DATOW Software

presents

FULL FUNCTION DEMO

GUIDED TOUR

Introduction

This document is a Guided Tour of the **DATOW Software** Full Function Demo. We recommend you use it as a map to guide you through our programs. This document assumes you know very little about computers. The Full Function Demo is a complete version of our 4 most popular PROfessional Edition programs (Lot Control, Lien Sales, Truck & Driver and AR) with the following exceptions:

1. The Lien Sale form printing functions are not included. This portion of the Lien Sale program is not really necessary to get a feel for the functionality of our programs, and it requires special forms or a laser printer. However, if you have a laser printer, you can print a blank CA lien sale form. Try it!
2. The Password generation and maintenance program is not included. We do provide a working full access password for your use with the demo. The working password is 1.
3. Some support utilities, such as sorting, file restructuring and call repair are not included. Also, some advanced Accounts Receivable features are not included. These programs are not needed for the demonstration. Also, AlphaNumeric pages are not actually sent, but you can see how the program supports this powerful feature.
4. These programs are set to turn themselves off after a certain date. Until then, they will function **in full capacity**. You are *not* limited to 10 cars or 100 calls, like some other demos we have seen, or any other limitation. If you need to extend the date of this time-out, contact us.

Sample data is included as a part of this demonstration. We also have included a utility program that will allow you to change the dates in the sample data so that a more realistic demonstration of our programs can be seen. See Appendix A for details.

During installation, you will be given the opportunity to print a README file. We recommend that you do so, as it contains additional information about installation options and about these programs. We also provide an electronic version of our manuals, which you can print and read for an even better understanding of our programs. Pre-printed manuals are included with the purchase or rental of our programs. These manuals are also available for a nominal charge, should you desire them. Or you can print our manuals from the OPENING MENU Choice #12.

This document also contains boxed sections that describe Problems you may run into, along with a possible Reason and a likely Remedy. You will not probably not need this help, since most demo installations and uses go smoothly. We have included these sections in the event that you have a problem. Of course, we want you to call us if you need us, but we think that we have covered most of the problems you may run into.

Please keep in mind that **DATOW Software** programs are very complete. At first, some of the screens may seem intimidating. Do not let that scare you. In just a very short time, you will be comfortable with the information you have at your fingertips and you will be glad that we have thought to include all the information we have in the *way* we have. Also, remember that you can ignore many of the items you will see and use them only if and when you choose to use them. Rest assured,

YOU WILL NEVER OUTGROW **DATOW Software**

24 Hour Support / 7 Days a Week

562-426-2255

Installation

Installation of the Full Function Demo is easy. (It is, however, the most complicated part of this demonstration. If you have little or no computer experience, you may want to either have someone who is more experienced with computers assist you, or call us for telephone support at **562-426-2255**).

If you have downloaded our Full Function Demo from our Web site, you have a file called FFDEMO.EXE. This file is self-extracting. Use the command:

FFDEMO -d -sxxxxx \ (where xxxxx is a code that we will give you when you call us, and it is followed by a space and a backslash. Also, there is a space before and after the -d.)

This will extract the files and insert them into the \DTD subdirectory, even if it doesn't exist. Also, it will create a \DTD\PF subdirectory where certain user files are kept. (Remember, this is a multiuser demo!) Lastly, it will put the file DTDEMO.BAT in your root directory.

If you have ordered our Full Function Demo from our office, we sent to you 3 diskettes. The diskette labeled DISK 1 DEMO INSTALL should be inserted into the floppy drive and your computer prompt should be at the root of the target fixed disk. The installation program will create a subdirectory called DTD and will put the files YNPROMPT.COM, INSTAL.BAT and DTDEMO.BAT on the root. You may want to check for the presence of these files on your root before proceeding and move them if they already exist. (This is highly unlikely.)

Installation can be from the A: or the B: drive. If done from the B: drive, the install program will try up to three times to locate its files on the A: drive and then will use the B: drive. Just follow the screen instructions. Installation requires that all **three** disks be used. The install program will prompt you to insert the second diskette and then the third. You should have, at least, 15 MB free on your hard disk.

To begin the installation, type A:INSTALL (or B:INSTALL) and press the Enter key. The screen instructions will tell you what to do next. Note that there is no space between the drive designator A: (or B:) and the word INSTALL .

Remember that you will have the option to print the README file during this installation. We highly recommend you do so. Any printer type will be fine, since this file has no fancy formatting. This README file contains some detailed technical information and hints about how you can modify the programs for your preferences. For example, some users do not like all the colors we use in our screens. With a simple change, you can tell the programs to switch to "Black & White" for most screens.

NOTE: If you are doing a re-installation , the installation program will ask you if you want to load STARTUP DATA. Answer yes to this question if you want to restart "fresh". The command REST can be used to restore startup data, without performing a complete re-installation.

No matter how you obtained our Demo, once installation is complete, type \DTDEMO and press Enter to begin the **DATOW Software Full Function Demonstration** program.

Dot Matrix Printer Users: After typing DTDEMO and pressing Enter, press the F1 key and the spacebar. You should be at the \DTD> prompt. Type IBM and press Enter twice. You will then be set up for a dot matrix printer. By typing LASER at the same \DTD> prompt you can change back to a simple generic laser printer. That is the default. However, we also provide batch files to take advantage of newer laser printers. The command LASER3H will cause certain reports to print in horizontal mode on a LaserJet3 or better. The command LASER4H does the same for a LaserJet4+ or better. The command LASER4 takes advantage of a LaserJet4+ or better printer, but does not use the horizontal format for printing certain reports.

All Users: Before you begin using the Full Function Demo program, you should press the F1 key until you are at the \DTD> prompt and follow the instructions in Appendix A. This will adjust the dates of the sample data so that you see a more realistic demo.

Getting Started

Are You READY?

This demonstration will take several hours of your time, but it is time well spent. If you do not have much time available now, you can still get some if it done and go through the rest of it later. Try to do this at a time when you will not be interrupted. Also, if you have not seen our Slide Show Demo, you should do so now. You can do this by using the command DTSHOW at the \DTD prompt.

Password Entry

Type DTDEMO and press Enter. You should see a screen called OPENING MENU. Each screen in all of our programs has a name. That name is shown in bright red, in the center of the screen, on the second line. So if you ever get confused as to where you are, just look there and it will tell you where you are. It is like a street sign to help you from getting lost. Learn to look at it as you learn to navigate around these programs.

At this point the cursor should be blinking at the Enter Your Password prompt. **For this demo, your password AND your employee number is 1.** So press the 1 key and then press Enter. Note that only a white dot appears when you press the 1 key. This is because passwords are never shown on the screen. This would defeat the purpose of a password. Someone could be looking over your shoulder and if the program printed your password as you typed it, they would know your password. It is similar to your PIN number for your ATM card. When you purchase our programs, you will be able to set up your own passwords for each person who will be using the programs. This keeps you in control. And our passwords are very advanced. They control not only which programs a user is allowed to get into, but also which menu choices they can make within any given program. The password even controls what they are able to do within a menu choice. For example, you can give some employees the ability to only look at information, others the ability to change it on a limited basis and others the ability to change or do anything. A unique "Intrusion Detection" feature lets you know if anyone has even attempted to get around your passwords. And although all other DATOW Software programs require the use of a password, the OPENING MENU, which is where you are now, can be set to bypass the password.

If all went well, you will see the cursor move up to the YOUR SELECTION portion of the screen and the menu choices should be in color, not white. But what if things did not go well? There are a few things that could have gone wrong. The following boxes contain information about what might have gone wrong and what you should do to remedy the situation:

- Problem: The computer beeped and nothing else seemed to happen.
- Reason: You did not enter the password correctly.
- Remedy: Enter a 1, which is the password for the demo. If you are using the numeric keypad on the right, make sure the NUM LOCK light is on. This locks the keyboard into the numbers, and not the words under the numbers.

- Problem: The computer never asked for the password. It just went to "Press any key to continue" and/or it went to the Accounting System BACKUP Menu.
- Reason: The most common reason is that you tried 3 times to enter the password and got it wrong all three times. Other possibilities involve an error or problem during installation.
- Remedy: If you just got the password wrong, press the spacebar to get the Accounting System BACKUP Menu onto the screen and then press 7 to get the OPENING MENU and try entering your password again.
- If you are sure you got the password correct, or if it never got to the point where it asked you for the password, then this is probably an installation problem and you have probably NEVER got any further than this. If this is the case, read the README file that you printed out during installation. Look at the portion regarding your config.sys especially as it relates to the SHELL= command and its /E: parameter. You can type SET and press Enter now to see if the environment is set correctly.

The last line in the environment should be PG=Y. If it is not, you probably got an "OUT OF ENVIRONMENT SPACE" error. Edit your CONFIG.SYS to include or expand the /E: parameter.

- Another common cause of this problem is that SHARE is not installing. SHARE is a part of MS-DOS and our programs require it. Type SHARE <Enter> at the prompt and see what happens. If it says, SHARE ALREADY INSTALLED, then this is not the problem. If it says something else or nothing at all, make sure that SHARE can be found on the PATH (usually DOS). Note that SHARE is not available under WINDOWS 95. This means that you must run our programs from an MSDOS Prompt session, NOT by shutting down Windows and restarting under DOS. This is really not an issue, since you will probably want to set up a Shortcut to our programs and run Windows all the time. This is a very effective and efficient way to operate.
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If none of these fixes work for you, please call us at **562-426-2255**. Be at your computer with it turned on and at the point where you are having a problem. Also, please have your demo diskettes nearby. We want you to really put our demo to the test, and we have worked hard to make sure this program will run on many different systems. However, due to the variations in computer systems and other factors, it is impossible to anticipate all conditions. That is why we want you to call us. We can probably solve the problem in just a few minutes and that will help you and us. Try not to get frustrated or overwhelmed. We are here for you...just call us.

OPENING MENU -- Your First Selection

When the program is correctly installed and you have entered the proper password, your cursor will move to where it is asking for YOUR SELECTION. There are a few different ways to indicate your choice. But before you do, now is a good time for you to check out our Help and Extended Help features.

Before you make a selection, the screen will show two periods. This means you have not made a selection yet. A selection is up to 2 numbers. Suppose you are not sure what to do at this point. ASK FOR HELP! Just press Alt-H. To do this, press and hold the key labeled Alt and tap the H key and then let go of the Alt key. This is just like the shift key on a typewriter. Try it now.

If you did it correctly, you should see a line of information at the bottom of the screen telling you to use your up and down arrow keys to select an item from the menu or to type the number of the menu item and press enter. This is called context sensitive help because it is tuned to the place you are at. But did you notice that flashing yellow plus sign at the far right edge of the help line? This is to tell you that there is even more help available. To view this Extended Help, just ask for help again. Press Alt-H and see what you get. (If you accidentally press Alt-H again, you may see a "Hex" view of this Extended Help file; press Alt-H again to go back to "English"! This is true throughout all of our programs.)

What you should have on the screen now is our Product Guide. It is the same as the printed Product Guide that you may have already read, but here it is for you to see electronically. You can print it if you want to, by simply copying it to the printer. You can use the command

COPY DTPRODGD.TXT PRN   to do this or you can use our OPENING MENU choice #12

- Problem: You don't see our product guide on the screen.
- Reason: Maybe you didn't press Alt-H correctly. Or maybe you have an installation problem.
- Remedy: Try pressing Alt-H again twice. Make sure you are at the Your Selection part of the screen. If you are somewhere else, you will get something else. That is how Smart Help works. If you don't get anything on the screen, you should probably call us because this program doesn't take much memory to execute, so we will probably need to talk to you to figure out what went wrong.

To move around in this screen, use the keys marked Page Up, Page Down, Home, End and the arrows and the space bar. You can get more information about how to use this program by pressing F1 while the word LIST is in the top left corner of the screen. But please be careful. There are some keys you can press that will change the colors so you can't see the words and there are some keys that will shell you to DOS. So for now, just stick to F1 and X and the Page up and Page Down keys until you understand a bit more about how this program works.

To get out of the Extended Help, press the X key. Normally, the F1 key will get you out of our programs, but the Extended Help is using a program that we didn't write ourselves and so it uses different keys to do things.

Actually, you can use *any* text viewer or editor for this task. We have designed this so that you can easily customize it. You can even make your own Extended Help text files or modify ours. This is really handy for location abbreviations and customer lists. But wait until you see our PickLists. They make looking up customers and other items a breeze.

Did you notice the TickerTape messages that are scrolling across the screen? This powerful new feature, combined with our AutoHelp feature, is designed to make it easier for a new user to become familiar with our programs. As you move around each screen, this message will change to tell you more about what the computer expects you to do. You can turn it off by pressing Alt-M. Alt-M is a toggle, which means you press it to turn it on, if it is off or you can press it to turn it off, if it is on. You can adjust the speed, you can customize the message and you can even permanently disable this feature if you find it distracting. Some older computers run too slowly to use this feature, so you may need to turn it off. But, for this Demo, please leave it on.

NOTE: DATOW Software programs have a built-in screen saver. If you do not press a key for a few minutes, the program will blank the screen. The time it takes is adjustable. The screen saver is disabled in certain screens, such as the DISPATCHING / ACTIVE CALL screen. Actually, this feature is more than just a screen saver. It will eventually exit back to an "Enter your Password" prompt and it will close all open files. This is a very safe thing to do, and it does it automatically. If the timeout is too fast, change the TO environment variable. As shipped, it should take about 15 minutes to time out.

Making your selection

Use the arrow key to highlight menu choice one and press Enter. Or you can enter the number 1 and press Enter. Both methods are functionally identical. You should see the words "Not Installed" flash a few times next to your cursor. That is because the General Ledger is not a part of this demo. In fact, very few towing operations require our General Ledger. It is designed by and for CPAs and is beyond the needs of most tow companies. (However, if you are interested in this program, give us a call and we can tell you what it can do for you.) If you use your arrow key to highlight the General Ledger menu choice, you can ask for help about it.

The same is true for menu items 3 (Accounts Payable) and 8 (Word Processing) and 9 (Spreadsheet). However, 8 and 9 can be easily set up to use your favorite Word Processor or Spreadsheet. (Tech Note: These menu choices actually spawn another command processor and invoke the batch files WSD.BAT and 123.BAT respectively). We have included just the beginning screen of item 2 (Payroll) in this Demo, so that you can see just a bit of it.

Now try highlighting menu choice 4 (Accounts Receivable) using your arrow keys. When it is highlighted, ask for Help. Notice that the flashing yellow plus sign is at the right edge of the help line. This indicates that Extended Help is available for this item. So ask for help again. What you will see is Extended Help information about the Accounts Receivable (A/R) program. This same feature applies to 5 (DATOW Lot Control) and 6 (Truck and Driver Dispatching). In fact, each menu choice has Extended Help. Check out the Extended Help for the Biorhythm Charts!

You will notice that at the bottom of the screen, when the Help is not being used, we show you some of the things you can do. One of those things is F2. It usually means "YES" or "SAVE" or "GO FORWARD". But if you are in a menu, and you haven't made a selection and you press F2, it will cause the printer to eject one sheet of paper. This may sound a bit strange, but there are times when this is a real nice thing to be able to do, so we make it easy for you to do it.

The heading for this section of the Guided Tour indicated that you would make your first selection, and now it is finally time to do so. Although 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12 will work (we'll leave it up to you to explore 7, 10, 11 and 12 on your own at some later time), we will start with number 6. This is our Truck & Driver program and it is often times the "hub" of our programs. This means that if you choose to purchase Truck & Driver, it will be where you will be most of the time, even if you purchase our other programs as well. From within Truck & Driver, you can go virtually anywhere.

So, can you guess how to choose Truck & Driver? If not, ask for help. If you can, choose it. (Hint: use your arrow keys until 6 is highlighted and press Enter.)

Truck & Driver

If you have successfully chosen Truck & Driver (TD), you should see a screen that is asking you to put in your password again. Remember that for the purposes of this demo, **your password is 1**. So enter a number 1 and press Enter. (Again, the OPENING MENU password can be set to bypass, but *this* password is required. However, once you have entered your password, the program will remember it and you will not have to enter it again, unless you exit from the programs.)

- Problem: You didn't get a chance to enter a password.
- Reason: The most common cause of this is that this demo has expired. When you purchased this demo, it came to you with at least one month of time built into it. But perhaps you are just now getting around to trying it out. (Keep reading and you will find a way around the time-out). Other reasons are similar to the previously described "Password Entry" problems. Look back a few pages and re-read that section.
- Remedy: It is pretty easy to trick a computer, and all you have to do is type DATE and press enter at the DOS prompt and put in some date from the past. Not too far back, but maybe a month or two. If you know the date you ordered this demo, use that date. Just remember to change it back to today before using any other programs on your computer. If you are still having a problem, it is probably an installation issue, and you should call us.

If you correctly entered your password, and TD is properly installed, you will see the Main Menu for TD. Again, look at the top middle of the screen on the second line and you will see exactly where you are. Get into the habit of looking there until you are comfortable navigating around these programs. You will also see today's date and time in the upper left corner of the screen and our logo in the upper right. On the first line, above the screen name, you will see the words "For DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY!". When you purchase our programs, YOUR Company Name will appear there instead. Also, you will notice the letters "DPO" in the upper left corner. This will be replaced with a three letter code for your company, when you purchase the program.

Some other things to note on this screen: A few lines from the bottom, you will see the Integration Status. This is the program's way of telling you that it sees that other DATOW Software programs are installed, and it will adjust itself to take advantage of them. The **OL** means **O**n **L**ine.

Your cursor should now be prompting you for Your Selection. Try asking for Extended Help. (Hint: Alt-H twice). You will see a detailed description of some of the specifications and features of the TD program. Remember that the X key will get you out of Help and back to where you were when you asked for Help.

This Main Menu for Truck & Driver has a lot of choices. Try using your up and down arrow keys to highlight each menu item and ask for help. You will get a one line description of what that menu item will do for you. Don't be concerned if you don't understand what all of these items mean or do. As time goes on, they will become clear to you and you will be able to use them to great advantage.

Remember that if you manage to get somewhere that you don't want to be, and you want to get out, just press the F1 key.

Dispatching

One of the main uses for TD is to keep track of all the calls you perform. You can either use TD in what computer people call "Real Time" or you can enter calls/tow tickets into the system after they are completed. The "Real Time" method is the best for most tow companies, but we have found that a lot of our customers start out by just entering call information "after the fact" and when they are comfortable with the program they start to use it in real time. No one way is "Right" or "Wrong". The "Right" way is the one that is best for you.

One very nice feature of our Truck & Driver program's design is that the way you enter a call is the **same** in both the "Real Time" and the "after the fact" methods. That is, if you store a call without completing the entry, the program treats it as a call in progress. You return to the Dispatching / Active Call screen where you can see that call. But, when you have completed the entry of the call, that call is no longer an active (working) call, so it is not displayed on the Disptach Screen.

To get to that part of the program where you will be able to see calls that are in progress and to be able to enter new calls, select menu item 1. (Do you remember how to do that? Remember that you have 2 ways to do that. Either type in the number 1 and press Enter OR use the arrow keys to highlight the first menu item and press Enter).

- Problem: The computer just beeps when you try to enter in the number 1.
- Reason: Usually, this is because you already have something typed into Your Selection. It may be a number or it may be a space. Spaces take up room just like a letter or number does, but they can be confusing because they are "invisible".
- Remedy: Use the Backspace key. Press it two times to be sure. Then try your number again. (The Backspace key is NOT the same as the left arrow key).

- Problem: You try to choose number 1 but number 18 lights up instead.
- Reason: Your computer is using the keypad on the right in Numbers Lock OFF mode. It is trying to use the words under the numbers instead of the numbers.
- Remedy: Press the key labeled Num Lock one time. On most computers this will cause a light to come on indicating that the Numbers are Locked ON. Sometimes some computers get a bit confused over this, and will have the light ON but think it is OFF. This is not a big problem and it will correct itself the next time your computer restarts.

If you have correctly chosen menu item 1, you should see the screen called "Dispatching / Call Access". And that is just what you do from here. You can enter new calls, look up old ones, update calls in progress and several other features.

A few things to notice about this screen: The top part is very similar to other screens -- that is, it shows the current date and time, your Company Code, our Company Name, our logo and the screen name. But it also shows you the next call number that the system will use. That is the number under the time. It shows you how many calls are working. That is the number under the screen name with the words "Active Calls" next to it. Also, you will notice Zones 1 to 4 and their current ETA's (Estimated Time of Arrival), the Day of the month of the last ETA update and the time of the last ETA update. The flashing 1 next to the letter C to the left of our Company Name, and the U with 2 question marks to the right of our Company Name are related to electronic dispatching. These show the number of Calls and

Updates that the system is "holding". This feature is currently available for AAA contract stations in Southern California.

The next line down is called a header, and it tells you what information is under it. You see the Call number, the Received, Dispatched and 97 (on location) times, the Driver and the Truck numbers, the Trouble Code and Order number, the Zone, the location and, if the call is other than today, the date of the call is shown. If you did not use the Appendix A instructions, you will notice that most or all of these calls are for dates other than today. Also, most of the screen is flashing at you and every 30 seconds the computer may be making a warning sound. (Note: You can turn the warning sound On and Off by pressing Alt-B. Try it!) This is not the normal way you will see this screen. It is this way now because you are looking at sample data that we entered into the program. We have included a utility program to correct these dates so that you can see a more realistic example of our programs. See Appendix A to find out how to use this utility program. Once you have done that, the screen will not be flashing so much and the data will be more realistic. Just for your information, the flashing and beeping indicates that you have "blown" the ETA for the calls that are flashing.

Proper operation of **DATOW Software** programs require the use of a color monitor. This screen is a good example of why we require color and how we have used it effectively to help you to do your work. The first call on the screen is red. It is red because it is hot. It has not yet been dispatched. The next color is yellow because it has been assigned to a Truck and a Driver. The next color is green. Notice that the green call has a 97 time. This means that the Driver has indicated to the dispatcher that he/she is on location and the dispatcher has updated that call to reflect that fact. Something a little special about green calls is that the location information is NOT the *pickup* location. It is the *destination* location. The idea here is that you really don't need to know where that call is coming from because the driver is already there. But by knowing where that call is going, you can decide which red call that driver will be dispatched to next. This is to help you from sending drivers criss-crossing all over town. This is what a good dispatcher does in their head already, but we provide this information to them as an aide in their work.

A flashing colored call means that the Received time plus that call's Zone ETA is before the current time. That is, the ETA is "blown"! A white call is a timed call (for some future date) and it will flash when the time planned for that call, the 97 time, has been reached or exceeded.

The bottom two lines indicate action items that you can choose. For example, F1 will exit from here, F2 will create a new call, Alt-S will bring up a status screen and other keys will do other things.

The number in the lower right shows the call the little arrows are pointing to. Actually, the entire line is highlighted in the color that corresponds to the status of that call. We call this a light bar, and it makes it very easy for you to see which call you are pointing at. If you were to just press Enter, the program will bring up the detail information about whichever call number is displayed down there. To access a working call, it is easier to just use the up and down arrow keys to move the pointer to the call you want. If you want to access a completed call, and you happen to know the call number, you can just type in that call number and press enter to get to the detail for that call. If you don't know the call number you can search for that call using many different items, for example Year, Make, Model, Color, Plate, Customer, etc. We will get to that portion of the program a little later.

One other thing to take note of: About every 30 seconds, you may notice the screen blinks. This is normal. What is happening is that your program is looking to see if another user has made any changes to the data. Since this is a program that is designed so that multiple users can be entering information at the same time, it needs to keep itself up-to-date. Also, the program is checking to see if any call's ETA has expired. That is what the blink is.

For now, try pressing the down arrow key one time. You will notice that the pointers and the light bar move down and the call number, in the lower right, changes to reflect the highlighted call. Use the up and down arrows to point at different calls. Use the Home and End keys and the Page Up and Page Down keys too. These really are useful when you have a lot of calls on the screen. Also, you would not want to have to type the call number in each time just to get to a call's detail screen. (Some other dispatch programs we have seen require that. I guess they think you like to type!)

With the pointer indicating call number 5, press the Enter key. You will see the detail for that call. The name for this screen is Daily Calls Query/Entry. You should be noticing that each time the screen changes, it shows you the Screen Name at the top middle of the screen. It is in bright red. (Again, we suggest that you notice this until you are comfortable moving around the different parts of these programs). This is like a street sign to help keep you from getting lost.

Take a moment to look at this screen. Most of what you see will be obvious to you. Things like Year and Make and Plate. Some other things may not be so obvious. As you get familiar with this screen, they will ALL be easy to understand. And remember that we have help built-in, and ready to assist you at any time.

Notice that the cursor has positioned itself on the Driver field. (These little spaces where you get to type information into the screen are called fields). That is because the program knows that the next logical thing you will probably need to do to this call is to assign it to a driver. But instead of doing that now, just press the F1 key to Abort or Exit from this screen. Remember that F1 is our "NO" key and F2 is our "YES" key.

The program took you back to the Dispatching / Call Access screen. Use your arrow key to point at the yellow call and press Enter. This time the program took you into that call and positioned the cursor at the On Location or 97 mileage field. Again, the program guessed that this would be the next item that you would want to enter. Press F1 now to return to the previous screen.

Now point at the green call and "bring it up". (Hint: Press the Enter key!) The cursor is again at the most logical place to be, that is the Completed or 98 mileage. Again press F1 to return to the previous screen.

What you just did was to look at the detail for some (3) of the calls that are currently working. But what about calls that are completed? Just because they are no longer being displayed does not mean they are gone. The program remembers each and every one of them, and will display them for you. You just have to ask.

If you happen to know the call number, just type that number and it will appear, as you type it, into the box in the lower right corner of the screen. Try doing that now. Type the number 2 and you will see a 2 appear. Press Enter, and call number 2 will display.

The one thing you probably noticed first is that flashing blue "Call POSTED" message. This is to tell you that this call, and all the charges, have been posted. This means that the information has been sent to another program, in this case to the Accounts Receivable program. The call is complete, but the information is still here. You can look at it at any time, get reports, even edit or change any information that might be incorrect (if your password has been set to allow you that capability). Also, the first line of information about this call is color coded to the call's status, that is Red for Received, Yellow (actually Brown) for Dispatched, Green for 97'd, Blue for Completed and White for a Timed Call.

What if the call you want to see is the one just before or just after this one? Look at the bottom of the screen. On the second line from the bottom, you see that it says to press Page Up or F4 to Step Back. Try that now. Press the Page Up key and you will be shown call number 1, which is the call just before call number 2. Press Page Down now and you are back to call 2. Another Page Down and you see call number 3. Think of these calls as being a list, or a log, on a long piece of paper. As each call is created. it is added to the end of the list. So pressing Page Down goes down the list and Page Up goes up the list. Are you getting the picture? Good! Notice that if you try to go up past the first call or down past the last call, the program will just beep to tell you that there are no other calls to look at. When you are done hitting Page Up and Page Down, press F1 to go back to the Dispatching screen.

Searching for a Call

So that worked out OK for looking at call when you *knew* the call number, or the approximate call number. But, what if you have no idea of the call number? For some other towing programs we have seen, this could be a problem. But it is no problem with DATOW Software. Do you see at the bottom of the screen it says Alt-H to Search? Normally, Alt-H will cause a Help line to display at the bottom of the screen, but here it is used to Help you find a call. Try it by pressing Alt-H now.

The box that opened for you allows you to put in information about the call, or calls, you are looking for. It starts at the **Y**ea**R**, but you can just press Enter until you get to the appropriate place and type in the information you want to search on. For example, get to where it asks for the License and enter the numbers 123. Now press F2 to begin the search. Note: If the search for a call box disappears before you have a chance to use it, it is because there is a 30 second time-out on this function. Just press Alt-H again to bring the search box back onto the screen.

The program should have brought up call number 6, which is a GReeN HONDa. But what if that isn't the call you are seeking? There could be a lot of calls that have a License Plate with a 123 in it. Press the Page Up key to search for the prior call that ALSO has a 123 in the License. Call number 5, which is a BLUe VolkWagen, is now displayed. It also has a 123 in the plate. (Notice that it doesn't matter where in the plate the 123 appears. We call this our Sliding Search feature. Also, notice that the plate is displayed in flashing blue, to remind you how you searched.) Try going back to call 6 by pressing the Page Down. Press F1 to get out of this, or search back until it doesn't find any more matching calls.

Using this feature, you could find the calls you have done for a particular customer, by a particular driver or even from or to a particular location. The location searches are especially powerful, since they use our Sliding Search feature and since they are NOT case sensitive. So, even though the location you seek was entered as "Main St", you could search for "MAIN" or "main" and the program will find the call.

You can use this feature to find a call by any or all of the search fields. The more information you enter, the more likely it is that the program will find the exact call you are looking for. However, if you put in too much information and some of it doesn't match, then you will not find the call you seek. In general, the less information you enter to search for, the more likely you are to find the call you seek.

Entering a Call

Most of the time, you will be looking at the Dispatching / Call Access screen. From here you can do a lot of things. One of those things will be to enter a new call.

When the phone rings and it is a call for service, you will want to enter that call into your computer. To do this, simply press the F2 key. (This is part of the On-Screen Instructions at the bottom of the screen. It says F2 - NEW Call). There are several ways you can tell this is a new call. The call number is the next call number. The screen is mostly blank. The cursor is waiting for you to tell it which customer this is for. And it is flashing the word NEW in the top left corner. This is a BIG clue!

You will see that the cursor is positioned to ask for the Customer ID. This is a number that identifies each of your customers. You will notice that it already has a customer entered in. This is called a default. It is the computer making its best guess as to what should go into this field. You will see a lot of defaults in these programs, since the programs are always trying to save you from having to type information. Of course, if it guesses wrong, you can change it to the correct information. But if it guesses correctly, it just saved you some typing. In this case, the computer is guessing that the customer will be "TODAY'S" cash customer.

When we set up these programs, we set up 7 cash accounts for Cash Monday to Cash Sunday. You can change these if you want, but most of our customers use these seven accounts to track cash sales. By using the days of the week, you can keep track of the activity your business does on a per day of the week basis, and maybe that will help you to plan for the future.

What if this is not the correct customer? Simply type in the number for the customer who is going to be billed or who is going to pay for this call. But what if you don't know the number? Ask for Help. (Press Alt-H while in the Cust ID field.) What you are seeing is our PickList help. It is showing you a list of all your customers. This list only has 12 accounts, but you could have hundreds in your list. You can use your up and down arrow keys, the Page UP/Down keys or even just type part of the customer's name to search for the correct account. The F2 key will select the next matching entry. Pressing Enter, or F2 if you are at the end of the list, will accept that entry and enter it into the program for you. Explaining how to use this feature is more difficult than using it. So just try using it! We think you will get the hang of it in a very short time. If you ask for Help AGAIN, while you are in the PickList Help, you will see Extended Comment File for the currently selected customer (in the data entry screen, not the PickList). This is a text file, and you can edit it to include or exclude whatever information you desire. This powerful feature allows your dispatcher to access information that is specific to the customer. Such as special rate information, or special delivery information. Press Alt / F / X to exit from the Editor. (This Editor can be replaced with a different one very easily. But most of our clients use the one that came with their operating system. If you have made a change to the text file, the editor will ask you if you want to save the changes as you exit. Press Enter to accept the "yes".) Back at the Cust ID field now, if you type in a number that is not valid, the program will beep at you and expect you to put in a valid number. (You can force it to ID 0, but this is just a temporary holding number and should not be used as a permanent ID.)

Try this now by entering Customer ID 141 and pressing Enter. As soon as you do, the program looks up ID 141 and finds the Customer Name, their telephone number, the person who is your contact there and their address, which it guesses is the destination for this tow. It also checked to see if they have exceeded their credit limit, if any, or if they have been put on a credit hold. You would be shown a message if this were the case. Also, it will display any special message that might pertain to this customer. A very special feature is that you can set a default rate (Income Code), vehicle type and zone for each customer using the Accounts Receivable program. That information is also used by Truck & Driver, at this point, to make your work easier and more accurate.

You can see these features in action by changing the Customer ID to 9290. To do this, use the Up arrow key to go up or back to the previous field, which is the Customer ID field. Now just type in 9290 and press Enter. The program beeps to indicate that this customer has been put on credit hold and a message indicates that this customer bounced a check.

At the Customer ID field change it back to Customer 141. You may have noticed that the telephone number, contact name and location did not change. This is because the program will honor anything that is already there. It only will put in new information if the field is blank. This will make more sense to you as you use the program. If you want to see the other addresses, use the F1 key to abort this NEW call, answer Yes that you really want to abort this new call entry, press F2 to create a NEW call (notice the call number is the same because you aborted the last use of this call number) and put in a different Customer ID. Note that if you try to Abort a New Call entry, the program will flash the screen and ask you to confirm that you are SURE you want to abort. This is to keep you from accidentally aborting a new call. Just answer with a "Y" to confirm the Abort.

When you have entered the Cust ID 141 and pressed Enter, you are at the Income Code field. The Income Code controls the towing and storage rates for the type or class of tow you are performing. It is defined using the System File option in either DATOW or TD Main Menu. It describes the source of this tow request. We have entered in 5 codes for you to use during this demonstration. The program allows for about one thousand different codes, and each code controls the towing and storage for 4 types of vehicles, so there are plenty of codes! Since customer 141 has been setup to use Income Code 300 in this demo, the program automatically changed the default income code, which is usually set to 100, (which is defined as "Local Police Dept." but it could be anything you want it to be) to 300. You will notice that the description changed to Commercial and the rate changed. It changed from $35.00 to $40 .00. But this is just a guess. You can change it. Eventually, you will set your own company rates so that this "guess" will be correct most of the time.

The next place the program goes it to the Driver number, but most of the time you may not be ready to assign this call to a Driver yet. But you may want to enter more information about this tow. To get to the top of the screen, you could press the Up arrow over and over, or just press the key marked Home once. Do this now. If you want to use the Zone feature, press End instead of Home. Enter a Zone number from 1 to 4 and press Enter. (Note that pressing Control-Home takes you to the "From:" location. This is especially handy for Public Agency calls where all they tell you is where the vehicle is. Also, pressing Control-End takes you to the Mileage Charge field. It is a quick way to change the charges. There are many "speed" features like this in our programs. As you get more familiar with the programs, you will be able to take advantange of these features.)

If you are not already there, press Home and the program will take you to the Date. If you need to change it you may do so now, but usually you won't have to. Press Enter and you can now change the time. This is the time you started to enter this call into the computer, and it is taken to be the time the call for service was received. You can change it or just press Enter to go to the Order Number. If you change the time, keep in mind that we use military or 24 hour time. (Special feature: If you enter a "D" or a "T" in a date or time field, the current date or time is entered for you.) The Order Number may be any 6 characters you choose to use. Some police agencies will give you a number, some clubs will and maybe even some commercial charge customers. You can use it if you want to, or you can just ignore it. Since this field is shown to you in the Dispatch screen, you can use this field to indicate any special circumstances you want to show the dispatcher.

The Year, Make, Model, Color and License are next and it is pretty obvious what they are. We recommend that for the Make you use the first 4 letters of the make, with the exception of MBZ for Mercedes Benz. There are PickList Help files for each of these fields, and you can modify these files. You can even create other text files and install them as the Extended Help, if you want.

This is a good oportunity to show you another feature of our programs. We call it PickList Lookup. At the Make field, enter an "F" and press Enter. The program will go the the PickList, find the first entry that starts with an "F" and enter that Make for you. As shipped, the Make "FORD" should appear. This feature works in any field that has a PickList. All you need to do is enter the first one or two letters of the entry and the program will look it up and enter it for you. If there are 3 or more characters in the field when you press Enter, the program will honor what you have entered and it will NOT do the lookup. You can modify the PickList by pressing Alt-H to bring up the PickList and then pressing Alt-E (for Edit) or Alt-A (for Alter). Then, make your changes and use the editor's commands to exit and save the changes you made. This feature is especially handy in the From and To locations. If, for example, you do many tows from a particular location, such as a shopping center or an apartment complex, you could enter that address into the PickList and, by simply entering one or two characters, the entire address will be entered for you. This is a real time saver.

The next field is labeled Trouble and is often used for the AAA T-Code. If you use them, fine. Otherwise you can use this for anything else you desire or not use it at all. It is up to you. This information is displayed in the active calls / dispatch screen.

The "FROM" is where you are going to tow the vehicle from. The "To" is the Destination. The computer has guessed that the destination is the address of the customer, but you can change that if you need to.

The next field is the comment field. You can type some special information here about this particular tow. But what if what you need to type won't fit in the space provided? We have a feature called Extended Comments and it works a lot like the Extended Help. But instead of just showing you a text file of information, it allows you to enter as much information about this tow as you want to. Lets try this now. With the cursor in the Comment field, press Alt-H once. You will see one line of help for the Comment field. Now press Alt-H again. This will bring you into the MS-DOS EDIT program with a file name that indicates this is a TD Extended comment for this call number.

Note that although we are using the MS-DOS EDIT program, you can use another text editor. Contact us if you need more information about this feature.

- Problem: You got a message in the top left corner of the screen that indicates that you are out of memory. Or the computer stopped working and seems to have frozen.
- Reason: The MS-DOS EDIT program requires a lot of memory.
- Remedy: Get to the \DTD prompt and type ALTEDIT and press Enter. This will cause our program to use a different editor that requires less memory. Or, edit CONFIG.SYS to free some memory.

This editor program has its own set of commands and help. Use the screen and your MS-DOS manuals to learn how to use it. For now, to get out of here, press and release the Alt key, press the F key, press the X key and, if another dialog box opens, just press the Enter key.

Back at the TD Daily Calls Query/Entry screen, notice that nothing seems to have happened. But from now on, any time you look at this call, the word "COMMENT" will flash to remind you that you have an extended comment for this call. If this call is sent (posted) to the DATOW Lot Control program, this extended comment will also transfer.

The next place the cursor goes to is the Contact name and then the telephone number. This could be a callback name and number or whatever you want it to be. The Contact name will transfer to the field called Release Authority if this call is posted to the DATOW Lot Control program.

If you want to save this Call, press F2. If you want to abort just press F1, answer that you are sure you want to Abort the New Call Entry, and it is as if you never did it. If you press F2, you will be given the option to print a Call Ticket. Press P if you want to, or any other key if you don't. If you do want to print a call ticket, make sure you are connected to a printer and that it has paper in it and that it is on line. TECHNICAL NOTE: Different printers behave differently, so we have options available to tell the program how to handle the printing and the ejection of the paper. See the README file for details regarding the CS environment variable.

No matter if you aborted the call, saved the call, printed or didn't print the Call Ticket, you are taken back to the Dispatch / Call Entry screen. (Actually, there is a system setup, and a hot key (Alt-K), that would enable you to stay in the call detail after a Store, but that is an advanced function used only in certain conditions. See the TD System Maintenance item called "Return to Dispatch Screen after storing a call" and ask for Extended Help. If the program refuses to return you to the Active Call screen, you probably have activated this "Keeper" feature. If this is the case, you will see a flashing "K" on the fifth line at the left edge of the Call Detail screen. Press Alt-K to turn this feature off.) If you saved it, it now appears as a red call. Calls are grouped by status (color) and by day, with the oldest at the top.

Dispatching a Call

Dispatching a call is simply the act of assigning a driver and a truck to that call. We will use call number 5 as our example. Use your arrow keys to point at call 5, if it is not already highlighted. Press Enter to get to call 5's detail screen

You will notice that the cursor is positioned at the Driver Number field. So just enter the number of the driver you want to assign to this call. To see what drivers and trucks are know to the program, press Alt-S for Status. You will see a box drop down showing 2 DRivers and 2 TRucks and their STATus. We are going to assign this call to Driver 1. Alt-S also allows you to change a Driver or a Truck Status and update Zone ETAs. More about this later. For now, press the space bar to clear the Status display from the screen and return you to the Driver number field. Now press 1 and Enter. You could also use our PickList Help to see which drivers are in the list. Then you could use the up/down arrows to select a driver. But since Driver 1 is already highlighted, you could just press Enter to select that entry from the list.

You will notice that the driver's name and two telephone numbers for that driver appear. These numbers may be the home and pager numbers or whatever you desire. These numbers are entered in another part of the TD program, called Driver File Maintenance. Also, notice that the Truck number has been guessed. This is the last truck that the computer knows this driver used, so it assumes that the same truck will be used for this call. If not, just change it. It will remember the change and use it the next time this driver is dispatched. For now, just press Enter to accept the guess of Truck 2. As soon as you do, the program tells you that this driver is free and this truck is currently assigned to a call. Or it could indicate other status conditions if you have been trying out other parts of the program. Please remember that this is only sample data, so some information may seem a little unusual. Also, since this is only sample data, and you can even restore it to the state it was in when we sent it to you, you should feel free to experiment and try out new things. Notice that the program also shows you the type of truck you are dispatching. In this case, a 92 GMC etc. It also time stamps the call with the current time. Also, the letters "OD" appear in bright blue to the left of the truck description. This is the Odometer reading for this truck. (It is automatically updated if you enter a new number for the mileage.) Press F2 to save this call and press the spacebar if you don't want a call ticket, or a "P" if you do.

It took just 6 keystrokes to dispatch this call. Now that is what we call efficient! NOTE: The "Print a Call Ticket" option can be disabled (SET CS=9). So if you never or rarely use this feature, you can save one more keystroke. And you can *still* print a call ticket by using the Alt-T key.

On Location -- 97

The next most likely event to occur for this call is that the driver will indicate that he/she is on location, or 97. To 97 call #5, just point at it, press Enter twice, F2 and either "P" or any other key depending on whether you want a call ticket. That is as few as 4 or 5 keystrokes. We are skipping over the Mileage feature for now. It is an advanced feature that you will probably use after you are familiar with the use of Truck & Driver. You can save another keystroke by pressing Alt-7 instead of Enter when you have pointed at the call you want to 97, if you are not using the Mileage feature.

Allow us a moment here to brag a bit about the Mileage feature. We have developed a way for you to tell the program how and what you charge for mileage, for each type of tow that you perform. You can have different rates for different types of tows. And you can have different rates for unloaded (to the scene) and loaded (from the scene). And you can have up to 4 rates for each type of tow. And you can set an "over/under" mileage so that a different amount is charged for the first so many miles and a different rate for miles over that number. So, if you include 5 free miles to the scene and 10 miles loaded, the program will know how to correctly calculate the Mileage charge! No other program can do that for you! You can see a sample of these rates by asking for Extended Help at the Mileage Charge field.

Notice that call #5 is no longer flashing. The flashing indicates that the ETA for that call has been "blown", but once the driver is on location, the ETA does not apply. That is why it is no longer flashing.

Complete -- 98

The next logical step that this call will probably take is to be completed. Notice that this call has now turned green and that the location is showing the destination. Get access to this call's detail screen (use the arrow key to point at call 5 and press Enter). The program will take you to the completed mileage, which we are not going to utilize at this time. So press Enter to have the program time stamp this call in the Completed or 98 category. (If you do not use the mileage feature, you can simply point at the call and press Alt-8 to skip that field and save a keystroke, just like the Alt-7 feature described above.) Another Enter will take you to the Invoice number. If your driver has used a Tow ticket invoice or some other document with an invoice number on it, you can enter it in the Invoice field. An advanced feature of TD is that the program will check to make sure that the number you enter is valid for this driver. That feature is disabled in the demo, but you can activate it via Driver File Maintenance in TD Main Menu. The next field is for a Purchase Order number. Use it if you want.

The next field is very interesting. It tells TD if this vehicle is coming into your storage yard. This demo has already put a Y in this field for this vehicle, so leave it that way. This field indicates that you can put an A for A/R or a P for Paid in here. You can also use a number, zero through nine, as a "How Paid" code. There are reports you can get that will then be able to tell you how much you were paid and how that amount was paid, i.e. cash, check, charge, etc. But it is used only if this call is going to the A/R, which is not the case this time. We will explore this feature in greater detail later.

Another Enter takes you to the charge information. Although the computer took its best guess when it created this call, it allows you to change the charge information. Perhaps this tow took a long time. Or maybe there were mileage charges. (TD can automatically calculate mileage charges, as "bragged" about on the prior page! NOTE: There is also another unique type of calculation that occurs if there is a mileage charge, and either a pair of truck odometer entries or a single total mileage number in the 98 mileage field, AND the call is posted to the AR -- more about this later.) If there is a mileage charge, put it in next to Mileage. Other charge categories are Hourly, Dollies, Labor and Standby. Each of these are self explanatory. Be sure to check out the Extended Help for the Mileage Charge field. It is an example of how you can customize our programs to your needs; any field can be made to work this way!

The next charge category is labeled O/PO/2nd which stands for Other, Pay Outs and 2nd Tow. The built-in help can be used to remind you of what this means. The Income Code, which sets the Towing, Storage and other aspects of the tow, can be set to automatically enter an amount for this O/PO/2nd field. It is usually used in cases where you are required to collect a fee for the City, County, etc. The Special category is for some other charge that we didn't anticipate. The Lot Control program uses this category for Legal Owner Notification Charges, so you should only use this field if you really have to. The last charge category is called Miscellaneous and we recommend that you use it for minus dollar amounts, if at all. Again the Lot Control program uses this category, so you should avoid using it here if you can.

The next field is the "POST/ REPOST CANCEL?" field and is used to immediately Post, Repost or Cancel (10-22) a call. The next field is the total dollars for this tow, but changing it really doesn't help because the program will automatically re-calculate the total for you when and if you change a charge category. Next is the Zone: use a number from 1 to 4.

Pressing Enter again will just take you to the beginning of the screen. You can change anything about this call you want to change at this point.

When you have this call looking the way you want it to be, you must decide whether to Save or Abort. An F1 Aborts, and it is like you were never here. An F2 will Save this call, but since the In Yard field is set to Y, a special question will be asked. Lets try this now by pressing F2. Note that after you press the F2, you have about 30 seconds to decide what to do or the program will just return to the DISPATCH screen. Don't worry. If it goes to the DISPATCH screen, just bring it back up on the screen again by typing 5 (the call number) and Enter and then F2 it again.

As usual, whenever you store a call you have the option to print a call ticket by pressing "P". But now, you see you have the option to press a "D", which will sent this call, and all this information, to the DATOW Lot Control Program. A "B" will Both print a call ticket and sent this call to DATOW. If you have a printer hooked up and ready to go, try the "B" option, so that you can see this call ticket. Otherwise, press "D". If you press a "P", or any other key (like the spacebar), you could still send this call to the yard later.

We call this function of sending a call into the DATOW Lot Control Program "Extended Hot Post". Hot Post because it posts this call immediately, and Extended because you have the ability to add more information once the call is sent to the Lot Control program. DATOW Lot Control knows about things that TD does not. Things like the VIN, do you have the Keys to this vehicle, is it on a Police HOLD and other items that are specific to the storage of a vehicle, but not to the dispatching of it.

When you press D or B, several things happen. Most noticeable is that the vehicle is shown to you in a special entry screen called Call Stored in DATOW Lot Control and you have the ability to enter additional information about the car. You do this by pressing Enter. Do that now. You notice that the cursor goes to the VIN field, because that is the first item that you probably want to add. When you have entered any and all information about this car that you choose to, press F2 to store it and you return to the DISPATCH screen. If you don't want to enter any additional information, just press any key other than Enter when the vehicle entry screen is first shown to you, and you will return to DISPATCH.

A lot of things happened in the background when you performed this Extended Hot Post. Notice that many items from the TD call detail screen were transferred to DATOW. The DATOW field called IC/DR# contains the TD call number. The Trouble Code moved to the VC Section, the Order number is now in the Note/Action Field. The contact name is now the Release Authority, and the contact telephone number is now the 2nd phone number. The Customer ID is a now the Customer ID in DATOW, the Truck and the Driver numbers came over and the vehicle now has one day's storage on it. (Future views of this vehicle will show the storage calculated from the Day In date, but this screen doesn't show calculations like that. This is really only an issue if the customer is there to redeem the vehicle or is calling about it. By that time, this step will have been performed and when you view this vehicle, all rates and charges will be accurate). If you had created an Extended Comment for the call, it too was transferred. The vehicle information came over and any information that was missing was replaced with the appropriate wording. That is, VIN becomes UNKNOWN, a missing plate is NONE and most other missing items transfer as Question Marks (???).

Back at Truck & Driver, some changes have happened there also. Bring call 5 back up on the screen (at the Dispatch screen, just type in a 5 and press Enter.) and you will see some differences. The most noticeable is that this call is now flashing "POSTED". Also, the LOG NUMBER that DATOW Lot Control assigned to this vehicle is shown. IF you have been following this Guided Tour, it will be LOG # 7 and is displayed just under the call number on the left upper portion of the call detail screen. After you have looked at this, press F1 to return to the DISPATCH screen.

There are many other functions that you can perform in the DISPATCHING / Call Access program, such as Pre-Allocation, Cloning, forcing an update, AlphaNumeric paging, jumping to the Accounts Receivable program and, for AAA contract stations in Southern California, AAAutoCall processing. Why not try Hot Posting a call to the AR? Select a call, complete it and set the Post Destination to "A" or "P". Then, after you press F2, press "A" to send that call to the AR. Follow the onscreen instructions to see how easy it is to post, and optionally pay, or partially pay, a call.

DATOW -- Lot Control

The program called DATOW is our Lot Control program. You may call this Inventory, or Yard, or Storage, but it is all the same. It keeps track of all vehicles that enter your storage lot. It knows about things that TD does not keep track of. Things like the VIN, does it have it's keys?, is it on hold?, storage rates, after hours gate fees, lien sale fees and many other things. If you do not store vehicles, then you do not need this program. But if you do, we think you will be amazed at how powerful, yet easy to use, this program is.

Most of the time, you will be in the TD DISPATCH / Call Access screen. We have already demonstrated what happens when the telephone rings and it is a call for service. But what if that phone call is someone asking about a vehicle that is, or was, stored in your lot? Or, what if someone has come to your yard to redeem the vehicle? From the TD DISPATCH screen, the DATOW Software Lot Control program, and every vehicle you now have, or have *ever* had, in storage, is just ONE keystroke away!

To access stored vehicle information, just press the Alt-V key combination. You see at the bottom of the DISPATCH screen the words "Alt-V RELEASE a Vehicle". The first step in releasing a vehicle is to get that vehicle's information on the screen. Once that is done, you can view it to answer a question about it, make changes to the information or release it.

When you press Alt-V, a Vehicle Search Screen appears. Actually, you are now in the DATOW Lot Control program, not the TD program. We have left the TD call screen on, just for your information, but you will notice that our screen name now reflects the fact that you are in the Vehicle Search and Release screen. Note: You can also press Alt-V in a Call detail screen. In fact, if you press Alt-V in the detail screen of a call that was Posted to the Yard, the Log number for that stored vehicle will be automatically entered for you in this Vehicle Search screen. Simply press F2 to bring up that stored vehicle. (If you press Alt-V again, you will return to the TD DISPATCH screen.)

Let's look at this Vehicle Search screen for a moment. The cursor is positioned in the License field, because most of the time you will probably search for a vehicle based on the plate. But notice that you can search on many other items, such as the VIN, the DATOW Log Number, the Income Code, the Year, the Make, or even just the date. (The words "Single DAY ONLY" mean that it will search on just that one day. You can adjust the program to search "ON or BEFORE"). The Special field allows you to search by many other ways, including Color, Location, Comment, Invoice # and more. Ask for Help with the cursor in the Special field for a list of the other ways. The space on the right labeled ACTIVE indicates *where* you want to search. You can look at vehicles that are **C**urrently in your possession, vehicles that have been **R**eleased, or even vehicles that were released years ago and are now stored in an **A**rchive file. Over 3 Million vehicle records can be "on-line"!

For now, position the cursor in the License field and enter a 123 and press F2 to begin the search. The program will look at the vehicles that are Currently in your possession and find the one that has been there the longest that has a 123 somewhere in the license. If you have been following along with this Guided Tour, you will have already Hot Posted a call into the yard. That vehicle was a BLUe VW with a plate of 1ABC123. So by putting 123 into the license field and pressing F2, you should have this vehicle on the screen.

The cursor is now at the lower right portion of the screen, in a field called Money Received (the label is actually "$$ Rcvd"). The program assumes you want to release this vehicle, so it is asking you to tell it how much money you are getting. The total owed on this vehicle is displayed just above this field and is labeled "TOTAL CHARGES". Since we do not know when you are doing this, this document cannot tell what the total is on your computer at this time. But look at the dollar amounts and you will see the storage calculated to "today". To the immediate left of that amount you are shown the rate that this Income Code is set for, and the number of days the vehicle has been in your possession. As a special reminder for those users who have to observe local or state laws regarding only charging one day's storage if a vehicle has been in possession less than 24 hours, the number of days in storage will flash in red if the vehicle has been in storage for 2 calendar days.

If you enter a dollar amount that is less than what is owed, it will calculate the difference and insert a minus amount under MISC. to balance the transaction. If you put in an amount greater than the amount owed, it will calculate the change you need to give back to the customer. Usually, you will just enter the amount that is owed.

Based on how much is owed and how much is paid, the program will go to the most appropriate field. Most often, you will receive the exact amount that is owed, so the program will go to the field called "Rel. To:". Here you put the name of the person you are releasing this vehicle to. If you were to leave the $$ Rec. field at 0, the program would take you to the customer ID, then the How paid, then the Check number, then the Rel. Authorization and the date of the Rel Auth before going to the Rel. To field.

Notice that the Cust. ID field already has the number for the customer that ordered the tow. This information came from Truck & Driver when the call was Hot Posted into the DATOW program's database. If there is a Cust ID, and you are going to release the vehicle to that Customer, you can press Alt-A to automatically enter the Customer's name and address.

At the Rel To field, put in the name of the person you are releasing to. For this demo, just put your own name here. The program requires that you put something here, or it will not release the vehicle.

After the Rel. To, this demo will take you to the Rel Date. However, this is because the password that you are using has been granted the right to go there. Often, you will not want your release person to be able to alter the Rel. Date, so that capability is controlled by the password.

Next comes some pretty standard information. The Street address and then the City State and Zip. Notice that there are 2 telephone number fields. The first is for the person who is redeeming the vehicle. The second contains the number of the person that ordered the tow. This information came from TD and is still there, so if you want to overwrite this second number you won't lose that information. Same thing goes for the Comment.

After the Comment, the cursor will go up to the Keys field. This is a place where you can keep track of whether or not you have the keys to this vehicle. Next is the Odometer reading.

Next is the field marked REL Veh. (Y/N). Since you can use this screen to just make changes to the record (for example, the police call to tell you that it is OK to release the vehicle, or the Insurance company came by to see it), the program needs to know if you want to release this vehicle at this time. If you do, put a Y in this space. For this demo, we want to show you a release, so go ahead and put a Y there.

The next field is the Employee Number. Each password has associated with it an Employee number and this number must match the password that started the program. For this demo, the Employee number is 1, the same as the password. (Usually they are different.) So put the number 1 in for Employee number. Notice that it is shown to you. This is because the Employee number is not a secret, but the password is private.

At this point, the vehicle is ready to release. That is because you have put a name into the Rel To field, and this vehicle is NOT on Hold. If it were, you would see a flashing yellow Y in the Hold ? Y/N field. You would need to change that to a N before releasing the vehicle. This is to prevent you from accidentally releasing a vehicle that is on a police hold. The other item that the computer checks for is to make sure that the employee number matches the password. If it doesn't you would get the message "Illegal Access - Permission denied" and you would be taken back to the Rel Veh? field.

At this point, you should have the Hold field at No, the Rel. Veh. field at Yes, the Employee number at 1 and the Rel To name with your name there. The $$ Rec. should be the amount owed. If not, make it so by moving around the screen and getting it the way it should be. If you have got this screen all changed around, and you want to put it back the way it was, just press F1 to Abort this change and start all over again. After pressing F1, the bottom of the screen will tell you what to do. But if you have everything correct, press F2 to store this screen and go to the next step.

If you press F2 and all is OK, you will notice that the Date of Rel and the Total Charges fields are flashing. We call this "Flash for the Cash." It is at this point that you must have the cash in your hands. Otherwise, you would abort this release by pressing our Abort key, which is F1. It is usually at this point that the customer will come up with a check (third party and out-of state!), or some story about how he/she doesn't have the cash. If you go ahead and complete the release, there is NO WAY to un-release the vehicle, and you will have to re-enter the information about this vehicle under a different log number and go through this whole thing again. (The reason for this is to prevent that method of employee dishonesty, and although it may seem like an unnecessary restriction, we have found it to be required.) But, if everything is AOK, and you have the money in hand, you press Enter and the vehicle will be released and an invoice will print. If you press a "2" instead of Enter, you will get 2 invoices printed. A "3" will get you three invoices. So, press either Enter, 2 or 3 now. NOTE: A 2 or 3 does NOT require an Enter. Also, notice that the top left area of the screen shows the letters "CPN". This is to tell you that the program will print the "Coupon" version of the release invoice. We have several versions.

Problem:	The vehicle didn't release.
Reason	Usually this is because it is on hold, you didn't put in the correct employee number or you didn't put a Y in the Rel? field
Remedy	If the vehicle is on hold, the program will have taken you there when you first hit the F2. Likewise if the employee number didn't match. If you forgot to put a Y in the Rel? field, just press Enter, as it says on the bottom of the screen to re-access this vehicle and try again.

Problem:	The release didn't print.
Reason:	Usually this is because the printer is not turned on or it is out of paper or it is off line or it is jammed.
Remedy:	If one of these things is the cause, the program will flash a message saying to correct the problem and press Enter to retry. If you press F1, the program will abort the effort to print the invoice, but the vehicle will be released already. There could be other reasons and remedies for this problem, mostly due to installation problems or computer problems. Call us and we will help you to correct the situation.

At this point you should have a release invoice in front of you. Most of our customers use a 2 or 3 part paper for this, so that the customer signs and they get a copy and you get one or 2 copies. Some tow yards use a laser printer and then make a photocopy of the signed release invoice which also includes the customer's drivers license. Whatever works best for you, we will support it. Also, we have the option to use a full sheet of paper for a release and using the lower portion to print whatever you want. Some use it to print a discount coupon, others use it to print a rate chart or directions to their secondary release yard. You can print any text you want there.

You may also print a Duplicate Invoice AFTER a vehicle is released. This is handy for those times when a customer loses their invoice and needs one for their insurance. This feature is password controlled, but you can try it with your demo password. Bring a released vehicle onto the screen, press F2 and press Alt-D for the Duplicate to print. NOTE: This feature is not documented on the screen.

DATOW -- Lot Control does many other things for you. Things such as VIN testing, Registered Owner lookup and insertion, many types of reports and more. We will get to some of those things later.

You can now return to TD dispatching by pressing Alt-V. Do this now.

Want to see something that is really cool! At the dispatch screen, press Alt-V to bring the Vehicle Search screen up. Now just press F2. Since you didn't give the program anything to search for, it brings up the first vehicle in the selected system, which in this case is the Current Vehicle file. Notice that this vehicle, which is Log#000001, has a flashing "RO" in the lower right corner of the screen. Press Alt-R. What you are seeing is the Registered and Legal Owner information for this vehicle. And there can be up to 6 names and addresses for each vehicle. If you do this in the "Rel To" field, the RO name and address will be inserted into the appropriate space for you when you press Enter to exit this RO display. Do this now. This capability can be restricted by password.

Now, press F1 to Abort the changes to this vehicle's information, and then press F2 to go get the next vehicle's record. (You should now have Log#2 up on the screen.) Now, with the cursor anywhere on the vehicle's information, press Alt-V. You will not return to Dispatch, since you are still in the vehicle's information. Instead, it will take you to the VIN field. Pressing Alt-V while in the VIN field will test the VIN to see if it is valid. Only 17 digit VINs for vehicles manufactured after 1980 can be tested. If the VIN is not valid, the screen will blink, the computer will beep and the letters VIN will flash in RED. If the VIN was valid, the letters VIN would turn bright blue, and, so will the Year, if the year is correct. If not, the YR will flash red. If you have entered question marks for the year, and the VIN tests good, the year will be inserted for you. Is this cool, or what? The math required for this test is beyond the scope of this document. But who cares! The program does it for you!

Press F1 to Exit from this vehicle's information screen, and then press Alt-V to return to Dispatch.

Summary

At this point, we have handled several cases. All start from the TD Dispatch screen. One was a call for service. The other was an inquiry about a stored vehicle. In fact, we treated the inquiry as a request for release. In all cases, we returned to the TD Dispatch screen.

But there are many other things that you can do with our programs. One of the primary reasons why companies use computers is to get fast and accurate reports of the business they perform. Lets look at some of those reports now.

Reports

To get to the TD reports, we must leave the Dispatch screen. Do this now by pressing F1. This should take you to the TD Main Menu. (Remember to look at the "Street Sign!) The right side of the menu is devoted almost entirely to reports. Some are called reports and some are called listings but they are basically the same thing.

The first two, menu choices 10 and 11, are just listings of the Drivers and the Trucks that the program knows about. The next choice, number 12, is a very useful report and that is where we will start this section. So choose number 12 now. Remember that you have 2 ways to choose a menu item. You can just type in 12 and press Enter or you can use your Up and Down arrow keys to highlight the item you desire and then press Enter.

The bottom portion of the screen now contains a series of fields that will allow you to choose exactly what you want to have on your Call Listing. This screen is used for all the reports, so once you understand how it works, you will know how to generate many different types of reports.

The first thing that this screen is asking for is the Truck number. If you leave it with a 00, you will get a report that includes ALL trucks. If the report you want is about just one truck, you could put that truck's number in this field. For now, leave it at 00 and press enter. This is the Driver number, and the same rules apply. Leave it at 00 for now.

The next field is the Income Code. If you leave it at 000, it will report on all Income Codes. If you put in an Income Code, it will report on just that one. But what if you want to get a report on a range of Income Codes? By putting the lower number here, and the higher number in the next field, you can do that. For example, if all your Local PD income codes are in the range of 100 to 199, you could get a report on just those calls by putting in those numbers in these two fields. For now, leave them at 000. These same rules apply to the Customer ID.

Sometimes you want to know about calls that you did just last week, or just yesterday. You can narrow the report by the date of the call. The DATES: From and To allow you to do this. If you leave the From date blank, it will show all calls from the beginning of time until the To date. Please notice that the To date is 12/31/31. This is the date December 31, 2031. So if you leave it at 12/31/31, the system will give you all calls, no matter what the date is. Since we have very few calls in the system at this point, we will leave the dates the way they are. That is, the From date blank and the To date at 12/31/31.

The next field determines the type of report you are going to get. The default is "S" for Summary, and it contains the "usual" information. A "D" for Detail gives you more information, and an "E" will Export this report for use by other programs. For example, some of our customers like to feed TD information to Microsoft's Excel or Works so that they can generate charts, graphs and specialized reports. That is beyond the scope of this Guided Tour, but if you are familiar with spreadsheet programs and charting programs, perhaps you would like to try this feature. For now, leave this as an "S" for Summary. NOTE: The "P" is for PickList generation and is not applicable to a Call Listing report. If you try to select that option, the program will beep at you. Remember that this report parameter screen is used for several different reports, so not all options are applicable to all report types. This is a good example of that.

Some reports like to print on wide paper, so that we can show you more information. But very few people use wide computer paper anymore. So we have the ability to compress the report so that 17 characters will fit where 10 would go. Leave this field at "Y" for Yes. (Note: If you are using one of our horizontal laser printer control files (LASER3H or LASER4H), this field tells the program to print the report "sideways", or in horizontal format. More about this later, and in the README file.)

Usually you want the report on paper, but sometimes you just want to see it on the screen. This next field controls where the report goes, and also can just provide totals to the printer if that is all you require. For now, leave the "P" ("P" stands for Printer, "O" is for Onscreen and "T" is for Totals only, which only goes to the printer.).

The next field tells the program which calls you want to see. You can see calls that have been Posted, calls that have not yet been posted, both Posted and Unposted calls or just Canceled calls. Change the "U" to a "B" for Both Posted and Unposted.

The next field is just what will print at the top of the report. Mostly you will just leave it as it is, but you could change it to anything you like. Perhaps "MY FAVORITE REPORT"!

Lastly, you can tell the program to start at a particular call number. This is useful when you have thousands of calls in the system. It is a speed-up feature and is not needed at this time, but you will really appreciate it in a few months. So just leave it blank or all zeros. The next time you press Enter, you will go to the beginning again. Just like all DATOW Software screens, press F2 to continue or F1 to Abort. This time, press F2.

Now you are asked one of our "pop-up" questions. There is no help available for "pop-up" questions, but they are usually so obvious that you won't need any help. In this case, the program wants to know if you want to see calls that just have a "Y" in the "In-Yard" field, just have a "N"o there, have an "A" there, have a "P" or a number "0" through "9" there, have either an A or P (or a number) there or, the default, Both (all). Press Enter to see Both, or all, of the calls.

Normally this report is shown to you in Call number order. But this next question allows you to see this report in Driver, Truck, Income Code or Customer order. For example, suppose you have 10 drivers and you want to see all calls last week but you want to see them for each driver. Instead of running this report 10 times, you could just answer that you want to see them in Driver order. The program will then separate the calls by Driver and show them to you that way.

The next question has to do with accessing Archived Calls. This allows you to report and see calls that you did a long time ago. After you have entered 15-20 thousand calls, you will appreciate this! Press Enter now to begin the report. There will be a brief message at the bottom of the screen to indicate that it is processing your request, and then the screen will go back to the TD Main Menu and the printer will print. When it is finished, get it from the printer and let's look at it.

The top of the report shows the date and time the report was run, your company name (For this demo, it says For DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY!" the page number, the type of report and how it was run. Then you see it shows the Call number, the date of the call, who the Dispatcher was, where the vehicle was towed from, the Trouble Code, the Year, Make, Model, License, the Income Code, the Type of vehicle, the Driver, the Truck, and the number of miles for that tow. The next 3 columns are "P" for Posted, "c" for canceled, and "Y" for in-Yard. Next you see the Customer ID, the Invoice number if present, the Order number if present and the Total charges for that tow.

Totals are shown near the end, along with some other information like the Average miles per call and time response analysis averages. This demo information will not yield useful information at the bottom, but when you are really using the program, we believe that you will find this information helpful.

Now lets try this same report, but in detailed mode. Choose number 12 again, select Detail and run the report again. The detailed report gives you 3 lines of information about each call. Other variations produce other results. For example, asking for Paid calls gives you a "How Paid" breakdown. Using one or a range of Income Codes or Customers gives you the option to print a AAA report sorted by order number.

There are dozens (actually hundreds) of other reports and variations available. We encourage you to experiment with them. Remember that reports do not alter data, so don't be shy. Also, try the Onscreen option and save some paper. Just remember that Onscreen reports are not able to show as much information as a paper report. However, Onscreen reports feature our ReportView capability, so that you can see the entire record that was used in creating the report. Just type the call number while the report is on the screen and see this feature in action. You can even print a copy of the call from inside this Onscreen report. If you have set the environment variable EGA=Y, and you use a lower case "o" to indicate Onscreen, the screen will be able to show you more information at one time, but it could be a little hard to read if you are over 40 years old!

Do you have a laser printer? If so, exit from the program and use the command LASER3H if you have a LaserJet3 or better, or the command LASER4H for a LaserJet4+ or better. Then return to the TD Main Menu Choice #12-Call Listing (the command DTDEMO will take you to the OPENING MENU) and try running the same report again. What you should see is the same report, but printed sideways. We think this is a bit easier to read, especially for us older folks! The question about "17 character pitch" triggers this horizontal mode if you have used one of the LASER commands with an H and you answer "Y" to the "17 character pitch" question. Most other reports work the same way, although the question about "17 chars" may be worded somewhat differently, such as "Compressed?" or "Narrow Paper?".

OTHER Truck & Driver FEATURES:

Expenses

Truck & Driver keeps track of 3 types of expenses: oil and gas, scheduled maintenance items and unscheduled (or major) expenses. Expenses are handled very much like calls. TD Main Menu choices 2 and 4 are used to enter these expenses. Choice 7 allows you to define up to 20 scheduled items. Choice 3 allows you to actually post these charges, and any unposted calls, to their respective trucks and drivers. Choices 13 and 15 allow you to print these expenses.

A feature in Expense Entry that we feel is very useful is the ability to journalize, or add to a Truck History text file, the expense entered. That is, if you press Alt-H at the Expense number, you will have the option to Add or Don't add this expense to that truck's maintenance or history file. If you Don't add it, you will go to the text file and you can add any notes you want to. If you Add it, the expense will be formatted and added for you, and you will still have the option to add any notes you want to.

You enter an expense in much the same way you enter a call. That is, you press F2 to create a new expense. You can "charge" the expense to the driver, but this is rare. Usually, you will charge the expense to the truck. An odometer reading is required. As you enter these expenses, the total for this expense is shown at the top.

One thing to note here is that you must use Choice 2 to enter scheduled items and oil/gas expenses and you must use Choice 4 to enter non-scheduled expenses. If you try to edit one type of expense while you are in the other type's menu choice, you will be denied that access and you will be reminded to use the other mode of edit/entry. TIP: You can use the up/down arrow keys to have the program search for the next/prior expense of the type that you have chosen. The program will skip over expenses of the other type.

The Full Function Demo has a few expenses already entered for you. Please examine this area of our program. You may find, as so many others have, that this is a very useful feature of Truck and Driver and that it could help you to not only get a handle on the expenses you have for each truck, but also to keep legally required records of maintenance.

Drivers and Trucks

TD Main menu choices 5 and 6 allow you to enter information about your company's drivers and trucks. Note that although you can change a driver's or a truck's status or default driver here, you should just let the program figure it out for you as you use it. Or you can use the Alt-S Status feature of the Dispatching / Call Access menu choice. A special option available to you during Driver and Truck Listings (TD Main Menu choices 10 and 11) allows you to include or exclude Drivers or Trucks in that listing based on their Status.

You can enter a lot of information about each driver and truck. Most of this information is obvious. Use the built-in help to read more about each item. Notice that each driver has two invoice sets. By making the range of acceptable invoices go from 000000 to 999999 in one set means that any invoice you use for that driver is acceptable.. If you don't do this, then when you enter an invoice number for the driver's call in TD's call detail, the program will beep if the number you enter is not in one of these two ranges. We have found that is an excellent way to catch errors. This feature is optional, and is effectively disabled, if you put in 999999 for the "to" value for either set. Shifts are required by the Commission calculation program and are another advanced feature. If you want to use the Commissions, put in a Shift of from 0001 to 2400 for each commissionable driver.

If you press Enter, or Down Arrow, at the Comment field, a text file is opened that allows you to keep unlimited information about each driver. If you are using the default editor (MS-EDIT), use the ALT-F-X keystroke sequence to exit and save your changes to this text file.

The Current, Previous and Year to Date information on the right will be maintained by the program. Do not manually change it.

Pressing F2 on a Driver record opens a second screen on the right for commissions. This is an advanced feature described in TDCOMMIS.DOC. Print it using the OPENING MENU choice #12.

Truck File Maintenance is similar to Driver File Maintenance. Pressing Enter or Down Arrow at the Insurance/Management Notes field opens up a text file to allow unlimited notes about this truck. NOTE: This is the same text file that is used to journalize Expenses. The Month to Date and Year to Date figures on the right are maintained by the program. Do not manually change them.

Pressing F2 in a Truck record takes you to the lower portion where you can set the scheduled number of days and/or miles between these up to 20 scheduled maintenance items. The system will fill in the cost and date/mileage of the last 3 events for each item. Pressing F2 again brings up the other 10 items. Note that although only the last three events are shown here, the program will remember ALL expenses for each truck, and you can get a printed or on-screen report that will show this to you.

System Maintenance

This choice (#7) allows you to modify certain items, such as your telephone number, and also change the way the program functions. See the Truck & Driver Operations Manual for details about this screen. It is unusual for you to have to change anything here, except that this is where you can customize the 20 scheduled maintenance items that are common to all trucks. Note that the "Default Hook-up Rates" are now obsolete; they have been replaced by the use of the Income Codes and the fields are used to tell the program how to handle the 97 mileage field, either as absolute miles or as an Odo reading.

A/R or DATOW

For customers who only purchase TD and DATOW Lot Control, this choice will take you to DATOW. For customers who purchase the Accounts Receivable, this TD menu choice #9 will take you there. Hint: A quick way to get to DATOW Lot Control from TD is to press Alt-V at the dispatch/call entry screen and then press F1 to abort the search. You can jump to the A/R from the dispatch screen with an Alt-R.

OTHER DATOW Lot Control FEATURES:

Vehicle counts

If you tried the Alt-V and F1 hint, you should see the DATOW MAIN MENU. It is similar to all other DATOW Software menus, but it has choices that are related to the storage of vehicles.

First, you will notice that, towards the bottom of the screen, in green, is your Vehicle Count. "Current" means vehicles that are currently in your possession. "Released" means vehicles that have been released. Although the current count will go up and down based on your business, the released count will go up and up. When it reaches about 3000, you will use DATOW MAIN MENU choice #9 to purge some of these released vehicles into an archive or history file. This approach allows you to have instant on-line access to any vehicle you ever stored, going back years and years.

Other DATOW Lot Control MAIN MENU Choices

Menu choice #1, New Vehicle Entry, is usually only used to put your existing inventory into the system when you first start using DATOW. It is also used if you do not purchase Truck & Driver, since most often TD will be used to Hot Post the vehicle into the storage program. Do you remember doing that earlier in this Guided Tour? Look back to page 15 and re-read the part about Extended Hot Posting.

Choice #2 is the search screen. We used that earlier, too. See page 16.

Choice #16, like choice #18 in the TD menu, allows you to change the date and set the time. This is useful for those times when you want to "trick" the computer into thinking that it is some other day and for those two days per year when Daylight Savings Time disrupts our lives. Also, it is nice to be able to easily set the time exactly. (Isn't it amazing that a $3.00 watch keeps better time than a $3,000.00 computer?)

Reports

Choices #3 to #7 are reports. Choice #3 is for the Department of Justice Report, which is mostly used in California, but can be adapted for other states. Reports 4 through 7 use the same selection screen, but present the data in different ways. Use the built-in help and experiment with these reports.

AR Posting

Choice #8 is for sending released vehicle information to the Accounts Receivable. See the How To Use Batch and Hot-Posting document for more information about how the AR and DATOW Lot Control and Truck & Driver work together.

Lien Sales

Choice #10 goes to the Lien Sale processing program. Even if you do not purchase the LS program, you still get to use some of that program's features and capabilities. Lien Sale choices #5 through #8 and #10 require the purchase of the LS program, but you can experiment with the other parts of this program. Note that although you have access to choice #5 in this Full Function Demo, the only thing you can do here is print a Blank LS form, and only if you have a Laser printer. But we wanted you to see the attention to detail we have in our program for printing LS forms. And although this Demo shows the California screen, we have other States available with similar screens and capabilities. Call us for more information. When you press F1 at the LS Main Menu, you will return to the DATOW Main Menu.

Leaving DATOW Lot Control and going to AR

Choice # 12 will take you to the Truck & Driver Main Menu. You can also get to TD, directly to the dispatch screen, by choosing DATOW Main Menu choice #2 and pressing Alt-V. Pick one of these methods and get to TD's Main menu and choose #9 to go to the Accounts Receivable. Or choose #13 at the DATOW Lot Control Main Menu. Either way, we are going to the AR Main Menu now.

Accounts Receivable

You get to the AR by choosing #9 from the TD Main Menu, or #13 from the DATOW Lot Control Main Menu or #4 from the OPENING MENU.

The AR is a computer program to help you to keep track of the money that is owed TO you. That is, the accounts you are due to receive. It keeps track of the payments you receive. It helps you to collect from those accounts that do not sent in their payments. Invoices, statements, payments and reports are all a part of this program. All AR programs must do these basic things, but the DATOW AR program is special because it communicates with the Truck and Driver program and the DATOW Lot Control program in a way that makes using all these programs easier.

All of your calls -- Charge, Club, COD and stored vehicles will eventually become invoices in your AR. Because of this, you will be able to determine exactly how much revenue your business is generating. Other sales, such as batteries, tires, repairs, body work or even NO PARKING signs can be entered directly into the AR. You can, at any time, ask the AR for a breakdown of your sales and receipts.

Once a month, most businesses send statements to their charge customers. This is one of the jobs that AR will do for you. In just minutes! In fact, you can create a statement for any customer at any time!

When your customers pay you, you need to apply those payments to their accounts. You need to know the date of the payment, the check number and the amount. You need to keep track of when and where exactly the payments were applied. This is another job for AR.

If your customers *don't* pay you, you need to know that, too. You need to know who owes you, how long they have owed you and how much they owe you. You may need to make collection calls. DATOW Software's AR does this all for you.

Of course, any computer program is only as good as the information it has to work with. By following the instructions in the manual, and by doing the POSTING from DATOW Software's other programs, AR will be a valuable part of your business.

Actually, what AR does is probably exactly what you are doing now. Accounting is Accounting. The principles have not changed in centuries. What is different is that instead of spending hours or days with a ledger book, you can spend just a few minutes with a keyboard.

At the AR Main Menu, you can choose to do many things. You can also see the "Integration Status." That is, the AR will tell you if it sees Truck & Driver, DATOW -- Lot Control, etc. on your computer. Remember that there is built-in help for each menu item. Use it to help yourself become more familiar with DATOW Software's AR program.

AR MAIN MENU:

STATUS & ACCOUNT/FILE MAINTENANCE

AR Main Menu choice #1 brings you to another menu, the STATUS and ACCOUNT/FILE MAINTENANCE MENU. From here, you can see the Status, or current condition, of your company, your customers, your salespersons, your products, etc. You can also modify these items here.

Notice that next to most of these choices, to the left, is some other information about that item. To the left of choice #5 you will see how many products you have defined in your AR. The Full Function demo program is shipped to you with 15 products pre-defined. To the left of #3 you will see how many customers you have entered into the AR. The full function demo program is shipped with 11 customers pre-defined.

Also, you will see in the right upper portion of the screen the date of your last End of Period, the Next Invoice number the system will use and the date of the Last Statement run. These dates are blank, since you have not yet performed these tasks. When you do, the date will be recorded and shown to you here, as well as in #6 - Company Maintenance.

The lower right portion of the screen will show you dollar amounts so that you can quickly see your current period AR information. You can see your sales for the period (usually a month), receipts (payment) and the Net.

The lower left shows the dollar amount of your entire AR system, not just the current period. This figure includes past due bills owed to you.

You make your selection the same way you do in all DATOW Software's programs. You either type the number of your selection or you can use the up and down arrow keys and press Enter.

Query

One of the nicest features of the DATOW Software AR is the ability to quickly look at the business you do with a customer. Menu Choice #7 is the Query (look at) portion of the program. Select it now.

The program wants to know which customer you want to look at. Put in 1 for the customer ID if it isn't already there and press enter. What you are seeing is the current status of the first cash account, CASH SALE MONDAY. There are six more cash accounts for each of the other days of the week. Notice that there are no transactions for this account. But press the down arrow key until you get to an account that does have transactions. In fact, keep pressing until you get to account 1044. You will see a green transaction for this account. It is a sale. With that transaction highlighted, press Enter to see the detail of that sale. This sale is from the DATOW Lot Control program. You can tell in many ways. For one, the Invoice number has a "d" (for DATOW) next to it. Also, the items in the invoice are related to storage. Also, the Cust. PO # has a log number in it. Only stored vehicles get log numbers. Press any key to get out of the detail of this invoice and back to the Query screen. Notice all the information we track. Things like the date and amount of the last sale, and the last 13 months of activity.

Now, press the down arrow until you get to account 9999. (Or you can directly enter 9999 into the Cust ID field which you can get to by pressing F1). Notice that sometimes the down arrow goes to the next customer and sometimes it doesn't. Don't worry. Actually, this is to keep you from accidentally going to the next customer. It will make more sense as you use the program.

At customer 9999, you can see that there is a payment as well as a sale. Pressing enter and the arrow keys will allow you to see that transaction's detail. Experiment with it. You can't hurt anything. In fact, this is really just a Query which means you cannot change anything; you can only look.

As time goes on, and you have more and more transactions and you have done End of Period processing, you will *still* be able to see each transaction's detail. Very sexy stuff!

When the cursor is at the Cust. ID field, you can press Alt-H once to get a PickList of all the customers. This makes it easy for you to find the customer you want to look at. But if you press Alt-H a second time, you are taken to the Extended Comment text file for this customer. Here you can keep any notes you want to about this customer.

Press F1 when you are done with this and you will return to the AR File Maintenance menu.

Customer File

The AR File Maintenance Menu Choice #3 allows you to enter new customers, change information about current customers and delete unwanted customers. Select this choice now.

When you enter most AR menu choices, and this one is no exception, the program tries to guess which Customer ID you are going to want to work with. It usually will remember the LAST Cust. ID that you worked with. If it guesses correctly it saves you time and keystrokes. If not, you just enter the Cust. ID you want.

This menu choice begins at the Cust. ID. Most often you will simply enter the ID number for the account you want to work with. Our PickList help is available to you here. Press Alt-H just once to see that list. Or you can press the UP ARROW and the cursor will go to the Customer Name field. Here you can type in the name of the customer, using up to the first 4 letters of that customer's name. If you have allowed the program to assign the Cust. ID when you first entered this customer into the computer, as will be described shortly, the program will probably go directly to the account you want. If not, you can press the DOWN ARROW key to go to the next customer. HINT: Just type the first letter of the account name and use the down arrow to get to the one you want. Try this now. Press the UP ARROW key to get to the Name field and enter a "B" and press Enter. The program will bring up account 1044 - Commercial Body Shop. This is because there are no accounts with a name that starts with "B" so the program went to the next letter -- "C".

So lets use account 1044 as an example. With the cursor at the Cust ID and it showing 1044, press Enter. The complete information about this account will now come up on the screen. Most of this information is obvious. Some things that may not be obvious are:

Ship to Address: If you put something here, the Truck & Driver dispatch program will use that as the default "TO:" address. If you leave it blank, it will use the normal address. So if you send statements to a PO Box, put the PO Box address in the first address and the street address into the Ship To address. If not, leave the ship to address blank. For Club accounts, just put a period here so that TD will not try to put the Club's address into each call's "To" location.

Terms: Discount %: This is the discount you give IF this account pays fast. Use the built-in help to read about each field. Usually, most tow companies do not use this feature, but if you do, a 2%, 10 days discount is reasonable. The NET is when the invoice is due. A unique feature of the DATOW Software's AR is that you can put, for example, a -10 in the Net Days and the invoice will be considered due on the 10th day of the month after the invoice is generated.

Taxes: If this account is subject to Sales Tax, enter a Y. Note that BOTH the Customer and the Product that you sell the customer must be set to Taxable for a tax to apply automatically.

CR Limit: This is the amount that you will allow this customer to charge before a warning is issued to the dispatcher. If you put minus one dollar here, the customer is put on a credit HOLD. Leave it at zero if you don't care to use this feature.

DO NOT enter information into the area on the lower left or the bottom right. The AR program will keep track of the dates and amounts and other items in the Charges, Credits, Balance, Last Statement and 12 Month Rolling History. Notice that 12 months plus the current month is 13 months. This is an especially nice touch that allows you to quickly see and compare this month with last year.

ACCOUNT TYPE: This is usually set to R for Regular, but we support about a dozen different account types. See the Extended Help for this field for details.

Salesperson: This is who is in charge of, or assigned to, this account. If you put each of your drivers in as salespersons, with the same number as their driver number, then TD will automatically use the driver # in as the salesperson on the invoice when a call is posted to the AR. A report is available to show you how much business you did for each assigned salesperson's accounts

Service Charge: This is to tell the program if it should add a late charge on an overdue balance. This must be Y and the option must be set during non-interim statement printing for this charge to apply.

Autobill: This is used to automatically create an invoice during statement printing. Also used during "manual" invoice creation as a default product code. You will probably never use this, but if you, for example, store vehicles on a long-term basis, this could be very helpful.

INC: This is the default Income Code for Truck & Driver to use for this customer. This way, you could set the rates you charge this customer automatically during dispatch.

T: The type of vehicle you usually tow for this customer. Also used by TD during dispatch to set the rate. For example, if the customer is a motorcycle shop, you could set this to M and the rate you charge for a motorcycle will be used by TD as it's default vehicle type.

Z: The zone this customer is in. Could be physical or logical. Also used by TD for ETA time-out warnings.

Good/Bad Comment: This is shown to the dispatcher during dispatch. This is a good place to leave a message to the dispatcher such as: "No deliveries after 5PM" or "Be sure to get a signed PO." Pressing Alt-H twice here will bring you into the Extended Comment text file for this customer.

When you are finished modifying an account's information, just as in all DATOW Software programs, you press F2 to store and save the changes or F1 or abort without making the changes, if any, permanent. Either choice will return you to the Customer ID field. An F1 at the Customer ID field will exit you from this menu choice and back to the File Maintenance Menu. But do not do that now. You are going to enter a new customer.

Entering a NEW customer is very easy. If you want to force the new account to have a particular ID number, you just enter that number. However, it is best if you allow the computer to calculate the ID number. Here is how it does that. When you enter 5 or more letters of a company name, the program assumes that you want to create a new account. (4 or less letters means you want to search for an existing account.) Using a table that is printed in the AR Operations manual, the program will calculate a Customer ID so that your accounts will be in numerical AND alphabetical order - more or less. There are some exceptions, but most often they will not affect you. Note: If the customer you are trying to create has less than 5 characters in their name, such as UPS, enter the name as, for example UPSAA. Let the computer calculate the Customer ID and then you can just edit the name to delete the AA.

Accounts with names beginning with "A" will receive an ID near 0100 and accounts with names beginning with "Z" will receive an ID near 9000. We reserve accounts 1 to 99 for CASH accounts. This means that batch posted invoices can be consolidated for cash accounts and there are certain other variations that apply to cash accounts. Most of the time, you should just let the computer assign the Customer ID.

Lets try entering a NEW customer now. With the cursor at the Customer ID field, press the UP ARROW key. The cursor will move to the Name field and the Name field will be blank. If the Name field is NOT blank, you pressed the Enter key instead of the UP ARROW, and you are about to change the account name, not create a new one. Press F1 if this happens and try again, using the UP ARROW key.

Note that any previous Cust. ID or account information that *was* on the screen is *still* on the screen. Just ignore it -- it will clear when the NEW account is created.

Now, type in the name of the account you want to create. If the name you are adding starts with the same letters as the name of an existing account, the computer will add 1 to that number and give the new account the next ID number. So if you are enter Long Beach Volkswagen and then enter Long Beach Chevy, the Chevy account will get a number higher than the Volkswagen account even though C comes before V in the alphabet. This is not usually a problem, but it is something you should be aware of in case you see it happen.

When you have successfully entered this new customer's name and pressed Enter, the word NEW will display next to the Cust. ID and the bottom right portion of the screen will tell you, in purple flashing letters, that a NEW Customer has been added. Most of the time, you really only need to enter the Name and Address of this new account. But you can put in as much or as little information as you wish.

WARNING: DO NOT enter Current Balance information here. To enter an existing balance for an account, you must enter a transaction (invoice). Then the AR program will update the customer's balance for you. Just entering an amount here is not valid and will cause the AR to incorrectly maintain that balance. We have a utility to re-calculate balances, in case you ignore this warning!

One other feature that you should know about is that each customer can have an extended comment file. At the Good/Bad Comment field (Hint: Press the END key to get there quickly.), press Alt-H twice. You are now in the MS-DOS Editor (or another Editor if you have changed EDITXHLP.BAT to activate a different Editor). You can now enter any text you wish. Using the MS-DOS Editor, as most of you will, press and release the Alt key, then F, then X and if another box opens, press Enter. You will return to the Customer Maintenance screen. Press F2 to Store and Save this customer. You can practice adding a few more customers now. When you are done, and have stored the last of these, press F1 at the Cust. ID field to return to the File Maintenance Menu.

Company File (Initialization

File Maintenance Menu Choice #6 is where you enter information about YOUR company. Here is where you can change information about your company and also you can change the way the AR program operates. Choose it now.

NOTE: Do NOT change the GL account numbers in the Debits/Credits/AR+/- area on the right side of the screen. Also, the system will set the Last Statement Run Date and the Last EOP (End of Period) date for you, so DO NOT change them.

Some things that you can change that will affect the way the program operates:

Aging: Most companies use 30, 60, 90 and 120 days for aging. But you can change that if you want. Also, when you print Statements, these figures will be used, but you can override them at Statement print time to adjust for months that are not 30 days long.

Consolidate?: This feature is now obsolete. Leave it at N.

Quantity Total?: An obscure feature. Leave it at N.

Virtual Invoices?: Allows for multi-page invoices. Another obscure feature best left at N.

Age by Due or Inv.: Affects defaults for Statements and some reports. Still another obscure feature, used by accountants for showing bankers how fast your accounts pay. They use it to determine loan and factoring rates. Leave it at D.

Cust Query Show?: After you do an End of Period, paid invoices will be sent to the Archive file. This switch controls if the Customer Query feature, which you used earlier, will show you these old, paid invoices. Some people find that they do not need to ever look at that information. Since it can really slow down the Query feature, you can turn it off here. But for now, leave it on with a Y. And just remember that you can disable it later if you want to.

When you are done with this choice, press F2 to store and save any changes you might have made or F1 to abort. You will then be given an option to get a Hard Copy, or paper report, of this information. Press F2 to get that report and look it over.

Discounting

File Maintenance Menu Choice #8 allows you to define discounts for your customers. This is a very powerful feature that will save you a lot of time and work if you do offer discounts to certain accounts. You define which customers get a discount for which products (services) you sell and the percentage or the exact dollar amount of that discount. For example, you can set it up so that a customer gets a 10% discount on towing, a 20% discount on mileage and $5.00 off labor. Another customer might get $20.00 off of towing, 10% for mileage and no discount for any other items. These are just examples. This is an advanced feature that you will probably want to read more about. See ARDISC.DOC for more information about this wonderful capability. We have made it easy for you to see this file. Just highlight menu choice #8 using your arrow keys and ask for Extended Help (press Alt-H twice). Read all about it, and press Esc when you have finished.

Other AR File Maintenance Menu Choices:

Choice #1 is to access the "mini" General Ledger that is built into the AR. These account numbers, descriptions, etc. are used to accumulate certain totals. You probably will not need to modify it.

Choice #2 gives you access to the Salesperson (we are so politically correct!). Here you can enter your drivers as salespersons. But you do not have to. If you do, here is where you will do it.

Choice #4 is for another "mini" feature. It is for keeping track of the companies you purchase products from. Most of you will never use this. But if you need it, isn't it nice that it is here?

Choice #5 is for maintenance of the products you sell. This demo is shipped with all of the products you will probably need already set up. The regular version of our programs are shipped the same way. If you need to add or edit these, you may. We suggest caution in this area, since it will cause posting to fail if you change these incorrectly. These is Extended Help for this choice. Highlight this choice and Press Alt-H twice to see that help. Esc when you are done reading that help.

This concludes our look at the File Maintenance Menu. Press F1 to exit this menu and return to the AR MAIN Menu.

Adding, Editing and Deleting Invoices

Sometimes you will need to manually enter an Invoice. Sometimes you will need to change the information on an invoice and sometimes you will need to completely delete an invoice. Sometimes you will have sent the invoice to one account and now it needs to go to another account. Or sometimes you will just want to re-print a copy of an invoice. All of these things are done with AR Main Menu choice #2. Choose it now.

NOTE: SU Series users have 3 dots next to this choice and cannot access other invoice types. PROfessional Edition users will most often use the TOW invoice format, but can access other invoice formats as needed by changing the word TOW to one of the other formats. This Full Function Demo is set to only allow access to the TOW format.

The invoice entry screen starts, as so many AR screens do, at the Customer ID. You need to tell the program which customer you will be working on. Lets use 1044. So enter the number 1044 and press

Enter. When you do, the program will show you that account 1044 is for Commercial Body Shop, that their Balance is $186.00 and that they have no credit limit. Press Enter again and the program will go the Invoice Number field. [Note that if you didn't know the Customer ID, you could use the PickList Help or you could press the UP ARROW key and you could search for the customer by their name. Or you could use the DOWN ARROW key to go through each account in order. Also, if you enter a number of an account that does not exist, you can add it here. But we do not advise that, because we prefer that you use the File Maintenance Menu Choice #3 to do it. Also, you can search for an invoice even if you do not know the customer ID. Just leave the customer ID field blank, press Enter and put in the Invoice Number you seek. But lets not do that now. We just wanted you to know that you could!]

As it clearly shows at the bottom of the screen, if you know the Invoice number, you can enter it here. But usually you will just use the up and down arrow keys to let the computer show you each invoice number for this customer. Try that now. Press the UP ARROW key once. You will see Invoice number 001001dt appear in the box. Press UP ARROW again. You will see the words "Beginning of Invoice List" display for a moment. Press DOWN ARROW and you will see the words "End of Invoice List" display for a moment. What does this mean?

There is only one invoice for this account. So when you asked the computer to show you what other invoices were in the "list" for this account, it indicated that there were not any other invoices. If there were, you would have seen their numbers in the box.

Notice the "dt" next to the Invoice number. This means that this invoice was created by DATOW - Lot Control. Now press the Enter key to "bring up" this invoice. You are now looking at the detail of this invoice, and you have the option to Delete, Edit or Duplicate this invoice. Press Enter again and you will be asked to enter a "Y" (or a "D" or "E") if you want to Delete, Edit or Move this Invoice, or leave it as an N if you just want to print a duplicate of this invoice. Use an "M" if you want to move this invoice to another account. (A "hidden" feature allows you to actually change the Invoice number by using an "I" at this point. But this is an advanced feature.) Let's try editing it. So, answer with a "Y" and press Enter. You may notice a short delay and you may see a lot of minus signs appear. This is because an edit is really a delete and a re-creation of the invoice. So if you really wanted to delete this invoice, you could press F1 again and, after answering that you are *really* sure you want to delete the invoice permanently, the invoice would be gone forever. Or you can use the Enter key or the UP and DOWN arrow keys to move around, change things and use the F2 key to store each section of the invoice and move to the next. The invoice is divided into sections and you can F2 to move forward or F1 to step backwards through each of these sections.

The last section is called Additional Terms and it is not stored with the invoice, but it does print on the invoice if you choose to print the invoice when it asks you, in the upper right corner of the screen, "Print Invoice?". You can use this for whatever you want.

You will also have the opportunity to print another original, print a duplicate (it will say "Duplicate" on the invoice), print a packing slip (not usually used by towing companies) or even print a document that looks a lot like an invoice, but say's "Estimate" or "Work Order" at the top and has a place for the customer to sign to authorize the work. Body shops and repair garages can use this feature to great advantage.

When you are done, press F1 to return to the Invoice Number field for this customer. Here you could edit this or other invoices (if there were any), or add new invoices. When you add a new invoice, you can either enter the invoice number you want this invoice to have or you can type in the word "NEW" and the AR program will assign this invoice the next invoice number in the AR's list of invoices.

There are numerous other features available to you as you enter or edit invoices, such as product code lookup and entry of new products. Most often, you will not need these features, but you will be glad they are available if you do need them.

Press F1 until you return to the AR Main Menu.

Payments

AR Main Menu Choice #3 is where you tell the AR program about payments you have received from your customers. It is also where you put in payments against your "CASH" accounts. We have made this step so easy to use, and we have added so many "creature comforts" to this part of our program, that many of our users think that this is the best part of our AR. And maybe you will agree!

Receipts Entry is another AR screen that begins by asking you which customer you want to work with. Let's use account 1044. If you have been following along with this Guided Tour, the program will have guessed that you want to pay account 1044 because that is the account you were last working with. If you do not see 1044 in the Cust ID field, put it there now. When you do, notice that the balance for this account shows on the third line from the top just above the account's name. This is more useful than you can imagine. As time goes by, you will see just how handy that is.

Press Enter now. The program will look for all open invoices for this account and show you the total number of open items under the account's name. It will also show you these items on the lower portion of the screen. Notice that the cursor is in the Check Number field. The program needs to have a reference number for this payment, and most of the time you will use the check number. But it could be any unique number. In fact, if you were to press F2 now, the program would detect that you didn't enter a check number and it will create a number using today's date. If you enter a reference number here that has already been used for this customer, you will be warned that the number already exists and the computer will ask you if you want to delete the existing payment in favor of the new payment. This is to keep you from accidentally double posting a payment, and it is how you can delete or change payments, should that need arise.

For now, either press F2 to have the program create a check number or put in some number like 1234 and press Enter. The next thing the program wants to know is the date of this payment. It will assume today's date, or the date of the last payment during this session if you are paying more than one account. But you can put in any reasonable date you wish. In fact, if you received this payment last month, and you are just now getting around to putting it into the computer, you will want to date it for last month so that End of Period reports and processing will correctly handle this payment.

The next thing the program wants to know is "How much did they pay?". You enter the amount of the check in the Payment Amount field. Note that you do not have to use the decimal point if it is an even dollar amount. Play with this some, and you will see how little of the amount you need to enter to get it right. A "hidden" feature is that if you press Alt-P at anytime while you are in this top portion of the Payment screen, the program will enter the account's balance, as of the date of the payment, as the Payment Amount. This is especially handy when paying off your "CASH" account and for certain other purposes. Try it now.

The next, and last field that you have presented to you is the How Paid Code. This optional field is a way for you to note if this payment was by cash, check, credit card, barter or whatever. Note that each of these fields has help and Extended Help, so use it to get even more information about this portion of the AR program.

When you are finished filling in this top screen information, press F2 to proceed to the lower portion of the screen. As you do, you may notice that the program tells you that it did not find a payment with the exact same Check Number as the one you are now using, so it allows you to proceed. As mentioned earlier, it would have warned you if it DID find an exact duplicate, and it would have given you the opportunity to delete the duplicate or abort this attempt to use that number.

You are now in the lower portion of the screen. This is where you will apply, or distribute, the payment against the open items. This demonstration is going to be a little unusual because there is only one open item for this account, unless you manually entered one in the prior section (Add, Edit, Review Invoices). With only one open item, it will be difficult to demonstrate how easy it is to move up and down, paying or not paying (or even partially paying) invoices. We have the ability to sort these invoices to display them to you in different ways. This is especially handy when you are paying a large club account. We can instantly take you to any invoice by simply typing in that invoice number. We can quickly take you to the last invoice or back to the first. We can go up or down part of a page or a whole page at a time. And, if you are paying a lot of invoices, our Alt-P feature will automatically apply all available funds to the oldest invoices until it runs out of funds. And of course, it does all of this accurately, even when there are "complicated" accounts with partial payments, credit memos and other transaction types that can confuse less capable programs. And get this -- there is no practical limit to the number of invoices that you may pay with one check. This means that even if you are a large company holding thousands of open invoices for one account, you can quickly and easily pay that account. Try doing that with any other program!

To pay this highlighted invoice, just press a "P". An uppercase "P" will pay the entire invoice, if there are funds enough available. A lowercase "p" will allow you to enter the amount that you want to apply to this invoice. That is, our AR program supports partial payments. Many of you may be familiar with programs that do not allow partial payments, so you know how frustrating it is to not be able to apply a payment until the entire invoice is paid. Notice that as you do either of these, the Funds Available amount will decrease by the amount of the applied payment. This makes it easy for you to see what you are doing and what you are paying.

We offer another feature that makes it easy for you to see what you are doing and what you are paying. You can change the information that is displayed on the screen about each open invoice. Notice that the lower right portion of the screen tells you that you can press Alt-D to change the display from Date to Reference. This means that the information you now see about this invoice about the date the invoice was cut, the date it is discountable and the date it is due can be changed, with just one keystroke (Alt-D) to display other, probably more useful, information about this invoice. This other information is the PO Number and Detail Reference for the invoice. Exactly what information is in these areas of the invoice varies based on the source of the invoice and what information was available when the invoice was created. Basically, this feature was added to allow club stations to see the club's order number while doing the payment. So if you entered a number into the Truck & Driver program's Order Number field when you entered the call that resulted in this invoice, that number would show. However, this invoice was for a stored and released vehicle (the "dt" after the invoice number tells you that), so the information displayed here is different. Here you see the log number of the stored vehicle. As you use the program, this very handy feature will become more clear to you. One last thing to notice about this feature. The date of the invoice is now showing only the month and day. We dropped the year to make more room on the screen, since it is very unlikely that the invoice will be more than a year old. Besides you can always switch back to see the complete date. And did you notice that the lower right screen shows the state of the display? The current state is shown in yellow.

You can also change the order in which open items are presented to you for payment. Use the Alt-S key to change the Sort order. The current state is shown in yellow. This is a very handy feature for paying large accounts that send you remittance advice in a particular order. Note that this feature only works if you have more than 3 open items. You can also go to any open item directly by simply typing that invoice's number.

Sometimes it is important to be able to see the entire invoice as you are paying it. We use our ReportView feature here to enable you to do just that. With the invoice highlighted, just press the Enter key.

If there were more open items, you would be able to use your UP and DOWN arrow keys, Page Up and Down keys and your Home and End keys to move through this list of invoices.

Statements and Other Reports

DATOW Software's AR has a complete set of reporting capabilities. Menu Choices 4 and 5 are for running these reports. Statements are actually just another kind of report, but it gets its own menu choice. We will start with Statements, which is AR Main Menu choice #4.

DATOW Software's AR supports the printing of a statement at any time. We call this an Interim statement. By answering "Y" to the first question in this screen, you can get this interim statement. Note: If you answer with a lower case "y", you will get an interim statement, but the word "INTERIM" will not print on the statement. This is handy in the case that your printer jams in the middle of a large regular statement run. DATOW Software tries to anticipate your needs.

Most of the rest of this screen is self explanatory, and do not forget that there is Help and Extended Help for each screen item. An Interim statement is just a report, so try different variations. You cannot hurt anything. A Non-Interim statement run can change data, since it stamps each customer record with the date of the statement, the amount of the statement and can optionally create a service charge transaction.

There is a pop-up question that will appear just after you press F2. It gives you the ability to supress the printing of zero balance invoice sets, that is, invoices that have been paid in full. This feature allows you to send a "short & sweet" statement that only shows unpaid items WITHOUT first doing an End-Of-Period. This allows you to put off closing the period for an extra 30 days, to allow for easy changes of invoices after the statements go out. The AR Operations manual describes this concept in greater detail.

The Statement Generator can also omit transactions prior to a certain date. This is useful in cases where you need to bill an account (usually a club) but they do not want to see on your statement invoices that have appeared on earlier statements. This feature allows you to omit these earlier transactions. You have the option to bring forward a balance of these omitted transactions, and you can even include payment transactions after the cutoff date. Technically, using these features means that the statement is NOT a true "statement", but rather a specialized report. Whatever! We added this feature to make it easier for you to deal with accounts that require this type of "statement".

Menu choice 5 is where the other AR reports and PickLists can be created. You can even print labels or envelopes. Again, these are just reports, so you cannot hurt anything. Try them! Many of these reports are also available as On Screen reports.

EOP

Menu choice 6 is where the AR End of Period process occurs. An EOP closes a month, calculates totals, clears out paid transactions and much more. It is beyond the scope of this document. But it really isn't too difficult. Read more about it in the AR manual and in the screen and help files.

DR and CR Memos

Debit and Credit memos (AR MAIN MENU choice 7) are also a part of DATOW Software's AR. They are accounting tools that you may never need to use, but if you do, you will be glad that we support them.

Utilities and other goodies

Menu choices 8 and 9 are support type programs that are not needed for day-to-day operation. Choice 8 allows you to print a payment coupon book. This is useful in the case where you might sell a car to someone who is going to pay you over some time. It makes a book like the old-style mortgage payment books. A variation on this choice allows you to print Remittance Slips, to include with your statements. Choice 9 is for access to a series of programs called Utilities. These programs will do certain very powerful tasks, most having to do with altering your database. You will usually not need to use them, but if you do, you will appreciate what they can do for you.

OTHER PROGRAMS:

DATOW Software includes many other programs. This Guided Tour is intended to introduce you to just a few of them. Contact us for details about our other products. And please use the OPENING MENU choice #12 to print our other manuals and related documentation.

OTHER FEATURES:

DATOW Software has hundreds of other features that are beyond the scope of this Guided Tour. There are many customization features and many speed features. As you use our programs, you will learn more about these capabilities and we are certain that you will appreciate the fact that we have anticipated your needs.

We hope you have enjoyed this Guided Tour. Feel free to really put our programs to the test. Try entering your own Customers, Trucks, Drivers and Calls. PLEASE CALL US at 562-426-2255 with any Questions or Problems you have.

APPENDIX A:

We have included a utility program to change the dates in our sample data so that you can see a more realistic demonstration of our programs. To run this program, you need to exit from the demo. Press the F1 key until you are at a \DTD> prompt.

The program to change the dates is called DTDDATUD. (This stands for DaTow Demo DATa UpDate.) So at the \DTD> prompt type DTDDATUD and press Enter. The program will show you some information about the dates it found and the dates it will use. Simply press Enter again. You will see some messages on the screen. When this is finished, you will be back at the \DTD> prompt. Type DTDEMO and press Enter to go back to the demo. Go to Truck and Driver's Dispatch screen and you will now see just two calls flashing (unless you are doing this before 8:47 AM, in which case only one or no calls will flash). If you want to restore the data to the way it was when you first installed the Demo, simply type REST at the \DTD> prompt and follow the on-screen instructions.

OTHER:

There are many speed features and setup options that are not described in this Guided Tour. Some you may never use, and some you may find indispensible. If you do not see something in our programs that you need, give us a call. It may already be in the program, or we may be able to add it for you.

Also, if you are having trouble understanding any part of any of our programs, please give us a call. Some of the concepts we use may be new to you. We understand! For over 16 years, we have been working with towing companies and we know how difficult computers may seem to you. Take advantage of our experience with your industry, and let us help you.

We appreciate that you have spent the time to evaluate our programs. You know that the decision you are about to make will affect your company for many years. And we know that, too. That is why we have developed this **Full Function Demonstration**. We want you to closely evaluate all your options. We have found that those who do, choose DATOW Software. We hope you reach that same decision.

Some of the things you need to consider are covered in this manual. Things like ease of use, built-in context sensitive help, the ability to search by a partial plate (any part of the plate), one key access to other parts of the programs, extensive password control, true On Screen reports (not just printed reports sent to the screen), single entry with no need to ever re-enter information and the ability to export to other programs. If you look at some of our competitors' products, you will find that big color ads in the trade publications are not going to help you when you find that it takes 8 or 10 keystrokes to go from dispatching to looking up a stored vehicle. Or that you have to put in the entire plate to search for a call/vehicle. Or that you have to pay extra (a lot extra) for AlphaNumeric paging.

Some things that you need to consider are not apparent when you look at a program. DATOW Software offers 24 hour support 7 days a week. We offer a Rent-To-Own plan and Satisfaction Guarantees. We even offer trade-in allowances for those poor unfortunate souls that purchased one of the other towing programs that are available, and then discovered that they were too difficult to use, poorly supported or not worth the effort. You need to know that the company you choose will be ready, willing and able to support you when you need help, updates or special changes.

DATOW Software is the right choice. We offer the right products at the right price.

Why put off your decision another day? Call today and order the best program with the best support.

Choose DATOW Software and you will find yourself saying what so many others have said:

"I should have done this years ago!"