



## #120 "SBE" Bottom Shelf Whisker® Couplers Fully Functioning Bottom Shelf Coupler

#120 Metal - Type "SBE" Bottom Shelf Couplers - Medium (9/32") Centerset Shank -With #242 Snap Together Gear Box. (2 Pair)

The #119 is a Type "SBE" coupler which is a common Type "E" coupler with a bottom shelf.

Prototypically the type "SBE" coupler is mostly found on modern cars.

Metal Couplers







# January Tech Tip - Shelf Couplers

From a modeling stand point, the majority of couplers on the market represent the Type "E" coupler, but in general appearances, the "scale" couplers presently marketed can be used to represent the early Janney couplers. This means modelers in any scale can use knuckle couplers for models back to the 1880s and be, at least functionally and in general appearance, prototypical.

Specialty couplers began to appear experimentally in the late 1930s and in 1947 the Type "H" was standardized. The Type "H" sometimes known as the "Triple Lock" or "Tightlock" and, because of it's safety features, was used on the newly developed high speed passenger trains.

The first interlocking coupler use for freight cars was the Type "F" coupler introduced in the 1940s was made Alternate Standard in 1954. The Type "F" coupler is basically a Type "H" coupler with an additional bottom shelf. Then in the late 1960s the top and bottom shelf Type "SF" coupler was developed and standardized in 1970 for hazardous material tank cars. During this same time period the Type "E" coupler with a bottom shelf was developed as the Type "SBE" and the Type "SE" top and bottom shelf came later on. Both the Type "SF" and "SE" couplers were standard for tank cars in 1975 then eventually became mandatory for hazardous material cars.

Please note: the Type "H", "F", and "SF" are larger totally different designs than the more common Type "E", "SBE", and "SE" couplers. In scale model railroading, they should not be mistaken as the same size of couplers.

We continually receive inquiries about the difference between our #118, #119 and #120 shelf couplers. Our #118 "SF" Shelf Coupler which is a Type "F" coupler with a top and bottom shelf, can be modified to represent the Type "F" or "H" couplers. Our #119 "SE" Shelf Coupler which is a Type "E" coupler with a top and bottom shelf, can be modified to represent the Type "E" or "SBE" couplers. Our #120 "SBE" Shelf Coupler which is a Type "E" coupler only a bottom shelf, can be modified to represent the Type "E" couplers. Also, Our #118, #119 & #120 Shelf Couplers are actual functional shelf couplers, meaning the couplers will not slip out of each other during operations.

Type "F" and Type "E" couplers are quite different from each other. The Type "F" coupler is a transition or progression of the Type "H" or tight lock (or triple lock) coupler and are actually larger than the common Type "E" couplers. So when you look at a #118, #119 or #120 coupler the #118 will look large and over-scale but in fact it's actually a scale size coupler.

Many modelers are using Shelf Couplers to help compensate for rough track and grade transitions where some longer models will uncouple. Also prototypically and generally speaking the Type "SF" #118 was used much earlier and presently found on many different types of rolling stock, including locomotives and the Type "SE" #119 & Type "SBE" #120 is mostly found on modern cars.

< Ref: Most of the above information came from the NMRA and "The Car and Locomotive Cyclopedias".>

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