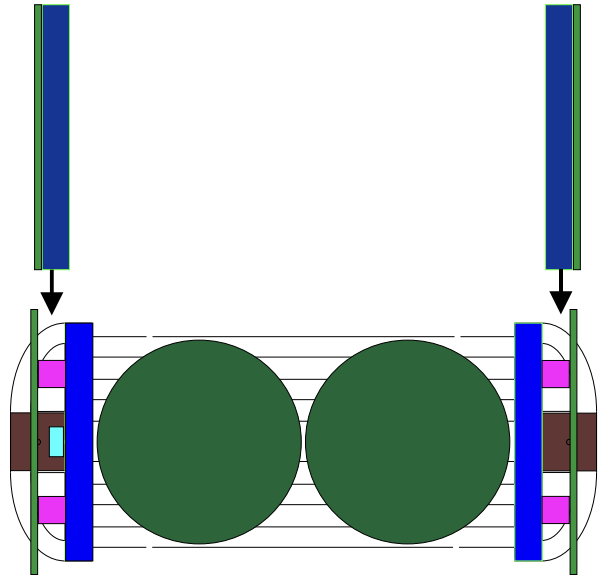
4. Feed the long end of the wire through the opposite lower hole.

Again, do not add glue yet to the turnbuckle as it will gum up your work.

5. Add a slight bend to the wire on the inboard side of the supports. This will make it look straighter.
6. Tighten to remove some slack, but not all of it. We found that removing too much slack will add a bow, which would be ok if you're looking for a warped car.
7. Glue the upper, bent piece of wire into place. CA would help this process go faster.

## ROOF INSTALLATION

8. Add a bend to the outboard side of the lower support wire.
9. Glue the lower support wire into place.
10. When dry, cut off as much of the lower support wire as you can.
11. Being sparing on glue, glue the turnbuckle into place in a manner that it won't interfere with the opposite wire.
12. Repeat until all four wires are in place.
13. **Keep a small piece of the wire for the brake wheel.**



## VAT INSTALLATION

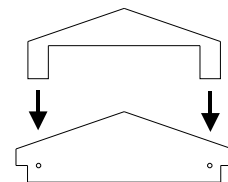


1. Plan out where you want the vats to be installed.

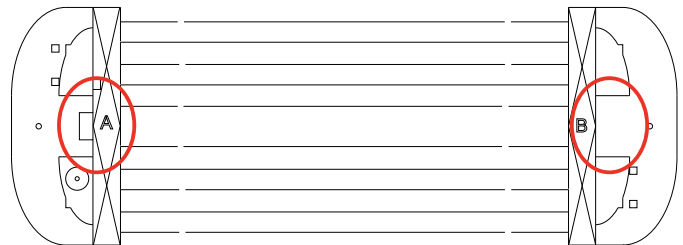
The ends of the vats with the tank bands closest to them are the down side. This is intended to make the car look more realistic, although, in truth, it isn't. They'd most likely be evenly distributed top/bottom.

We recommend placing the vats with the seams towards each other in the middle will hide the seams.

2. Glue the vats into place.



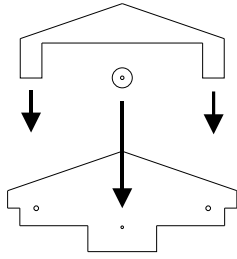
1. Glue the non-brake end roof support into place, taking into account the items mentioned below.



The non-brake end goes on the end of the body without the square cutout between the vertical supports. (right side above)

The thinner piece faces outboard, so that the 1/8-inch piece rests on top of the vertical supports.

You may need to cut out part of the 1/8-inch side to accommodate the wire. The roof support should fit tightly against both the upper horizontal supports and vertical supports. If not, the roof won't go on squarely.



2. Take the scrap piece of wire that we told you to hold on to and make sure the hole on the brake wheel cover will take the wire. If it doesn't, drill the hole out. **Keep the wire- you'll need it again later.**
3. Glue the non-brake end roof support into place, taking into account the items mentioned below.

The thinner piece faces outboard, so that the 1/8-inch piece rests on top of the vertical supports.

You may need to cut out part of the 1/8-inch side to accommodate the wire. The roof support should fit tightly against both the upper horizontal supports and vertical supports. If not, the roof won't go on squarely.

4. Drape the chain over the circular piece of wood, so that it hangs evenly. Guide it into place so that it protrudes through the square cutout in the bottom of the car.
5. Add a few drops of CA to the top of the chain.

We've found that the chain doesn't like to stay in place, so be sure it doesn't move.



6. Once the above-mentioned items are dry, glue the two side supports for the roof.

They have ears that will fit with the two end pieces.

You may choose to use a somewhat loose rubber band to hold the roof support together.

Too tight of a rubber band will destroy the side supports.

You may need to use some wood filler to close up the seams, especially if the roof doesn't fit together perfectly.

Do not install the roof yet. It'll help with the next step.

### **BOBBER INSTALLATION**

1. Flip the car over and locate where the side rails should go.

The two biggest issues we are concerned with is centering on the car and making sure the car will fit on the tracks.

Luckily, this car has some supports built into the side rails that contact the underside of the body. This makes things easier. It helps to add the wheels for proper alignment.

Testing your plan on small piece of track will help as well.

We recommend marking where the ends go with a pencil.

2. Identify how you are going to rest the car upside down.

This is why we didn't have you install the roof yet.

We recommend resting the car on a 3-2-1 block.

3. Once you're happy with your plan, glue the side rails into place, ensuring that you added the wheels.
4. While you are waiting for the side rails to dry, you can also assemble and glue into place the couplers.

### **DETAILS/ FINISHING**

1. Glue the chip board roof into place, ensuring it fits squarely.
2. If you are unhappy with the seam down the roof line, you can fill that in with wood filler.



3. Glue the hatches into place.

We chose to put them on opposite sides of the roof because you don't know in which direction the car will arrive at the plant.

4. Remember the scrap wire we've held onto? Cut it so that it will fit in the brake wheel and into the hole on the roof support.

We played with it a little and found that you want a little bit of slack, so it looks more realistic. We were not happy with it fitting snugly.

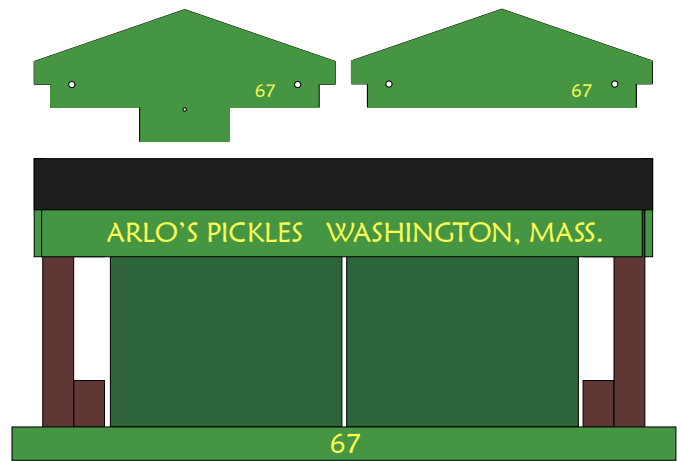
We recommend using CA to glue it into place.



5. Look at the area on the deck, between the vertical supports, where the chain goes.

Determine if you want to add any decking there and do so if you desire.

6. Cut the chain that hangs below the body of the car.
7. Add glue where the chain will contact the body.
8. Glue the ladders into place. We used the left side of both sides of the ends. Feel free to use the sides.
9. Glue the nut, bolt, washers into place. One goes at each corner of the car on the roof support.
10. Glue the stirrups in place.
11. Fix any edges, paint nicks, etc.



12. Add the decals as desired.
13. Weather as desired.

Please share your completed photos on <https://www.facebook.com/ConowingoModels/>

See [Conowingomodels.com](http://Conowingomodels.com) for more unique model railroad products.

If there are any parts missing, please e-mail us [conowingomodels@yahoo.com](mailto:conowingomodels@yahoo.com) and we'll get those parts headed your way. We strive for a perfect kit, but mistakes do happen. We apologize if this happens.

Many thanks to Steve Milley, Jeff Grove and Mark Schreier for their help!

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