

Newsletter #36 (Aug 22, 2009)

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What's New

New version 4.3.8

A new version of Campground Master was released on August 8th. If you're a current customer, you should have received notification by E-mail already (if not, please check with us to see that we have your current E-mail address on file).

If you were waiting because of the second notice about a problem in 4.3.7, please be assured that this is fixed in 4.3.8 and it is safe to install the new version now. There is no need to install in-between versions, just get the latest version at http://campgroundmaster.com/download_upgrade.html.

If you're subscribed to the service receive the updates on CD, they were sent last week and you should get yours soon.

Friend Communications update

Obviously the schedule on this has slipped considerably, due to circumstances out of our control.

However we're happy to announce that it's going into initial beta testing this coming week. We will be bringing on beta testers slowly, since Friend needs to get each one set up individually. I know many of you expressed interest in the past, but please let us know again if you're interested in trying it during beta testing so we get you on the list. You may also want to contact Friend Communications and let them know, so they can get you worked in to their schedule.

We're aiming for a late-September full release, if all goes well with the beta testing.

In case you missed the initial information about this, you can read all about it here: <http://campgroundmaster.com/online.html>

X-Charge update required

For anyone using the X-Charge credit card processing software, remember that you must upgrade your X-charge before September 1st or your merchant service will be cut off. You should have received a notice about this already, but if not please go to this link immediately:

<http://www.x-charge.com/upgrade>

The upgrade is easy to do, and their support will help if needed. The X-charge update does not affect Campground Master, and it doesn't matter whether you do it before or after upgrading to the latest version of Campground Master.

Capterra Reviews -- post your review of Campground Master

Capterra is a leading software search engine for business software. We've been listed there for quite awhile, but they have just launched a Reviews function. If you have a couple minutes, we would like you to fill out a quick review of Campground Master to be shown on their site. Just click on the link below:

http://www.capterra.com/review_new?vendor_id=2016154

Thank you in advance for your time! Since there are places in the review form for comments we hope you'll say some nice things, but we'll be checking the reviews anyway to make sure we're adequately serving your needs -- but of course we also encourage you to E-mail us or use our forums whenever you have comments or requests.

User's Forums Update

Have you joined our user forums yet? Here are some of the recent discussions in [Technical Support](#):

- Site criteria
- Automatic logout
- Site quick-pick
- Changing group sync to non-sync
- Non-reserved
- Networking receipt printer
- Average stay report
- Inventory management
- Customer details customization
- Predating a payment
- Walk-in rates

So why not stop in to say "Hi!" and see what's going on? Visit with other Campground Master users to share your ideas or get business tips.

<http://campgroundmaster.com/forum/>

Q & A

Top Q&A's from past issues

Since it has been quite some time since the last newsletter, we're noticing that a lot of the questions from past issues keep coming up in support calls. Here are some of the more common ones, with links to the past articles answering the question:

How to copy/transfer Campground Master to a new computer (or re-install)

<http://campgroundmaster.com/copying.html>

How to back-date transactions

http://campgroundmaster.com/news/back_datingtransactions.html

How to get Sales Tax information for state tax reporting

<http://campgroundmaster.com/news/reportingtaxablesales.html>

Color-coding by reservation type

<http://campgroundmaster.com/news/colorcodingspecialreservati.html>

Color-coding holiday dates on the Rack

<http://campgroundmaster.com/news/coloringtherackdatesforho.html>

Entering security deposits

http://campgroundmaster.com/news/howtorearrangesitesonthe_2.html

Resolving Uncategorized amounts on Receipts by Category

<http://campgroundmaster.com/news/receiptsbycategoryreportad.html>

Credit Cards shown after 4.3.8 update

A: Due to an overwhelming number of customers wondering why it *wasn't* showing the previous credit card used by the customer, we changed the default settings to retrieve the previous card information. If you ever adjusted the Credit Card Security Settings previously, this won't be an issue -- your customized settings were saved. But if you never adjusted any of the security settings, the default used will change. Note that there may be a couple issues involved here:

1. If they're seeing the entire card number, rather than a masked number, that means they're logged in as an Administrator. You should lower the access level used by the normal operators to the Reservations or Manager level (see Park Setup / Operators), so they will only see the last 4 digits.
2. Ideally you do want to keep it from retrieving the previous card information at all, particularly if you process cards in Campground Master -- you get a lower processing rate if you swipe the card again whenever they make another payment, so hiding the card will force this. To change the option, go to Maintenance / Credit Cards / Security Setup. We also suggest that you view the Help for that screen (press F1) before making any changes to the settings.

Turning off the Reservation Linking

Q: How do I turn off the linked reservation stuff? We don't want any linking, since making them Synchronized causes more work for us later to separate them, but we keep forgetting to uncheck the "Synchronize with" box.

A: In the New Reservations dialog, click the "Linking" button. Select "Not linked at all", and check the box "Save the selected linking mode". Now they won't be linked unless you force the check boxes.

Reporting occupancy by # campers on site

Q: I need to know how many paid campers I have each day. This means campers, not how many sites are filled or how much money I collected during the week.

It sounds like what you need is an Occupancy report that reports by # of people instead of # of reservations. There isn't a built-in report for this (because the fields that count the number of people are re-definable), but there's a sample Query that does this if you still use the default # Adults and # Children fields.

1. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Queries, and click Import query.

2. Locate the folder C:\Program Files\Campground Master\Samples. (In the "Look In" drop-down at the top, start by clicking on the C: drive, then double-click the Program Files folder, etc. until you reach the Samples folder.)

Select the file "Sample Query - Occupancy (# people) by reservation type.csv" and Open it. That will add the query to the list. There's also another version, "Sample Query - Occupancy (# people) by site type.csv", that you can also add. Close the Query Setup dialog, and now you'll see a Query tab, between the Payments Due tab and the Transactions tab. Click on that, and select the above query from the drop-down list. Then just put in the date range needed.

Reporting by Rate

Q: How can I generate a report by Rate?

A: It won't be possible to report totals by Rate -- once the transactions are added to a reservation from the rate, it has no reference to which Rate those came from (because Rate definitions can change later anyway). If you need to separate the rates when reporting, then you need to set up separate Transaction Categories for each one you want reported individually (see Maintenance / Pick Lists / Transaction Categories). Then edit your Rates to use those categories in the rate's Charge (click on the category in the grid to change it), and then you can use the standard category reporting to get your totals.

Entering old electric readings

Q: How can I enter electric readings for people who left 2 months ago?

A: Change the "Actual date of readings" in the Electric Meter Readings report. This date won't show on their bill or affect the date of the charges, it just determines which occupant is shown & billed. If you have different electric charges based on seasons, though, it will also affect which rate is charged (this of course may be what you want it to do).

Tips & Techniques

Fixing an incorrect Split

When you Split a reservation, you're asked how to handle the linking of the 2 parts. The recommended option, as noted in the selection dialog, is to make the 1st half a sub-member of the 2nd half (so the new/current part is the "main" reservation). However if you're not in the habit yet, you might choose the opposite option by mistake. Worse, you might assign a new site to the 2nd half and then make another reservation in the newly-vacated previous site before you realize your mistake, making it difficult to go backwards and re-split.

Unfortunately there isn't an easy shortcut to just swap which reservation is the submember. The simplest way is to correct the problem is this:

First, Delete the new/current part of the reservation. All transactions are on the old part, so it should be simple to delete the new part (under Reservation Details, click "Delete").

If you can extend the old part by at least 1 day (e.g. if no other reservation is in the way), then extend it, and do the split again on the same date you did before (the new part will only have 1 day so far). After the split, you can change the site of the new part if needed, and change the dates accordingly. Note that you may also need to undo a check-out of the old part before it lets you extend it -- in Reservation Details, uncheck the "Checked Out" box.

If you don't have a way to extend the old part then do the split anyway, on the last day (one day sooner than you really want the split to occur). Then go to Reservation Details on the new part and change the site/dates

accordingly for that part, and then also go back and fix the last night of the old part.

Handling reservations with a balance due

Having your campers check out with a balance due isn't fun (and unless you change the Program Option, it isn't allowed in Campground Master), but it probably happens once in awhile. Here are a few ways you can handle this, depending on the overall situation and how you want them reported.

If it's a write-off (you don't expect to see that customer again), there are a few options:

1. Add a Payment Method (in Pick Lists) for "Write-off" and enter the balance due as a Payment, selecting that payment method. This would show on reports like Receipts by Payment Method and figure in your total receipts, though, which may not be desirable.
2. Enter a negative Charge in the category that's being written off (and appropriate negated taxes), e.g. the same way you would do for shortening a stay or refunding an item. (manager access is usually required for entering negative Charges). This would not affect total Receipts, but would show in reports like Charges by Category.
3. If you want to keep the original amount of the Charge reported in its original category even though it's being written off, first add a Transaction Category (in Pick Lists) for "Write-off". Then enter it on the Reservation as a Charge with a negative amount as above, selecting the new Write-off category. You also need to move the Write-off charge so it's above their last payment (if there was one), through Reservation Details / Transaction History, so it's reflected properly in Receipts by Category reports. For instance, if there was a Rent charge of \$50, a payment of \$10 and then a Write-off of \$40, and you want it to show as Rent: \$50, Write-off: -\$40, move the Write-off charge above the payment. Otherwise it would show as Rent: \$10 and the Write-off would not show on Receipts by Category.

Alternatively, if it's a balance you want to keep on the Customer info (you expect them back some day to pay the balance), then you would need to enter a negative Charge for the original category so the reservation balances out (again moving that above any payment), and enter an equal (but positive) charge for the same category through Customer Details / New/Edit Transactions. This leaves a balance due on the customer but the reservation is zeroed out.