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Göppingen, March 30, 2011

Dear Madam/Sir:

This technical newsletter deals with our current digital system.

Exchange of the 60173 Booster for the 60174 Booster

The use of a common ground for all applications has been a technical detail of Märklin's model railroad technology for many years. The so-called rail ground was a common ground for train operations as well as for solenoid accessory circuits.

Our technicians made a departure from this guiding principle with the introduction of the 60213 Central Station. Starting with this point in time the requirement was made that ground connections for the Central Station and the 60173 Booster should not be connected with each other continuously. The hot as well as the ground connections at the transition between different power consumption areas therefore had to be separated.

This requirement led to irritation among many model railroaders. Many circuits that were based on the system of a common ground were now only usable under certain limitations. For a non-technician or a lay person the hurdles resulting from this were in many cases impenetrable. A factor that admittedly we evaluated incorrectly during the introduction of the new technology.

This change was therefore rescinded with the 60174 Booster. This unit is designed so that the common ground can be used again as a ground return in the track. Galvanic separation will be used for this. Galvanic separation will prevent undesired connections between the individual components. The current Central Station will also come from the factory with this galvanic separation.

We are exchanging the 60173 Booster for the current 60174 version in a goodwill gesture so that customers still using the earlier 60173 Booster will have the possibility to reintroduce the principle of the common ground on their layouts. We are doing this exchange without recognition of any legal claims. This exchange is not necessary for other Boosters (6015 or 6017).

Naturally, this exchange program also applies to stocks of the 60173 Booster that you might still have in your shop.

When your customer comes to you with one or more 60173 Boosters, please handle it as a warranty claim and send these units to our repair department in Göppingen. We will send you exchange units in the next product shipment to you.

One more product note: The 60174 Booster, in contrast to the 60173 Booster, can also be used in the future with the new 60101 switched mode power pack with its maximum output of 100 VA.

Important: The common ground refers to all power supply units that are connected directly to the track. Switched mode power packs or transformers used to supply power to the Central Station or the Booster must not be connected directly to the track ground also, since otherwise the internal format of the digital voltage will be short-circuited. Therefore, these units may only be used to supply power to these components (Central Station or Booster); they must not be used to supply power to other users on a model railroad layout at the same time.

A unit without galvanic separation can also continue to remain in the total system. For that reason it is not necessary to exchange the 60213 or 60214 Central Station and such an exchange will not be done by us.

We would like to emphasize that the earlier technology in the 60173 Booster does not represent a defect. The issue here is an exchange program done voluntarily by our company in order to achieve a harmonization of the technology being used. We would be happy to answer additional questions Monday through Friday from 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM (Central European Time) at our telephone number

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Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,
Gebr. Märklin & Cie GmbH

Your Märklin Customer Service