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What's New

Visit our redesigned web site

We have finally updated our web site to join the 21st century. Besides giving it a visual makeover, we've added some useful content and revised the menu system to make it easier to find the information you need.

Stop by and take a look!

http://Campground-Master.com

If you have any comments about the new site, please let us know in the forum here: http://campgroundmaster.com/forum/showthread.php?t=76

User's Forums Update

Have you joined our user forums yet? Here are some of the recent discussions:

In Technical Support:
- Merchandise rates
- Hourly rentals
- Online reservations
- Handling Balance due at checkout

In Discussion Board:
- Performance & Maintenance
- PDA's / Ultra-Mobile PC's
- Credit card processing

In Suggestions & Complaints:
- Void or Deletion reports

Cancellation Confirmations

In Campground & RV Park Business:

Where do you invest your advertising $$?
New RV park business

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/

Friend Communications update

Some of you have been asking about the new real-time online reservations integration we're working on with Friend Communications (using their Reservation Friend online service).

We're happy to announce that it's on track to be in beta test by November, and full release by the end of the year. If you're interested in beta testing, please let us know.

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

Q & A

Fixing lost transactions after a split

Q: I was trying to move one of our long-term guests from one site to another using the "Split reservation at this date", but lost all data in the Transactions field. How do I recover this data?

A: The transactions are probably still there but under the "old" half of the split, which means the wrong linking method was selected when doing the split.

After confirming that the transactions are in the other half, Delete the reservation that's missing the transactions (under Reservation Details, click "Delete" to completely remove it). Then correct the dates on the other half to what they were. This may require undoing a check-out or check-in so the First and Last night can be changed, depending on the situation -- to undo Check-in or Check-out, click on the "Checked in" or "Checked out" box in the Status area of Reservation Details. Once it's fixed up like it was before, try the Split again. This time make sure you choose the option marked "Recommended", which is making the first part a sub-member of the 2nd part.

How to un-split a reservation

Q: I split a reservation by accident (selected the wrong one) -- how do I correct this?

A: There isn't an un-split function, so you need to delete the extra reservation and fix the dates and status to what they should be.

First figure out which of the two reservation halves has the transactions (assuming there are any transactions added yet). If the split was done with a sub-member option, it may actually look like transactions are on both reservations, but they will actually be linked to only the "Linked master" reservation. You can see which one is the Lined master by double-clicking on one of the reservations to get the quick-info window. At the bottom of this window it will show "This reservation is linked...", and one of them will have "[Linked master] after it. Make a note of which dates are shown for that.

Also be sure to make a note of the overall first and last night of the combined reservations, and also the Auto-charged-through and Paid-through dates, , since you'll need to know those to fix them later.

Now you need to go into Reservation Details for the reservation that is *not* the Linked master (the one without the transactions), and Delete it (click the Delete button at the top).

Next, go into Reservation Details for the remaining reservation and correct the dates and status. This may require undoing a check-out and/or check-in so the First and Last night can be changed, depending on the situation -- to undo Check-in or Check-out, click on the "Checked in" or "Checked out" box in the Status area of Reservation Details.

Now correct the First and Last Night to what they should be for the whole stay, and then if necessary do the Check-in again if they're a current reservation (be sure to answer "No" when it asks if you want to make it start today).

Finally, double-check the Auto-charged-thru date (if applicable) and the Paid-through date, which may have changed when the split was done, and update those to what they should be.

Rates for last-minute reservations

Q: How do we make a higher Rate for last-minute reservations, e.g. if they make the reservation less than 2 days in advance?

A: If you're using version 4.2.2 or later, you can do this using the "Advanced Condition Expression" setting in the Rates definitions.

Create a new rate definition (e.g. make a copy of the normal daily rate), with the amount changed for the last-minute rate.

Then, put this in the Advanced Condition Expression:

```
Days(Resv:Resv_First_Date, Resv:Resv_Date_Made) <= 2
```

It has to be exact, so use copy/paste if possible. The Days() function shown calculates the number of days between the first night of the reservation and the date it's made (e.g. like subtraction), so this rate will apply if it's made 2 or less days before it starts.

Also note that you should have this rate above the normal daily rate in the list (so it checks these conditions first), so this rate has priority over the normal rate.

Adding charges when a reservation is made

Q: Can we have it add charges to a reservation when it's made, rather than when it's checked in?

A: Yes you can, but this will affect your reports. Technically, the "income" is reported on the day you add charges (that's when the rent is deemed to have been "earned", since that's when it's put in as a charge to the customer). Depending on how you do your accounting and which reports you use, this may or may not be an issue.

So, you first need to decide how it will affect your accounting, including your reporting of state sales tax (or GST). If you use the "Receipts by Category" report, for instance, this would not be a problem unless you take Deposits -- in which case the Deposit will immediately be applied to the Charges and Taxes (proportionally), and thus at least some of the income is earned on that day. If you don't take Deposits, then it may be safe to add the charges early as long as you use one of the "Receipts" quick-reports for accounting, not the "Charges by Category" quick-report. Also note that if you export to QuickBooks, charges are always reported the day they are entered -- the Export to QuickBooks function always assumes Accrual-based accounting, not Cash-based accounting, as far as when the amounts go into the corresponding Accounts or Items in QuickBooks.

OK, so if you decide to do this, here's what you need to know. If you're using Auto-rates, simply change the option to auto-add charges when the reservation is Created, instead of when it's Checked In (see Maintenance / Program Options / Auto-Rates). If you use Select Rates to add your rates manually, or if you just use the Charge button to add manual charges, then just remember that if you're adding them under Quote/Confirmation then they won't be saved. Instead, go into Reservation Transactions (e.g. New/Edit Transactions under Reservation Details) when you add the charges so they're permanent. Then you can print the confirmation letter from there (select the Confirmation Letter in the drop-down list above the "Print Reservation Receipt" button).

Fixing an electric meter reading

Q: How to I correct a meter reading entry that was entered wrong, so the next time we put in a new reading it will calculate correctly?

A: The last reading can be entered manually under Site Details. Right-click the site (on the Rack or in the Electric Meter Readings report), select Site Details, and change the "Last reading" number as needed.

Fixing transaction overlaps on receipts

Q: Some accounts have a statement several pages long due to the large number of charges. How do I get it to print out without going over the top of the "notice to guests" on the bottom of the page, and to use multiple pages if it's longer than the page?

A: Version 4.0 or later is required for it to print multiple pages for a statement, which also helps prevent overwriting the notice. However if you already use version 4 and it still does this, then you may need to adjust the number of transaction rows that it prints on each page (especially if you've enlarged the size of the notice text at the bottom). Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Forms, and Edit the form definition for the receipt that you're using (e.g. select it and click "Edit form"). In the Edit Form Definition dialog, you'll see "Trans. rows/page" -- make that number smaller (count one that starts overflowing to see how many it can fit).

Another option that doesn't require version 4.0 is to use "Print only some transactions", for instance to print transactions starting from a certain date, instead of printing All transactions.

Reporting average nights stayed

Q: Is there a report I can pull for average length of stay?

There isn't a standard report for that, but there are a couple options:

If you run the Occupancy report and the Arrivals statistics report for the same time period, then you can divide the occupancy total (total nights) by the arrivals total (total # stays) to get the average nights per stay.

Or, if you have version 4.0 or later installed, there is a sample Query you can import that does show the average nights per stay.

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 - Average nights per stay, by site type" and Open it. That will add the query to the list. Close that 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.

Tips & Techniques

Showing underlined letters for hot-keys

In the documentation we mention that Alt- hot keys are underlined in menus and on dialogs. For instance the "**F**" is underlined for the File menu item, indicating that you can press **Alt-F** to go to that menu. However you may not be able to see these in Windows XP or Vista, at least not until you press the Alt key in the first place.

This us due to an option in XP and Vista to hide the underlines until you press the Alt-key, and in Microsoft's wisdom they seem to have enabled that option by default in some cases (why confuse the user with all those underlines, right?). So if you don't see any letters underlined in the menu or dialogs then just press the Alt key and the underlines should show up.

You can also disable this option in Windows XP by going into Desktop Properties (right-click on an empty desktop area), click the "Appearance" tab, click the "Effects" button, and uncheck the "Hide underlined letters" option.

If you're using Windows Vista, go to the Vista Control Panel - Appearance & Personalization - Ease of Access Center - Make the Keyboard Easier to Use. Check the box by "Underline keyboard Shortcuts & access keys".