

◀ The courtesy blowdown device is a simple combination of copper tubing scraps, capped off at one end of the T and threaded at the stem end to fit your blowdown valve or pipe.

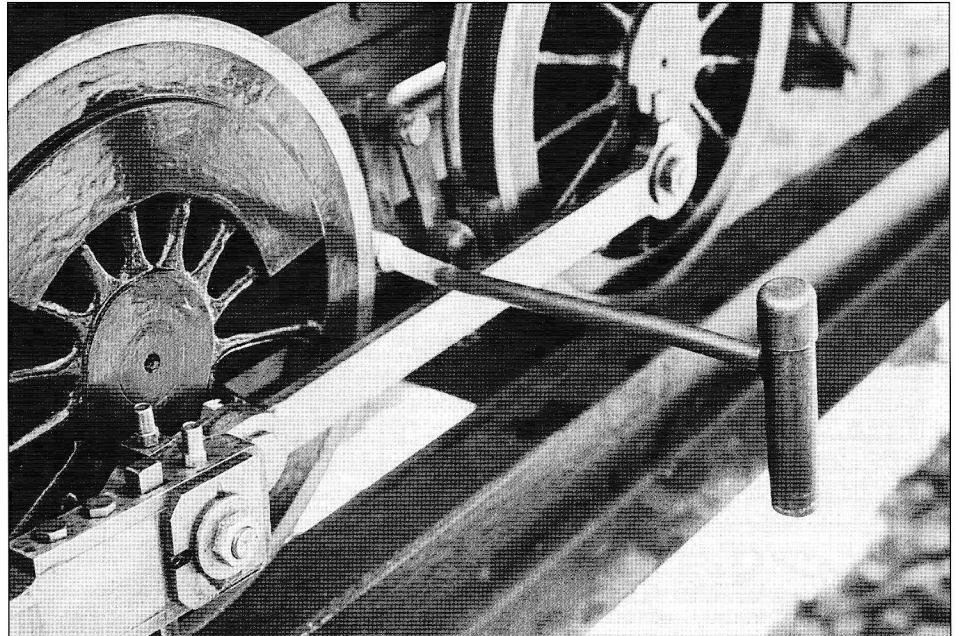
▼ The blowdown valve on this engine is centered at the front end of the firebox. A pipe leads from there to the fireman's side of the engine, where the courtesy blowdown device attaches.

# Cal Tinkham's Courtesy Blowdown

By Greg Lewis  
Photos by Author

Cal Tinkham's brand new museum-quality ten-wheeler sat on the steaming bay track shining like a new bike on Christmas morning. He had just finished cleaning it after a successful run. Cal won't forget what happened next. A thoughtless engineer, shutting down his engine on the next bay, opened a blowdown valve and sprayed hot water loaded with boiler scale and mud all over Cal's engine.

Determined that he would never be guilty of such carelessness, Cal created the Courtesy Blowdown Attachment, a simple device that directs the blast downward, away from adjacent engines and onlookers.



The photos tell the story. The device is a simple combination of copper tubing scraps designed to direct the spray downward and dissipate some of its energy. The smaller tube is fitted to the blowdown valve or pipe. Tinkham's engine has but one blowdown located at the low spot on the mud ring, at the front end of the firebox, so he ran a copper tube from the valve out to the fireman's side where the Courtesy Blowdown

Attachment connects. The blowdown attachment is simply a small tube soldered to a larger diameter one, and the top end of the latter is capped off. The use of the larger tube and the T-shaped connection helps dissipate the energy in the blast. Size the stem of the T to fit your blowdown, and make the cross-piece tube two or three times the diameter of the stem. Solder the two together and the project is complete.

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