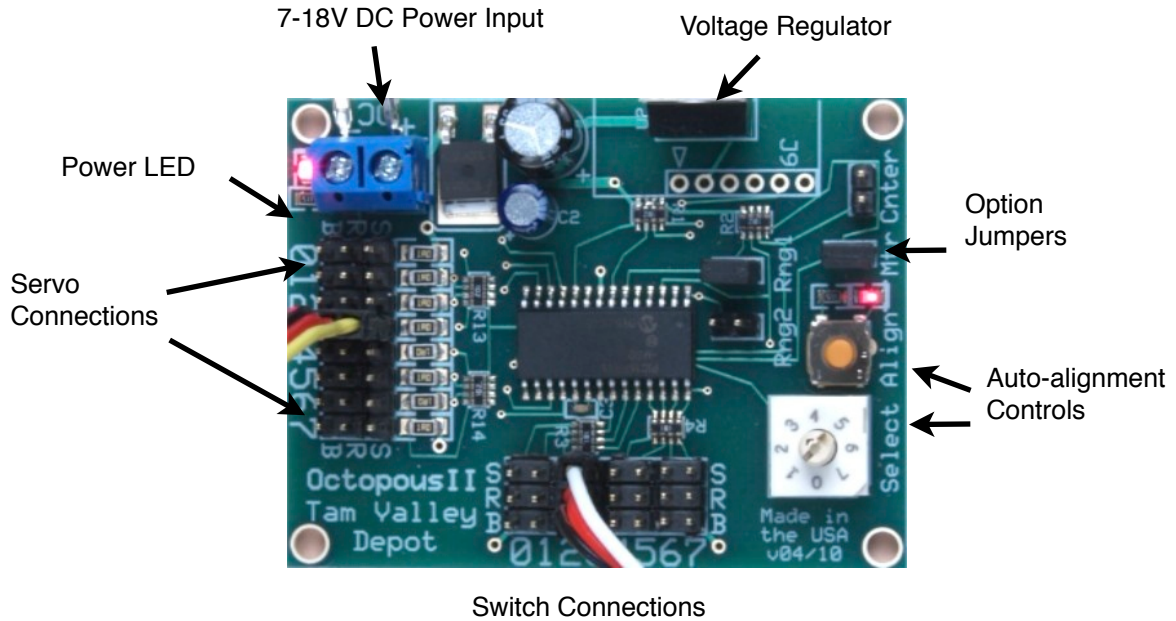


Overview

The Octopus Servo Driver will control 8 turnouts manually by flipping a switch or with a pushbutton using R/C servos. It is also possible to control the Octopus with active low logic (the type used by the majority of model railroad control circuits). The Octopus uses R/C airplane servos which are readily available and inexpensive. These instructions explain how to install the servos to control turnouts, however, you can control other devices such as semaphores, crossing gates and so forth.



Installation

Install the board by placing it near the turnouts you want to control and the fascia where you want to mount the switches. The inputs are more susceptible to noise than the outputs, so keep the input wires shorter (less than 2 feet if possible) and allow the servo wires be longer in considering the placement.

Mount the board with a couple of wood screws through the mounting holes, or use double sided tape. In some cases you may just want to leave the board floating and tack down the wires around the board to keep it in place. *Make sure to keep the board away from conductive surfaces such as metal that could short the board. You can kill the board if let a hot wire touch the wrong part of the board.*

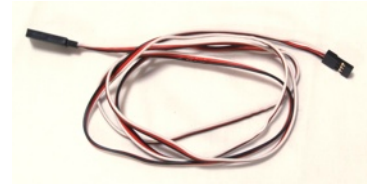
Make certain the voltage regulator is free to ventilate the excess heat. If the regulator gets too hot (~85C) it will shut down until it cools back down. The regulator will be warm in normal operation.

Power - Connect the board to a DC power supply in the range of 7 to 18 volts. **Do not use AC or DCC.** The power inputs are polarity protected by a diode and will only work in the correct orientation. The power LED will light when power is correctly applied to the board. If you are going to use the board with a signaling system, make sure there is a common ground or, even better, use the same power supply.

Servos

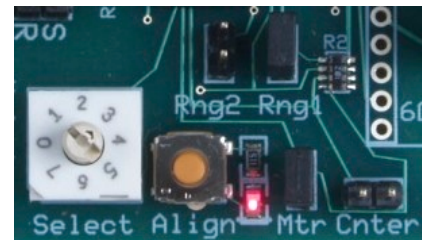
Plug the servos in to the bank of servo connection pins. Servos have three wires, the power leads are usually black and red, and the third, the signal lead is white, yellow or orange depending upon the brand. Plug the servos in so that the signal lead is inboard and the black wire is towards the edge of the board. If you do it incorrectly, it won't hurt anything, but the servo won't move. Please see the website for more information on mounting servos for driving turnouts. Also see the article in the July 2009 issue of Model-Railroad-Hobbyist online e-zine. There is a link to the article on the front page of the Tam Valley Depot website.

Servo Extensions - If the wire is too short to reach the board after installation, servo extenders in various lengths are available from Tam Valley Depot or at your local R/C hobby shop. Alternatively you can splice in extra lengths of wire. The servos draw little current so that any wire 26 gauge and above will work well. How many extensions can you add? In a test I was able to add 15 feet of 26 gauge extensions and the servos still worked well - at 20 feet the servos stopped working. A heavier gauge wire would allow longer extensions, although I haven't made any tests.



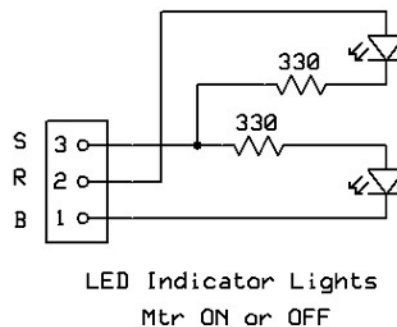
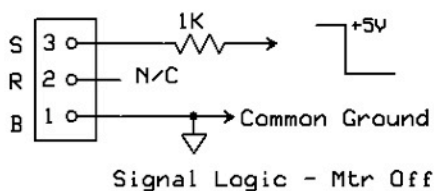
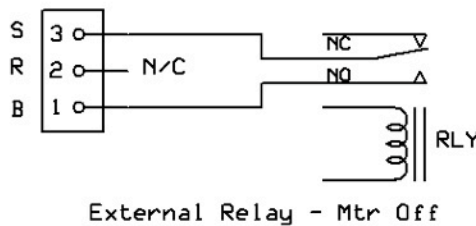
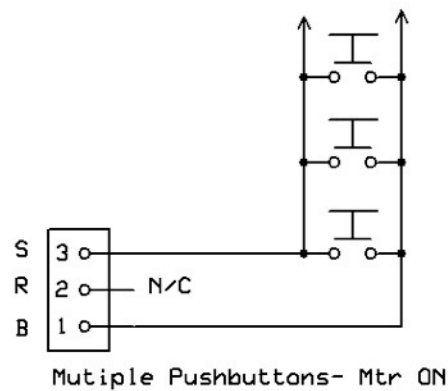
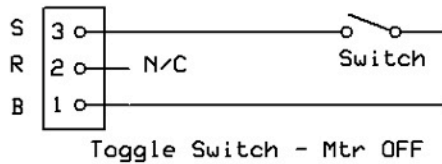
Control Inputs

The **Mtr** jumper is used to tell the board if momentary switches or toggle switches are being used. Make sure the jumper is correctly set or you will get unusual results. In the picture to the right the **Mtr** jumper is ON.



Toggles - The switch needs to be arranged so that it is open in one position and closed in the other (i.e. just like a light switch). You can use toggles, relays or lever switches for this. If you use a DPDT toggle, then the other side of the switch can be used to switch the frog polarity.

Momentary - You can use a pushbutton for the input. Each time the button is pushed, the turnout will change. The Tam Valley Depot fascia controllers are momentary devices so put the **Mtr** jumper on when using these. You can use several pushbuttons in parallel to have two or more stations controlling one turnout. You can use a Y cable with the fascia controllers to have two input stations both with indicator LEDs.



Centering the Servos

To aid in installation the servos can be driven to their center position. Place a jumper across the **Cnter** pins and the all the servos will move to their center positions. The servos will stay centered until the jumper is removed.

Automatically Aligning the Servos

Follow these steps to align the servos automatically.

- Connect the servo to the board
- Set **Select** to the same number as the servo
- Put on the **Cnter** jumper
- Mount the servo such that the points are midway between the stock rails
- Remove the **Cnter** jumper
- Press **Align** for ~ 1 sec
 - The LED will flash rapidly for about 2 minutes while the servos are aligned
 - (To abort press **Align** briefly.)
- If desired, swap the endpoints with a *brief* push of **Align**

If the servos stop before the desired inputs, check that the points are free to move and that there are no obstructions to the actuating mechanism. *You can also try pushing the Align button again - each time the buttons is pushed the endpoint threshold current will be upped ~50% for the next 3 attempts as long as the selector is held at the same number.* When the selector is moved to a new number the current threshold is reset. This will allow for stiffer points to be aligned without causing excessive current on more easily moved points.

Range Jumpers

As an *alternate* to the auto-alignment of each servo the two range jumpers, **Rng1** and **Rng2** set the range of movement of the servos from about 10 degrees to approximately 70 degrees according to the table. If either of the jumpers is on *all* of the turnouts will use this range regardless of the auto-alignment values. However, using the range jumpers can be a useful alternative to the alignment in many cases where all your servos can use the same throw.

R1	R2	Range
Off	Off	Auto-align
On	Off	+/- 17
Off	On	+/- 33
On	On	+/- 55

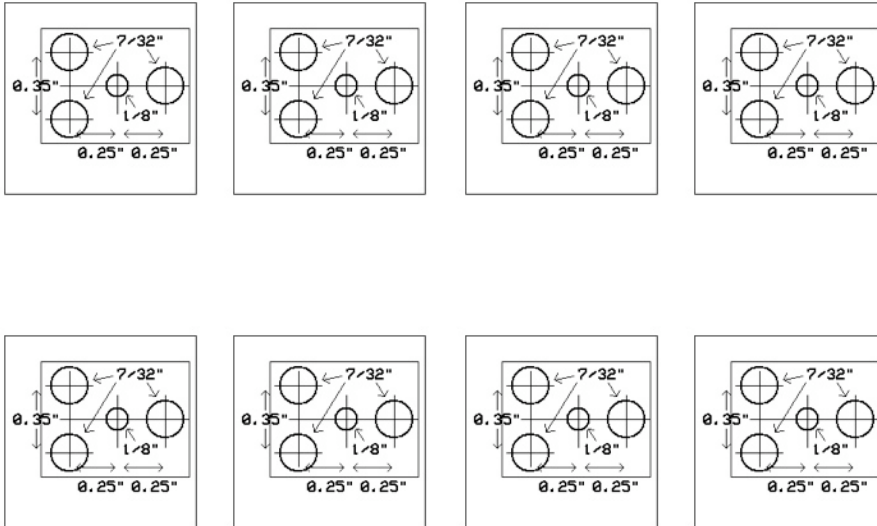
The illustration shows the jumpers On for **Rng1** and Off for **Rng2**.

Factory Defaults Reset

To reset all the values to their original factory values, turn off the power to the board for at least 30 seconds and then hold down the Align button while turning the power back on. This will erase all the servo positions and set them back to just either side of centered.

Fascia Controllers

The Octopus can use the same fascia controllers as the Quad servo decoder. Put on the **Mtr** jumper for proper operation. The following templates can be cut out and used as drilling guides for the controllers:



More Information and Help

See the website at <http://www.tamvalleydepot.com/products/octopusservodriver.html> for an instructional video on the Octopus II. Please feel free to contact us at dmcree@tamvalleyrr.com.