
Newsletter #17 (Nov 21, 2005)

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What's New

Inventory Find/Edit bug

A minor bug has been discovered which causes an error message like "Record is already open for editing" to be shown when you try to edit an item, even though it isn't open. This is caused by doing a "Find" from within the Edit Inventory Item window. This also applies to Vendor records.

If you do get this message, just close Campground Master and re-open it to clear the error.

Avoiding the "Find" function inside the Editing dialog is the only workaround -- just Save or Cancel the editing dialog first and then locate the item from the Inventory Setup function, or use POS / Find Inventory Item.

Rates with Periods bug

This only applies if you're using the Schedules feature, e.g. for hourly reservations, and you have Rates definitions that only apply to some (not all) periods of a schedule.

A bug was introduced in version 3.6 which will cause any Periods listed in a Rate definition (in the "Applies only to..." section) to be duplicated and deleted if the Rate itself is duplicated or deleted. This causes duplicated rates to not work, but more importantly if the rate is deleted it will cause the associated schedule to lose its periods.

To avoid this error, delete all Periods from the list in a Rate definition before using Copy or Delete on the Rate, and then add them again afterwards if needed.

Q & A

Reservation shows unpaid (red) on the Rack

Q: Sometimes a reservation is shown with red text on the Rack (or other views) instead of the normal black text. How can I fix that?

A: The red text simply means that the "Paid Through" date is not set for the reservation. The program usually sets this automatically when you enter a payment, if it equals the charges added to the reservation (paid in full), and if those charges were added automatically or through Select Rates. If you enter charges before the payment, or add manual Charge transactions, it may not set the paid-thru date automatically.

To fix a reservation in this condition, just go to Reservation Details for that reservation and "check" the box in front of the Paid Through date to indicate that it's paid through the date shown. (You can also do this in Reservation Transactions by clicking on the paid-thru date in the reservation information grid.)

Deleting the Demo

Q: Can I delete the demo version of the program, or at least the "Demo" icons on the desktop?

A: There isn't really a demo "version" of the program -- it's all the same program. There is simply a special "Demo" database, and the icons on the desktop just tell it to open the demo database instead of your normal database. So all you need to do is delete the icons named "Campground Master Demo" and "C.M. Demo with POS". This won't delete the program itself, just those special shortcut icons.

Entering "Paid Out" transactions

Q: How do I enter "paid outs", e.g. expenses paid from the cash drawer?

A: Go to Transactions / Enter Expense Transaction. Here you select the category, payment method, etc. Note that if the cash isn't coming from the same place as where the income goes (e.g. a different "petty cash" box instead of the normal cash drawer), then you should use a different Payment Method to avoid confusing it with cash paid in. The same applies to payments you make by check -- e.g. add a "Company check" item (through Maintenance / Pick Lists / Payment Methods) so that it doesn't look like a check received.

Rack is starting on an old date

Q: Why does my Rack view always start on an old date instead of today (or yesterday with the red line), even when I click Reset/Today?

A: Go to Maintenance / Program Options / Reservations, and make sure the option is checked to "Ignore default start date once it's in the past". If not, then it will always start on the default date specified there. If that doesn't solve the problem, check to make sure your computer's date is set correctly (that's how it knows what "today" is).

Tips & Techniques

Carrying the Rack dates into New Reservation

If you typically change dates on the Rack to determine what's available for a reservation request, you may have noticed that it doesn't remember those dates when you go to New Reservation.

There is one way to get the dates to carry over -- start the new reservation by double-clicking on the open site where you want to make the reservation, instead of using the New Reservation function. This also selects that site for the reservation.

Two other conditions must be met for this to work:

1. The "Available Only" box must be checked in the upper left corner of the Rack.
2. The "Use date selections from the Rack" option must be checked in Maintenance / Program Options / Reservations.

Note that on the Map view there isn't an "Available only" checkbox, but double-clicking on an open site will still use the dates selected (if the #2 condition above is also met).

How to set up a Map (a brief overview)

The Campground Master documentation covers the details of map setup quite extensively, but it may quickly get too technical for some users who simply want to know in general terms what's involved in setting up the map.

There are basically 2 steps :

1. Create a "background" image, outside of Campground Master. For instance you can scan in a map from a printed brochure, or draw one using any image software like the Windows Paint program or Corel's Paint Shop Pro. This can just show roads or other landmarks for reference in step 2, or it can be as fancy as you like. (If you prefer, you can hire us to create the map image for you.) Note that it's not necessary to draw each site, since Campground Master can draw rectangles or circles in the site locations.
2. In Campground Master, go to Maintenance / Park Setup / Maps. This is where you load the background image you created, and then place rectangle or circle "indicators" on top of the background which will show the current status of each site and allow interaction (click the site to make a reservation, show details, etc.)

You can go back and make changes any time, like changing your background image (outside of Campground Master) and/or changing or adding site indicators (through the Map Setup).

For several examples of what our customers have come up with, see the web page below:

<http://Campground-Master.com/maps.html>

Using a Zip drive for backup

By "Zip drive" we're talking about the Zip disk drive device by Iomega which is similar to a floppy drive but handles disks of 100MB or larger capacity (these are rapidly being made obsolete by USB flash memory devices, but if you already have one it can still be handy). This is different than the "ZIP" compressed file format which Campground Master uses, but both uses of "zip" are common terms and can sometimes be confusing.

Zip drives can be used for backups, but there seems to be something incompatible between Zip drives and the compression algorithm we use. Version 3.5 attempts to avoid the problem by not compressing backups directly to drives larger than a floppy disk, so this should solve it. Just select the Zip drive as the backup location as you would a floppy drive. It will compress the file to a temporary location and then copy it to the Zip drive.

However if you're still using an older version of Campground Master, the backups may not work properly unless you turn off the compression option for backups. Go to Maintenance / Program Options / Database, and uncheck "Compress the database backups to a ZIP file". It should work fine then. Make sure also you change this option on any other computers you use, so it knows the backup isn't compressed when you restore it.

Miscellaneous

Web site services

Occasionally we're asked how to set up a web site, or who we use for web hosting. We're not in the business of setting up web sites so we can't offer much help in this area -- we recommend finding someone locally who you can work with to design your site, unless you're a do-it-yourselfer. There are many excellent books on web site design, and it's really pretty simple if you're proficient with a word processing program.

However we're happy to let others know who we use as our web host. (A "web host" is the place where you need to store your web site once it's created, so other people can see it on the Internet). We use Pair Networks, and we've been very pleased with them for many years. They have several levels of service, but for most users their lowest "FTP" service (about \$6/month) will work just fine.

Find out more at: <http://www.pair.com>.