
Newsletter #16 (Nov 10, 2005)

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What's New

Use a 3" receipt printer for small receipts

You may not be aware that Campground Master can print receipts on a small receipt printer, like the ones you see at the checkout counter of any major store. This functionality is included even without the Point of Sale option, though version 3.0 or above is recommended for the best functionality. Support for an electronic cash drawer is also included (which can be opened on command or when a payment is entered).

While we haven't done an official comparison, we feel that it's much more economical in the long run to use these small receipts than to use a full-size printer, mainly due to the high price of ink and toner. It can also be much faster, depending on the printer you use, and it takes less room at the counter. Of course you'll also want to keep your full-size printer available on at least one computer for reports and letters.

While almost any PC-compatible printer can be used, we recommend the Epson and Star brands. We suggest using the parallel port version if possible for simplicity, and because this allows fast direct-to-port printing. The serial version is also good if you have a spare serial port. USB versions are available but require a Windows driver and will usually not print as fast.

Where do you get one? Of course you can buy it from us if you like (and if you're in the U.S.). We sell 3 different models, ranging from \$325 to \$450 (this includes the cable, a couple ribbons and a supply of paper). See <http://www.campgroundmaster.com/hardware.html> for printer and other hardware pricing.

LIMITED TIME DISCOUNT -- If you mention this newsletter, we'll give you \$50 off any printer ordered before December 15th, 2005. (Not to be combined with any other discounts such as bundle deals.)

Let us know if you have any questions.

Q & A

Disabling the meter reading options

Q: How can I disable some or all of the meter reports (like water & gas)?

A: Basically it's the reverse of the procedure for enabling them -- go to Maintenance / Data Field Definitions / Site Fields. Locate the applicable fields, e.g. for Electric meters look for "E. Meter" & "E. Reading" fields (there will be 3 fields for each type of meter, near the bottom). Change the Status for all 3 of them to "Disabled".

WARNING -- If you disable fields that have data in them, that data will be wiped out -- so don't disable the wrong ones!

Automatic capitalization of names

Q: When I'm on the phone I only have one hand available for entering information. Is there a way it can capitalize customer names (just the first letter) without having to hold the Shift key each time?

A: Yes, this was an option added in version 3.1 but it's turned off by default. Go to Maintenance / Program Options / Formats and enable "Automatically format customer information". This works on not only the name but also the address fields.

Select a site by typing the site number

Q: Can I just type the site number in the New Reservation dialog when making a reservation, instead of using the mouse to find the site in the list or grid?

A: There isn't a regular place to type the site number, but there is a way to avoid the mouse using a couple shortcut keys. When you're ready to select the site, press the **F9** key (this opens the Search function -- **Alt-S** can also be used)). Type the site number, and press **Enter**. This will scroll the grid to the site and highlight it. Now you could double-click it in the grid, but better yet, just press **Alt-A** (which is the hotkey for Add Selection).

Backup files won't accept the date

Q: When I try to name my backup with the date, like "Backup 11/4/05", why does it say it's not a valid filename?

A: The slash character can't be used for file names in Windows. Use the dash character instead, like "Backup 11-4-05", and it should work fine.

Disabling the credit card information

Q: I want to enter credit card transactions that were made on a separate terminal, so I don't need the credit card information in Campground Master. How do I disable this on the Enter Payment dialog?

A: It's not really necessary to disable it -- you can just leave it blank. But if you want to make it disabled for simplicity or security, then you can change the applicable payment methods so they look like a check entry. Go to Maintenance / Pick Lists / Payment Methods. Check "Allow editing of fields", then change the Base

type for each of the credit cards to "Check" instead of "Credit Card". If you also want the Reference field available for other info, select "Yes" for that column.

Tips & Techniques

Mailing List for last season's campers

Let's say you want to generate a mailing list for everyone who camped last season (or during any particular dates), removing duplicates. You don't want to include anybody who wasn't here all last season. This is easily done with the following steps:

1. Go to Reports / Mailing Labels
2. Check the options "Use reservations..." and "Filter out duplicate..."
3. Go into Reservation Filtering...
4. Check "Filter by Date".
5. Select "Start date" or "Start-to-end", depending on which is more appropriate, and enter the date range needed.
6. Hold down the **Ctrl** key and click the "Checked In" and "Checked Out" items under Reservation Status to select both of them (assuming you don't want the cancelled ones, etc.).
7. Click OK.

That should give you the list you want, and you can print or export it (or go ahead and print labels if that's your goal anyway). Remember that you can also sort by any column needed just by clicking on the header for that column.

Note: In step 6 you may also want to include Day Pass if those apply to you, and possibly even Inquiry and Waiting List if it's a promotional mailing.

Note that the duplicate removal is based on customer records, not customer names. If you still see duplicates with "remove dups" checked then there must be multiple customer records with the same information in them. These can be fixed by using the Merge function in the Find Customer dialog.

Canceling after Checked Out

Once you make a reservation checked in or checked out, the normal "Cancel" function on the right-click menu and in Reservation Details is disabled, mainly to prevent accidental cancellation. However there may be times when you need to do this anyway -- for instance if the customer decided they can't stay the night, and you checked them out (not realizing that would still occupy the space for the night).

To get the reservation fixed to a Cancelled status, follow these steps:

1. Locate the reservation and get to Reservation Details.
2. Click on the "Checked Out" checkbox in the upper right (the only one that's checked and enabled). Confirm the prompt, and they will become Checked In again.
3. Click on the "Checked In" checkbox in the upper right (the only one that's checked and enabled). Confirm the prompt, and they will become Pending again.
4. Now click on the "Cancelled" checkbox to cancel the reservation.

At this point you can negate charges and/or enter a refund as needed, just like any other cancellation where they've already been charged and paid.