Newsletter #7 (July 11, 2005)

Contents

Q & A

Entering laundy or other misc. receipts

Q: We collect the laundry machine money which goes into our register as non taxable merchandise. How do I enter this in Campground Master so our cash drawer balances, without doing a fake reservation or customer for it?

A: You can use "Unbound Transactions" for this, which are generally for merchandise sales without customer information.

For instance, click on the cash register icon to open Unbound Transactions (or go through the Transactions menu if you have the POS option). Then instead of selecting a rate, just click "Charge", pick a category and enter the amount. (You can add a category for "Laundry" in the Transaction Category Pick List if necessary.) Then also enter a Payment of cash for the same amount (so the total balance due is $0).

That will show the cash in the register, and also a "charge" in the proper income category, when you do your reports.

Multiple groups on one site

Q: We often book a second unit into our larger sites if groups want to camp together. The program won't allow us to accept a second booking into the same site with the first group, so how can we do this? Also, we charge a lesser rate for the second vehicle.

A: The Guest reservation type would work for this, since this type is used for additional guests on the same site -- see "Guest Management" under the Reservation Details, or "Add a Guest" when you right-click on the reservation in the Rack. If you already use "Guest" for other things, then you can create a separate reservation type such as "2nd unit" that also works like Guests as far as double-booking the site (see Pick Lists / Reservation Types, and add a type with "Guest" as the base type).

Since it's now a separate reservation type, you can also set up the separate rates accordingly. Add a rate

definition and select the appropriate Resv Type for it to apply to, so it's only used for the guest or 2nd unit reservations.

Speeding up check-outs with transactions

Q: When someone leaves our park we need to go to Transactions to refund a key deposit, then we have to get back to the reservation to check them out. Is there a way to streamline this?

A: There are a couple ways to make this easier.

1. While doing the transaction, click on Reservation Details, then check the "Checked Out" checkbox in the upper right. This will perform the checkout function while you're still working on the transactions -- Save will take you back to Transactions so you can finish up there.

Also, if you forget to do it before closing Transactions, just press Ctrl-R on the keyboard to open Reservation Details for the reservation you were just working with.

2. Reverse the actions -- instead of going to transactions first, do the Check Out function first. This will automatically open the Transactions dialog so you can do the key refund, if you have the appropriate Prompt option selected. See Maintenance / Program Options / Prompts, and set the "Checking out with no balance due..." option in the "Open a Transactions dialog when" section.

Re-combining split reservations

Q: Is there a way to fuse a split reservation back together?

A: There isn't any function that will do this automatically. You can just delete one of them (assuming no transactions are on it yet) and re-adjust the dates on the other one to include the entire range. You may need to undo the checked-out and/or checked-in status in Reservation Details so that it allows you to adjust the dates.

Tips & Techniques

Printer Recommendations

In an ideal world, every printer would work as advertised and work perfectly with Windows. Unfortunately, there are some that don't quite work in all situations.

This is usually a problem with the "driver", which is the piece of software that's used when an application (like Campground Master) sends a formatted page to the printer through Windows. Drivers have been a continual problem for Windows users -- they can have bugs that cause a crash when printing, lock up Windows, or just don't create the output as expected. If you experience a problem related to printing, the first thing you should do is go to the printer manufacturer's web site and see if they have an updated driver for your printer.

In our experience, Hewlett Packard still makes the best printers and has the most compatible and bug-free drivers (they have the money to fund expert development, and very good history and experience). Epson is also one of the better ones, but we've always felt that their printers aren't quite as robust. So our primary recommendation is always Hewlett Packard.

One brand in particular that we suggest you avoid is Lexmark. Their drivers are notoriously buggy, and we had to program a work-around to avoid one of their major bugs. Some newer Lexmark drivers have more problems of not showing the proper output (blank areas on receipts, for instance). At this point we cannot guarantee that printed output will be correct on Lexmark printers.

Tips of the Day

Have you read all of the Tips of the Day? Do you remember them?

It only takes a few seconds to read a tip each time you start the program. You may not understand all of them or they may not apply to you now, but if you leave them on and let them keep cycling through, they will eventually be useful.

We know it's easy and tempting to disable them, but it's surprising how many support questions we get that are answered in the Tips. Also remember that each new version has a few more tips about the new features.

If you don't see the tip when you start up, you can re-enabled them. Assuming you have version 3.0 or later (and if you don't, you really should upgrade to it!), go to the Help menu and select "Show Tips on Startup". If you have some time and want to browse through a few any time, just select "Show Tips Now" from the Help menu.

Miscellaneous

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