

## HOW TO USE:

# DATOW Software INSTALLATION/SETUP CHECKLIST GETTING STARTED

# READ ME FIRST

## OVERVIEW:

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Your DATOW Software package includes many items. You have diskettes which contain your programs. You have some documentation that will help you to install your DATOW Software programs. You have other documentation that will help you to get your DATOW Software programs set up for your company. There is other documentation to help you get the most from your DATOW Software.

After you have installed your DATOW Software, you can use your computer and printer to generate even MORE documentation. There are manuals for each program you have purchased. (NOTE: These manuals are also "built into" the programs. You should get into the habit of asking for help and, when available, extended help.) There are some extra DOC and TXT files to help you utilize some of the more advanced features of DATOW Software. Keep in mind that some of this documentation may not apply to you. Also, some of this documentation may be "over your head." DON'T WORRY! Chances are that if you do not understand it, you do not NEED to understand it. We include the technical information for those users who are very familiar with computers and need or want to know the details.

Use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need. Also, use this checklist to make sure that you perform the installation and setup correctly. As always, we are available to assist you on the telephone should you need help. If you do, please be at the computer with it turned on and please call us at 562-426-2255. There is no charge for the first 4 calls, up to one hour total, for installation and setup assistance. However, most installation and setup issues are covered in the documentation provided to you. PLEASE READ IT. If you still need help, call us. Note that *all* calls for technical help made to our 800 number are billed at the prevailing rate. Please read the document called DATOW Software Error Handling and Support for details about our Support Policy and Support Pricing.

NOTE: If you received this document as part of the DATOW Software Full Function Demo, you should follow the instructions in the Guided Tour document that is a part of that package.

### ***What's in the DATOW Software package:***

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You should have received the following items:

- ◇ A cover letter welcoming you as a new user of DATOW Software. This letter also spells out what you are purchasing/renting, the terms of that purchase/rental, some suggestions and a reminder about our license agreement.
- ◇ An invoice for your purchase. Rental plan buyers -- please note that your invoice covers only your setup and first month's rental. Future payments are described in the cover letter you received and it is your responsibility to mail your payments on time. You will receive an invoice each month.

- ◇ Diskettes: One labeled INSTALL, one labeled KEY, one labeled DOCS and one for each system you have purchased/rented. PROfessional Edition AR users receive 2 AR diskettes. A diskette labeled BACKUP and another labeled OFFSITE may be included, so that you may learn to do backups. You do NOT use these BACKUP and OFFSITE diskettes during the installation.
- ◇ Documentation:
  - Installation Guide. This also contains the license agreement.
  - How to Use DATOW Software -- Installation/Setup Checklist--Getting Started. This is what you are reading now. Notice that it contains a number of sections, including: How to Use DATOW Software Under Windows, How to Use System Maintenance / Income Codes (rates), How to Use PickList, How to Use Hot and Batch Posting, How to Use Error Handling and Support, How to Use Backups and Other Bits and Pieces.
  - How to Use DATOW Software - The README File. This is a "pretty" version of the file that is able to be printed during installation. So unless you want another copy, you can answer No during the installation question about printing the README file.
  - How to Use: Password Access. This is very special document that MUST be kept confidential. You MUST NOT allow it out of your hands and you MUST NOT lose it.
  - How to Use ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE The OPERATIONS MANUAL (If purchased)
  - How to Use TRUCK & DRIVER The OPERATIONS MANUAL (If purchased)
  - How to Use DATOW LOT CONTROL The OPERATIONS MANUAL (If purchased)
  - How to Use AAAutoCall The OPERATIONS MANUAL (If purchased)
  - Optional: You might also receive an Addendum which may have some last minute notes or some instructions that are specific to your company. You might also receive manuals for Lien Sale Processing and/or Deficient Lien Collection.
- ◇ Labels for your backup diskettes. (NOTE: You must purchase more diskettes for daily backups. Buy the size your computer uses. Make sure that you get them PRE-FORMATTED for IBM. This will save you a lot of time and they only cost a little more.

### ***What to do now:***

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After you have checked to make sure you have received all the items listed above, you are ready for the installation of the programs. However, we strongly recommend that you take the time now to read the documentation. Even if you do not understand it, please read it. It will make more sense to you as you proceed. Then, you should get to a DOS prompt at the root of the Hard Disk you want to install the programs onto, usually C:. If your computer is running Windows 95, select Start / Programs / MSDOS Prompt to get to DOS, then CD \ to get to the root of drive C:. Do NOT use the "Shutdown and Restart in MS DOS mode" option. Follow the instructions in the Installation Guide.

NOTE: You will be asked during installation if you are Updating Only. Since this is your initial installation, answer "N"o. When you are asked if you want to load BLANK STARTUP DATA, answer "Y"es to this question.

Once installation is complete, type TOW and press Enter. Note: FF Demo users type DTDEMO.

After typing TOW and pressing Enter, press the F1 key and the spacebar. You should be at the \TST> (or \DTD for FF Demo users) prompt. Type SET and press Enter. This will show you the computer's Environment Variables. Make sure that the line TT=99 appears in this list of variables. It will usually be near the end. If you do not see it, read the How to Use DATOW Software -- The README file and look at the section called "Your CONFIG.SYS file:". It describes how to expand the environment space. Also,

if you intend to run DATOW Software under Windows, see the section of this How to Use DATOW Software -- Getting Started document about Windows. If neither of these documents are able to help you, please call us for technical support. Often a minor change is all that is required. Full Function Demo users should see PF=\DTD\PF\. If you get a message about a "potential problem", expand your environment space. Or call us for Technical Support.

**Laser or Ink Jet Printer Users:** At the \TST>, type LASER and press Enter twice. You are now set up for a laser printer. By typing IBM at the same \TST> prompt you can change back to an IBM compatible dot matrix printer. If you purchased DATOW Lot Control, read the README document section for "DATOW Users" and the DATOW Lot Control Operations Manual for installation options related to TOWMENU.EXE, TOWINVCE.INI and TOWCOUPN.TXT. Full Function Demo users: Your system came set up for a laser. If you use a Dot Matrix printer, exit to the \DTD prompt and type IBM <Enter>.

You should also read the README document for detailed information about other environment variables that will allow you to customize DATOW Software programs to, for example, take advantage of the capabilities of your color monitor, adjust the way the Truck & Driver program prints Call Tickets, the time-out feature and more.

### ***Setting up your Company's rates, Drivers, Trucks, etc.:***

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Type TOW and use the Password **11227** (which has associated with it an Employee number of **112** ) to get to the OPENING MENU's Your Selection prompt. Each screen in all DATOW Software 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. Try to get into the very good habit of looking at it as you learn to navigate around these programs.

Now you need to tell the DATOW Software programs about your company. Things like the types of tows that you perform, the rates you charge, your Trucks, Drivers and customers and more. Read the How to Use System Maintenance / Income Codes (rates) document and follow the instructions.

After you have set your rates, use Truck & Driver to tell the computer about the Trucks and Drivers you have. Use the Truck & Driver Operations Manual sections called Getting Started Driver File Maintenance and Truck File Maintenance to do this.

If you purchased our Accounts Receivable program, use the Accounts Receivable Operations Manual to enter your company information and your customers.

After you have entered your company information, and before you enter any transactions such as calls, stored vehicles, invoices, etc., you should do a BACKUP. This way, all your work in setting up your company information is preserved in the event that you need to restore to the "ready-to-go but without any transactions" state that you are in as soon as you have completed the setup.

### ***Other:***

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There is other documentation regarding BACKUPS, PASSWORDS, WINDOWS, and other areas that you should read. We put a lot of time and effort into the preparation of these documents, and we need you to read them. If you find them confusing, please let us know so that we can adjust our documents to make them more easily understood. If you are still not sure about how to proceed, please call us at (562) 426-2255. We want you to get the most from our programs and we are here to help you.

If you received our Lien Sale Processing program for California, you need to run the LSINSTAL program. You also need to set up and test your modem. Contact us for assistance. If you purchased our Lien Sale Processing program for a state other than California, please contact us for assistance.

If you want to use the AlphaNumeric Paging capability of our Truck & Driver program, print and read the file called TDPAGE.DOC. Then unpack the file called ACSPAGE.ARC. Edit TOW.BAT to set the PG environment variable. Contact us for further information and for instructions to remove the "unregistered" message that each page will have.

**TIP:** The DATOW Software Introductory Slide Show was installed along with our other programs. Some users have found it helpful to run and re-run this slide show to get a better understanding of the programs. To see this slide show, just get to a \TST prompt (or a \DTD prompt if you are using the DATOW Software Full Function Demo) and use the command DTSHOW to begin the slide show.

If you are going to run DATOW Software under Windows, find and read the section of this manual that discusses how to set up a Program Group and Icon for that purpose.

If you are using the PROfessional Edition of DATOW Software and you are running the software on more than one computer, you will need to set up each computer. The easiest way to do that is to simply copy the \TST and \VIDEO subdirectories to \TST and \VIDEO on the Hard Disk of each computer that will be running DATOW Software. Then, edit the TOW.BAT file in the root and the \TST subdirectory of each computer to point the D1, D2 and D3 environment variables to the appropriate drive on the server. you may also need to adjust the printer control file for each workstation and the TOWMENU option. Also, the other environment variables may need to be adjusted. If you are running each user from the same hard drive, as is often the case if you use Novell Netware, you should use the PF environment variable to give each user his/her own Personal File area and put the appropriate files in that subdirectory. These files include: SORTINV.BAT, TSTPRC.DAT and (optionally) TOWINVCE.INI, TOWCOUPN.TXT, and TDPAGE.DAT. Also, point the RD variable to that subdirectory. Using Netware, we have found that using the Network Adapter ID in a conditional statement in the Login Script is a good way to set these pointers. Contact us for further information if you need help.

Your DATOW Software programs are shipped to you with one password already set up. It is **11227** and it is for Employee **112**. You can add password control for each user that will need access to the computer. See the CONFIDENTIAL document about Passwords for detailed information and instructions about how you can do this. Most customers never modify the default password, but if you do, you can do it now or at any time. Full Function Demo users cannot alter the password. It is set to **1** for Employee **1**.

### **Entering Existing DATA, such as Stored Vehicles and Customer Balances:**

After you have completed the installation and setup, AND you have performed a backup of this information using our backup procedures, you are ready to tell the programs about the vehicles you now have in your yard and how much each customer owes you. Of course, this only applies if you have purchased the DATOW Software Lot Control program for your stored vehicles and if you have purchased the DATOW Software Accounts Receivable program for your accounts.

Before you do, we suggest that you run a few reports onto paper and fax them to us so that we can look them over to make sure you are doing things correctly. The reports you should run are:

- Income Code Listing. Use DATOW Lot Control if you have purchased it. Otherwise, use TD.
- Customer Listing - Summary.
- A print screen of the Company Setup screen (System Maintenance) in DATOW, TD and AR. Note that the AR will give you an option for a "Hard Copy" when you exit from the Company Initialization menu choice.

Our FAX number is 562-591-9784. There is no charge for this service. However, if this analysis indicates that you have made some mistakes, and you have exceeded the technical support time included with the programs, you may incur some additional charges for extended technical support. Again, please read the portion of this manual called How to Use Error Handling and Support for information about our support policy and pricing. Also, please make sure your reports are dark enough to fax.

Some users do not enter their existing inventory of stored vehicles into the computer. They simply start using the computer and they just keep in mind that any vehicle brought in before the day they began using the computer is not in the computer. But all vehicles AFTER that day are. This decision often depends on how many vehicles you have in inventory and how much work you want to do. If you just have a few, it will go fast. If you have hundreds, you may choose to not enter them. The choice is yours. Use the DATOW Lot Control Operations Manual to learn how to Enter a New Vehicle.

Current customer balances can be entered at this time, but many users simply wait until they are ready to let the computer generate statements. This way, the number of transactions that will need to be entered will be less, because many of them will have been paid by that time. Use the Accounts Receivable Operations Manual to learn how to Add an Invoice. As that manual clearly states, you do not just enter in a balance due, because the AR is transaction based. You must enter a transaction (invoice) to represent that balance. But you can date that transaction for some past date.

NOTE: We often hear from our new users that they intend to enter past information into the computer. That is, they are going to try to enter all activity since January 1st, or some other date. We have found that this is not such a good idea. The problem is that reconstructing past events can be very time consuming and those customers who ignore our advice to NOT try to do this often get very frustrated, and they often take months or more to get "up-to-date". Of course, the decision is yours. But we STRONGLY recommend that you do not try to do this.

### ***Ready, Set, GO!:***

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You are now ready to start using DATOW Software. The programs are chock full of on-line help, so PLEASE use it. (Alt-H is the key!) The manuals represent an enormous amount of work, so PLEASE read them. There are hundreds of features and capabilities of DATOW Software. You will probably NEVER use ALL of them, but as you get more familiar with our programs and with your computer, you will be able to use more and more. So please, do not feel that you have to use everything the first day!

A good way to learn is to, of course, read the manuals. Another way is to try to learn ONE new feature each day. For example, try running a report in a slightly different way. If you usually run it on paper, try running it on screen. Or try it for just one customer or one income code. Try answering a question differently. Eventually, you will learn more about the programs. And you will be able to get more value from the programs as you do.

If you purchased Truck & Driver, that is where you should start. Find and read the document called How to Use Hot and Batch Posting. It will help you to understand how you will use these programs. If you did not purchase TD, then go to DATOW Lot Control.

Remember to use the DTSHOW program. It will help you and your employees to learn to use these programs. You have purchased the BEST programs available for the towing industry. We want you to get good value for your time and money.

**THANK YOU for choosing DATOW Software.**



# HOW TO USE:

## DATOW Software Under Windows 3.1 or 3.11

### OVERVIEW:

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DATOW Software executes under WINDOWS as a DOS program. Many of our users prefer this approach since it gives them easy access to other programs. We have found the following to work well.

### ***Creating a DATOW Software Group/Item:***

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At Program Manager, select the desired group. Many users put DATOW in the STARTUP group, so that DATOW Software is ready to run as soon as WINDOWS starts. But you can put it in any group you desire. If you want to create a new group, choose File, then New, then Program Group. Click on OK. For Description use DATOW Software or whatever you wish. The Group File name is optional.

Choose File, then New, then program item. Click on OK. For the description, we like to use DATOW Software or just DATOW. Press TAB to move to the Command line.

For the command, use `\COMMAND.COM /K TOW.BAT`. If you are setting up the full function demo, replace the work TOW with DTDEMO. (If you have a problem with environment space, you can use `\COMMAND.COM /E:512 /K TOW.BAT`. You can adjust the /E: parameter for your system needs.)

(NOTE that there IS NOT a period at the end of the command line, and there IS a space between each parameter. So the Command line would read as follows: backslash COMMAND a period COM a space a forward slash a K a space TOW a period BAT and that is all. It is difficult to explain this any better. If you have problems reading this, get some help from someone who is familiar with computers or call us for help.)

Press TAB to go to the next field, called Working Directory. For the Working Directory, enter `\TST` if you are using the SU or PROfessional Editions of DATOW. If you are just using the full function demo, the Working Directory is `\DTD`. (Again, no period at the end, please!)

To associate an icon with this, Click on the Change Icon button, use Program Managers Icons and pick one and click on that icon. Then, click on OK. OR We include a DATOW ICON! Enter `\TST\DATOW.ICO` for the file name and try it! FF Demo users enter `\DTD\DATOW.ICO` instead.

Back at the PROPERTIES dialog box, click on OK. You will return to Program Manager within the group you selected and DATOW is now highlighted. Press Enter (or double click on it) and you should be in DATOW Software. If not, get to the DOS prompt, type Exit, highlight the DATOW Software icon and choose File/Properties. Look at what you have typed. You have probably entered something incorrectly. If you cannot spot your problem, call us for technical support.

HINT: After you have your item working correctly, use File/Copy to put it into another group. This way, if it should be accidentally deleted, you can quickly restore it.

Learn to use WINDOWS and you will find that this approach can make you very productive. Just be careful not to create more than one running DATOW at any given time! PROfessional Edition users are able to do this, but it can get confusing, so avoid doing that. You can use Control-Escape to see a Task list to see if you are running more than one DATOW at one time. WINDOWS 95 requires a different procedure, but the goal and end result is similar. Note that this procedure may not work with DOS 5.0.





# HOW TO USE:

## DATOW Software Under Windows 95

### OVERVIEW:

DATOW Software executes under WINDOWS 95 as a DOS program. Many of our users prefer this approach since it gives them easy access to other programs. We have found the following to work well.

#### ***Creating a DATOW Software Shortcut:***

At the desktop screen, **right** click on an open portion of that screen, that is, a place where there is no shortcut. Select New / Shortcut. When the Wizard prompts for the command, enter `\COMMAND.COM /K TOW.BAT`. If you are setting up the full function demo, replace the word TOW with DTDEMO. (If you have a problem with environment space, you can use `\COMMAND.COM /E:512 /K TOW.BAT`. You can adjust the /E: parameter for your system needs.)

(NOTE that there IS NOT a period at the end of the command line, and there IS a space between each parameter. So the Command line would read as follows: backslash COMMAND a period COM a space a forward slash a K a space TOW a period BAT and that is all. It is difficult to explain this any better. If you have problems reading this, get some help from someone who is familiar with computers or call us for help.)

Press Enter or Click the Next button. For the Description, we like to use "DATOW Software", but you can use any text you choose to identify this shortcut. Press Enter or Click the Finish button. Windows will create the shortcut, using the MSDOS icon.

Now right click on that shortcut. Select Properties. The Properties sheet will display with the General Tab selected. The only item that should be checked here is Attribute Archive. All other Attributes should be clear.

Select the Program Tab. Change the description to something like "DATOW Software". It probably has the words MS-DOS Prompt there now. DO NOT press Enter. The Cmd Line should be as you entered it above. For the Working Directory, enter `C:\TST` (or `C:\DTD` for the Full Function Demo or where you have installed your software if you moved it from where our install program put it). The Run option should be changed to MAXIMIZED. The Close on Exit should be checked. Select Change Icon and enter `C:\TST\DATOW.ICO` (or `C:\DTD\DATOW.ICO` for the Full Funtion Demo) and Click OK twice.

Under the Screen Tab, select Full Screen. Under the Misc Tab, clear the Allow Screen Saver. Click on OK to save this shortcut.

Test it by double clicking the shortcut. You may see the message "Cannot load SHARE from an MSDOS prompt" It is safe to ignore this, but if it bothers you, simply edit tow.bat to remark or remove the SHARE command.

You can also add DATOW to your STARTUP options, and it will execute as soon as Windows starts. Click on START / Settings / Taskbar. Choose the Start Menus Tab and Add. Then use Advanced Options to set the Tabs as described above.

Learn to use WINDOWS and you will find that this approach can make you very productive. Just be careful not to create more than one running DATOW at any given time! PROfessional Edition users are able to do this, but it can get confusing, so avoid doing that. Your Task Bar will show you if you are running more than one DATOW at one time.



# HOW TO USE:

## SYSTEM MAINTENANCE / INCOME CODES (RATES)

### OVERVIEW:

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PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT BEFORE YOU ENTER YOUR RATES.

Both DATOW LOT CONTROL and TRUCK & DRIVER share files (TOWINIT.DAT and TOW2INC.DAT) that contains certain system-wide information that both programs use. Some of this information is permanent and cannot be changed. Most of it can be changed easily. Examples of information that can be changed by you are: Your address and telephone number, your starting and current (next) release invoice number and log number, whether LOT CONTROL searches are by a single date or on an on-or -before basis, many other defaults and your towing and storage rates.

### PLANNING YOUR INCOME CODES (RATES):

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Your rates are controlled by what we call INCOME CODES. An income code defines the type of tow, that is Police Impound, Police Storage, Private Property Impound, Owner Request or Commercial. You may have several other types. The program supports 999 different Income Codes, so you do not have to worry about running out!

Each Income Code controls the towing and storage rates for 4 different types of vehicles. They are:

- C for Car
- 1 for a type 1 truck (maybe medium duty). Any type vehicle for which you charge more than a car for towing or storage
- 2 for a type 2 truck (maybe heavy duty). Any type vehicle for which you charge more than a type 1 vehicle for towing or storage
- M for a Motorcycle

The rate you assign for the towing charge is just a default or a "guess" for the computer to use to try to save you some work. If you need to change the towing charge for just a particular call, you can easily do that in that vehicle/call's detail screen. But if your rates change, you will want to change the rate for that Income Code, so that the computer "guesses" correctly most of the time.

The storage rate is a different story. You will need to let the computer use the income code to determine the storage rate, so that it can accurately calculate the storage-to-date. Any adjustment to the storage charge is made on a per vehicle basis by editing or deleting the first day's storage. For example, some states or cities require that you only charge one day's storage even if a vehicle has been stored for two calendar days but less than 24 hours. By making the First Day's Storage equal to zero, the law is complied with. You would NOT change the Income Code rate; just change that vehicle's detail.

You can also set the "O/PO/2nd" fee for each income code. This is useful when you are required to collect a fee for each vehicle. This feature, in conjunction with our reports, will make it easy for you to comply.

Income Codes are used for more than just rates. They also tell the program about how to handle certain reports (DOJ 5 and 30 day) and lien sales. This is also a reportable data item, so that you can ask the computer, for example, to show you calls or vehicles that came in under just one, or just a few, Income Codes.

Usually Income Codes start with the number 100 and are grouped together. For example, suppose you tow for your local Police Department, a state-wide police authority, and you do Private Party tows, Owner

Requests and Commercial Towing. You might make Income Code 100 be your Local PD Impounds, 101 be Local PD Storage and 102 be Local PD Owner Requests. Do you get more for a night tow? Then create 3 more Income codes for Night rates. For example 105, 106 and 107. Do you get more for inside storage? Then create 6 mode codes to cover each of the day and the night rates. For example 110, 111, 112, 115, 116 and 117. Do you see what we have done? We added 5 to the Daytime Income Code to get the number for the Night code and we added 10 to each to get the Inside Storage rate. If you tow for another PD, do the same thing, but add 50 to each. So you would have 150, 151, 152, 155, 156, 157, 160, 161, 162, 165, 166 and 167.

For the state-wide agency, begin at, for example 200. Privates at 300. Commercial at 400. For commercial tows, you might have 3 or so rates. Maybe you can call them Commercial A, Commercial B and Commercial C, with C being the lowest charges. We suggest that you leave 700 empty for now. Some of our clients have found that they like to keep track of their driver's lunch breaks, so they use the 700 Income Codes (with zero charges, of course!) and just treat each lunch break like a call.

### ***ENTERING or CHANGING A SYSTEM MAINTENANCE ITEM:***

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System Maintenance items are entered or modified by using DATOW MAIN MENU choice 11 (System Maintenance) or TRUCK & DRIVER MAIN MENU choice 7 (System file maintenance). If you purchased both, then use DATOW Lot Control instead of TRUCK & DRIVER to enter or modify a System Maintenance item that is related to storage and for income codes. Then use Truck & Driver for items that are related to dispatching, trucks, drivers, etc.

PROfessional EDITION USERS: Make sure all other users are logged out during this procedure!

This screen controls many aspects of DATOW Software programs. Each field has at least one line of built-in help which you can see by pressing Alt-H while you are in that field. We encourage you to use this help, as it will answer many questions for you. The meaning of most of these fields is obvious. Some are less so. Any time that you are not sure, ASK FOR HELP. If you are still not sure, please call for technical support.

The field labeled Starting Invoice # comes to you set up with 1001. If you want to be able to enter your own invoice number during a release of a stored vehicle, set this number to zero. The program will then allow you to enter your own number at the time of release. If you don't enter a number at the time of release, the Current Invoice # will be used. This feature is used by companies when the driver uses a tow ticket even for stored vehicles and the company wants the release invoice number to match the driver's ticket number. We do not recommend this approach, but the program will support it.

DO NOT change the Starting or Current LOG #. The program allows you to do this, but if you do it wrong, you may damage your data. There are certain conditions where this capability is useful. If, for some reason, you think you need to change these numbers, call for technical support.

The DMV Agreement Control number is not currently used by the program. But you can use this space to record that number if you want to. States other than California may require this field.

The Long Lien\$ is the amount you charge for a California over \$2500 lien sale. Other state may use this.

The field L/S P.O. City is used by the lien sale program to determine where you will mail your L/S forms. It is now obsolete, but we still maintain it because you never know when California DMV will require it. Also, other states may require it.

The Time of day is the time you conduct your lien sale. Use military time, - 0900 is 9AM, 1300 is 1PM.

The Hourly Towing Rate is obsolete. If you put a number here, it will print on the release invoice. Since the Income Code controls the Towing rate, you should probably make this number zero.

If you want to be able to release a vehicle WITHOUT a release invoice being printed, change the field called Allow NO INVOICE to a "Y"es. We don't recommend this.

If you set the Single Search Date only to "N", then DATOW Lot Control will use the DATE search field as an "On or Before" date instead of a single exact date. The Search for a Vehicle screen will show you the state of this switch, by printing the words "Single Day ONLY" or "ON & BEFORE DATE".

The Requester Code is used for California Electronic DMV access. If you have one, enter it here. It is a letter followed by 4 numbers, for example "A1234".

For Lien Sale users, you should set the fees you charge for Title, L/S and Cost of Sale. These fees are automatically applied as follows:

- Title                      When L/S mode 3 is run to request a title search.
- L/S                         When L/S mode 5 is run to create/fill-in lien sale forms.
- Cost of Sale             Whenever the date is on or after the lien sale clear date. Note: The program will take you to the Cost of Sale field AFTER the AR Product Codes section.  
    NOTE:                 In California, the total of these fees may not exceed \$70.00
- Long Lien\$             This is added to the Title and L/S fee for vehicles valued as 3 (over \$2500)  
    NOTE:                 In California, the total fees for an over \$2500 vehicle may not exceed \$100.00

One area that may not seem obvious, and has confused some new users, is the A/R Product Codes. These numbers are used by the programs DATOW and TRUCK & DRIVER to know which product codes to use when a call or a vehicle information is transferred to the A/R. If you don't use the A/R, these are meaningless. If you do, the program comes to you already set up with the necessary codes. **Changes to these codes are not usually necessary and should only be made if you need to AND you understand their usage. These are NOT your Towing, Storage, etc. RATES! Use Income Codes to set your rates.**

The Default Search Parameter is used by the Lien Sale program to determine how you usually choose to request DMV information -- by Plate, Vin or Both. You can override this on a per vehicle basis.

The publication name is for over \$2500 lien sales in California. May also be used by other states.

Set the Storage Tax Rate only if you are required to charge this fee. This rate will apply ONLY to the storage-to-date amount.

You also have the option to view and modify the paragraph that prints on the release invoice. If you don't like the current wording, you can change it, or even delete it. Put a "Y" in this field, and when you store this screen, you will be given the opportunity to modify the Release Paragraph.

When you are finished making your changes, press F2 to save your changes (or F1 to Abort). This is true in all DATOW Software programs. When you have stored the screen, you will be shown the signed paragraph if you selected that option. In either case, by pressing F2, you will eventually be shown the Income Code section of the program.

NOTE: You are unable to change the Company Name field. This is permanently set for your company. If your company name changes, you will need to contact us. There is a small fee for this change.

### **TRUCK & DRIVER USERS:**

There are some special items for Truck & Driver that can only be accessed using the TD Main Menu choice 7 (System file maintenance). So, skip this section for now and use it after you are finished with the DATOW Lot Control choice 11 steps described above AND you have entered your Income Codes, as described in the Next section (Entering or Changing an Income Code).

The first item that is special to TD is called Default Posting Destination. If most of your calls will result in vehicles being stored in your yard, you can set this to "Y". If most of your calls will go the A/R, then set this to "A". If most of your calls will go to the A/R and be Paid at the time the service is performed, you

can set this to "P". No matter how you set this, you can always change the Posting Destination for each call, usually when you enter that call's 98 information

The next item is called Default Income Code. In DATOW Lot Control, the lowest numbered Income code is the default. In TD, you can set the default to any existing code you choose.

There are less product codes in TD than there are in Lot Control, but they are COMMON so don't change them here unless you really need to. You should call us for technical support if you do.

The 97 MileageTrigger/Misc. fields are used to control how TD treats the 97 mileage. If you enter -99.99 here, the 97 mileage will be treated as a "to the location" or "unloaded" mileage.

The ticket printer port is used only in special conditions when you need to control the call ticket printer. We suggest you leave it set to "NULL:". If you set this field to something else, for example "LPT1:" Truck & Driver will print a call ticket EVERY TIME YOU STORE A NEW CALL, except for pre-allocated calls or cloned calls.

There are 20 Scheduled Maintenance items. You can change them for your own descriptions if you want to. These descriptions are also used for each truck. When you describe the Maintenance item fields, they will be tracked by each Truck you add to the system. If you need to change one or more AFTER expense data is posted, misleading reporting will occur. You can add a category at any time, but it is advised not to change an existing category. That is why you must plan ahead by listing, in advance, the maintenance items you wish to track for ALL your trucks in the system. Once defined, do not change these categories without first talking to us. **Leave the Month to Date and Year to Date figures alone.** The program will maintain them for you.

**DO NOT CHANGE** the Call and Expense numbers, starting or current. If you do, your data WILL be damaged.

The last item is to control where the program goes after you store a call. You can change it if you want, but we do not advise it. A "Y" will return you to the active call screen after you F2 a call. An "N" will leave you in the call detail screen. This could be useful for fast processing of pre-allocated or cloned calls, but recent changes to the cloning program have made this feature less often required. Also, pressing Alt-K while in the Call Detail screen will temporarily, and just for that one user, cause the program to act as if this item were set to an "N". A flashing "K" (for Keep me here) will display if you use this Alt-K feature. It is a toggle type feature; press it again to turn it off.

### ***ENTERING or CHANGING AN INCOME CODE:***

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Income codes are entered or modified by using DATOW MAIN MENU choice 11 or TRUCK & DRIVER MAIN MENU choice 7. (If you purchased both, then use DATOW instead of TRUCK & DRIVER to enter in your Income Codes.) These System Maintenance choices are where you would change your telephone number and other items. To get to the Income Codes, press F2 to store the first screen and you will see the Income Code portion of the screen open at the lower part of your display. (If you are doing this from DATOW Lot Control, you may first go to the "Signed Paragraph" edit screen. If so, just press F2 again.) PROFESSIONAL EDITION USERS: Make sure all other users are logged out during this procedure!

This screen will show you the lowest Income Code you have in the system. Usually, it is 100. When you purchased our program(s), we started you out with a code for 100 called "Towing Source". Just press the Enter key to get access to that code. You can now enter whatever DESCRIPTION you want to use. For example, here in Long Beach, CA we might use "LBPD Imp Day Outsid" Note that you have 20 characters to fit in your description, so you might have to abbreviate or even cut off some of the description, as shown above. When you have the description the way you like it, press Enter to go to the first Towing rate. This is the rate you will *usually* charge for this type of tow for a Car. Enter your rate here. If it is an even dollar amount, you do not have to put in the decimal point. (Be careful that you do not accidentally enter \$7,000.00 instead of \$70.00) Press Enter to get to the Tow rate for a Type 1

vehicle, then Type 2, then Motorcycle. Next are the storage rates for those four types of vehicles. As mentioned above, you can also set the "O/PO/2nd" charge for each income code.

If you are doing this from Truck & Driver, you can now enter base Commission rates and/or mileage rates for each Income Code. Skip down to where this manual says: DATOW AND TRUCK & DRIVER USERS:. If you are doing this from DATOW Lot Control, there are a few more entries to make.

### **DATOW USERS:**

[The next 5 extended items are for reporting and lien sales. If you are NOT in CA, and you are not required to notify authorities when you have possession of a vehicle, you can ignore this next section.]

The first extended item is labeled DOJ Flags: 5 day. In California, you are required to notify the Dept. Of Justice whenever you have a vehicle for 5 days (and again at 30 days) when that vehicle came in under authority OTHER than a police agency and you have not notified the Registered Owner. If this income code is for a police agency tow, just leave this field blank. Otherwise, put an "X" here. This is also described in the Help for this field. Do the same for the next field, which is the 30 day report.

Next, the program wants to know if this is a Public Agency tow. This is used by the lien sale program, since you have to handle things differently based on who authorized the tow. Put a "Y" if you are entering an income code that defines a Public Agency type tow, and an "N" if not. Owner Requests, even if they come through a Public Agency, are NOT Public Agency tows.

The next field is labeled "New Vehicle HOLD?" This is used if you want the program to automatically put any vehicle that comes in under this code on HOLD. We suggest that you not use this feature until you are more familiar with the program, because it can be confusing to a new user.

The next field is the PPI? field. This is to tell the system that this Income Code is for a Private Party Impound. Some of you may call this Private Person's Impound or Private Property Impound but they all mean the same thing. So if this is a PPI, put a "Y" here. Otherwise, put an "N".

### **DATOW AND TRUCK & DRIVER USERS:**

If you are using TD System Maint. to enter your income codes, there are 9 extra entries for base Commission rates and 18 entries for mileage rates per income code. These are advanced features described in more detail in the TD Operations Manual. You can skip these for now, and go back to them later. Just as in all DATOW Software programs, you can press F1 to abort or ignore any changes you may have made, or press F2 to save these changes. In either case, the cursor goes back to the Income Code number. If you have more to enter, just put in the number of the Income Code you want to create or edit and press enter. Notice that if you are creating a new Income Code, a small "n" will appear next to the number, which is the program's way of telling you that this is a new income code.

When you are finished entering new codes, or changing existing codes, at the Income Code number press F1. This will NOT abort the changes you have made, since you pressed F2 to save each one that you worked on. It will, however, exit you from this portion of the program.

### ***PRINTING AN INCOME CODE LISTING:***

---

When you are finished editing or adding Income codes, the program will give you the opportunity to print a listing of all your Income Codes. Just answer "Y" to the question if you want a list printed or "N" if you don't. A Lower case "y" will print the list in small letters. (This is a good test of your printer setup.) A "P" will create a Pick List of your income codes. TD users have another option. If you answer the question with a "C" or a "c", you will get a listing AND it will include any base Commissions and mileage charges you have set. The question about "In Alphabetical Order?" should usually be answered with the default "NO". It is rare that you want these codes printed using the Alphabetical order of the description. But, you can. It is advised to run this choice twice, once with a "P" and once with a "y". The "P" option will create a PickList help file and the "y" will print a listing of your income codes. To run it the second time, choose DATOW Main Menu choice 11 (System Maintenance - Rates) again, press F2 to get to the income codes, press F1 to not change anything in the income codes and then you will have the print

options again. Or, you can choose to create the PickList Help file by choosing a lower case "p" and the program will return you to the Income Code.

### ***A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT RATE CHANGES:***

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One interesting side effect of changing rates is that any current vehicle that has been assigned an Income Code that you change the rate for, will immediately reflect that change FROM THE DATE-IN, that is retroactively from the 2nd day forward to the current date. (The 1st day's storage is not affected.). This means that you may have to manually adjust the charges for this vehicle. Some customers create new Income codes for the new or the old rates and use them accordingly. Some just ignore the effect. It is, of course, up to you.

### ***HOW TO DELETE AN INCOME CODE:***

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Usually, you will never need to delete an Income Code. If you do, remember that this will affect all released vehicles also, so we advise you not to do this. But if you do, you can by simply changing the Description to the words "DELETE PLEASE" and storing that Income Code. The Description field must contain ONLY those words. A small "d" will appear next to the income code to confirm the deletion.

### ***OTHER:***

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Income Codes DO NOT control hourly, dolly, after-hour fees or any other charges other than the Towing and Storage rates and, optionally, the "O/PO/2nd" charge and the mileage rates. The hourly, dolly, etc. charges are added to an individual call or stored vehicle on a per call/vehicle basis. That is, if you are going to charge \$15.00 for a dolly charge on a particular call, you will manually add that charge to that call's detail. If it is easier for you to simply enter the mileage charge than it is to enter the miles and have the computer calculate the mileage charge, you can do that. Or you can setup the mileage charges for each Income Code where a mileage charge would apply and let the computer calculate this charge. If you give a flat rate for a particular tow, you will have to enter the mileage charge.

Another point to consider when you define your Income Codes regards Owner Requests. If you do not care, and you do not need to know, if an Owner Request came through a particular Police Department, you can make just one Income Code for all Owner Request tows. If you want to be able to run a report for a particular PD, but you do not want to include the Owner Requests that came through that PD, you can make an Income Code for Owner Requests for *each* PD and group all of these Owner Request codes at, for example, the 600 range of Income Codes. By separating the Owner Requests to a different range, you will be able to get a report, by range of Income Codes, of all Owner Requests, or all PD's without Owner Requests, on one report. But, if you want to include the Owner Requests, in one report, that also includes all the other tows for that PD, you will need to give that PD's Owner Requests an Income Code in the same range as the other Income Codes you create for that PD.

PLEASE do not get carried away with creating Income Codes. Remember that you can always add a new Income Code later. If you create a lot of Income Codes that you never use, certain functions will take longer than necessary. For example, if you ask for a DATOW Lot Control Current Inventory, Incoming Activity or Release Activity report, and you ask for a PC (Product Code) breakdown, the program will go through all qualifying records for EACH Income Code to develop the totals for each of the 13 products. Even though we utilize a speed feature in our programs so that this goes quickly, it will still take some time to process each Income Code. And if there are dozens of Income Codes, it could take quite some time. Remember that if you have Income Codes that you have never used, you can delete them.

If you want to fax your Income Code listing to us for a fast, free and friendly review, please use the "Y" option instead of the "y" option. A fax is tough enough to read, and the small letters make it even more difficult. Also, please make sure your printer ribbon is fresh. Light printouts make poor fax copies.



**SAMPLE & WORKSHEET:**

The following is a sample and a worksheet you can use to plan your income codes. Remember that when you actually enter these codes you will have an opportunity to print them. Note that the Tow Ath (Tow Authority) field is not used by DATOW or Truck & Driver and is now obsolete. We have left it in the program because it is a reportable field and you can use it for whatever you choose to. For the purposes of this document and procedure, you can ignore it.

Tow Inc	Towing Rates				Storage Rates				D O J	PPI	?ON			
Ath Code	Description	<C>	<1>	<2>	<M>	<C>	<1>	<2>	<M>	5Da	30D	?	HLD	
1	100	Local P.D.	50	50	75	50	10	10	15	5			N	Y
	105	L.P.D. Nite	55	55	80	55	15	15	23	8			N	Y
	110	L.P.D. Inside	50	50	75	50	15	15	23	8			N	Y
2	200	Highway Patrl	45	45	90	45	9	9	18	6		X	N	N
	210	H.P. Inside	45	45	90	45	18	18	36	12		X	N	Y
	250	Border Patrol	60	60	120	60	11	11	22	7	X	X	N	Y
3	300	Pvt Pty Impnd	60	60	120	60	12	12	24	6	X	X	Y	N
4	400	Commercial	35	35	70	35	10	10	15	5	X	X	N	N
5	500	Auto Club	15	15	0	15	9	9	0	5	X	X	N	N

Tow Inc	Towing Rates				Storage Rates				D O J	PPI	?ON		
Ath Code	Description	<C>	<1>	<2>	<M>	<C>	<1>	<2>	<M>	5Da	30D	?	HLD
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This completes our description of System Maintenance and income codes. If after reading this document you are still not sure about how to proceed, please call for technical support. Setting up your income codes, while not difficult, is probably the most complicated part of all DATOW Software programs. So if you think you need help, ASK FOR IT!. Also, since income codes are the basis for your rate structure and much of your reporting capability, it is an area that you want to get right the first time. We can help you. You can fax your proposed income codes to us for a fast, friendly review!



# HOW TO USE:

## DATOW Software's PickList

### ***OVERVIEW:***

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Beginning with Version 4.00, DATOW Software provides a PickList feature. This is an easy to use extension to our already extensive help system. You can customize it to suit your needs. We expect that it will make our programs even easier to use. We hope you like it.

A PickList is a List of items that you can search through and choose one by simply highlighting it and pressing the Enter key. For example, when the program expects you to enter a Make, pressing Alt-H twice will bring a list of Makes. You choose the correct Make and press Enter. The Make is now entered for you. Some fields do not have PickLists, because it would not make sense to have one. For example, you would not have a Pick List for VINs or PLATES because it would be ridiculous to have all VINs and Plates in the list. You do not need a pick list for the year, because the year only takes two keystrokes to enter and it would take a minimum of 3 keystrokes to access the PickList and choose one. Some items, like the How Paid Code, have PickList capability even though it only takes one keystroke to enter the item. This is because the PickList can help you to choose which is the correct entry to use. Items like Income Code, Customer ID, Driver, Truck and like items are good candidates for the PickList feature. These are either hard to remember items or can be entered faster with the PickList.

The PickList can also help to standardize input. This means that all users will use the same abbreviations or names for certain items. Color is a good example of this.

### ***Setting up the PickLists:***

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Some PickLists came to you already set up. PickLists for the Make, the Model and the Color are examples of pre-generated lists. You can add, delete or modify these if you wish, using menu choice #11 in the Hard Disk Accounting System Main Menu. If you discover Makes or Models that we have omitted, please let us know so that we can change our lists.

Some PickLists are generated by the program that uses that list. For example, when you enter Income Codes, you have an option at the end to print your Income Codes. Notice that one of your print options is "P". If you select that option, the PickList for Income Codes will be created. If you already have a PickList for Income Codes, the program will replace it with your new, modified list. Truck & Driver will create Driver and Truck PickLists using the "P" option in the Driver and Truck Listing choices in Truck & Driver's Main Menu. The PickList for your Customers is created using the Reports menu choice in the Accounts Receivable Main Menu. Choose Customer Listing and again choose the "P" (for PickList) option. Note that the AR Customer PickList is automatically updated when you add/modify/delete a customer, but the income code, truck, driver, etc. PickLists require that you choose that option.

Some PickLists are created by a special menu choice (#11) in the Opening Menu (a.k.a. The Biorhythm Menu). The PickLists for Make, Model, Color and How Paid Codes are examples of lists that are created in this menu choice. All PickLists may be modified using choice #11. Be aware that if you change these lists, they may no longer be in Alphabetical order. Also, you should remember that you have changed these lists, so that if you purchase an update or upgrade we can tell you how to preserve these lists. Otherwise, they may get overwritten by the update or upgrade.

## ***Using the PickLists:***

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Using the PickList is easy. When you are in a field that supports the PickList (you can tell if the field supports PickList help because the first line of help will be in blue and white), you simply ask for help. That is, press the Alt-H key. A List will appear. You can choose using several different methods. The simplest is to use the arrow keys to go up and down. Notice that the Up and Left keys go up and the Down and Right keys go down. End takes you to the end of the list. Home to the beginning. Page Dn takes you to the end of the displayed list unless you are already at the end of the displayed portion of the list. If you are, it will take you to the end of the next "page". The space bar will take you down the list, just as the Down or Right Arrow keys work.

You can also jump to an entry by typing in part of it. Pressing F2 will go to the next occurrence of the text you typed. Explaining how to use this feature is a lot more difficult than using it, so we suggest you experiment with it yourself. You really cannot hurt anything, so just try it. We think you will like it.

You will notice that in the lower corners of the list there are numbers. This is showing you how many entries are in the list and the number of the one you are on. Also, the last line of the list (actually part of the box) shows an up arrow, a down arrow or both. This tells you if you are able to go up or down or both. The top of the list shows the filename that is being used to show the list to you.

Notice that when you ask for help, a line of help appears at the bottom of the screen. If this help line is highlighted in blue, then there is, or can be, a PickList for this item. If it is in brown, there is no PickList, but there may be more help. If there is a flashing plus sign at the end of this help, there is extended help. If this plus sign is yellow, the extended help is specific to this item. If not, the extended help is generic to the entire screen that you are in. So pressing Alt-H while you are in a PickList will bring up the Extended Help, if it is available. Otherwise, you will go back to the field you were in when you pressed Alt-H the first time. Again, the explanation is more complicated than the feature. Use it and you will get used to it in no time.

Two exceptions to this use of Alt-H while in a PickList is during an AR Query and during Truck & Driver Call Entry when the cursor is in the Customer ID field. In these cases, you will go to the Extended Comment for the customer selected. The on-screen instructions should make this clear.

If you get into a PickList and you do not want to choose an entry, just press the Esc or F1 key to abort. If you accidentally choose an entry, when you return to the field it will show the entry you accidentally chose. Just press an up or down arrow to leave the field. Since you did not press Enter at the field, the accidentally chosen entry will be "forgotten" and the original entry "remembered".

### **PickList LOOKUP:**

PickList Help also has a lookup feature. If, for example, you enter an "F" in the MAKE field, the first entry in the PickList Help file that starts with an "F" will be entered for you when you press Enter. If you are using the MAKE.PLH file that was shipped to you, this would be "FORD". If you enter 2 characters, such as "FI", the first entry in the PickList Help file that starts with an "FI" will be entered for you when you press Enter. As shipped, this would be "FIAT". You can use Opening Menu Choice #11 (Create/View PickList files) and then select the PickList Editor / Generator Menu Choice #2 (Add and/or Edit a .PLH file) to customize this feature. If, for example, you find that you tow more Chryslers than you do Chevys, simply move Chrysler to make it the first entry that starts with a "C". If you have two or more entries that start with the same 2 letters, the lookup feature will select the first matching entry. So, if you tow more PONTIACS than you do PORSCHEs, put PONTIAC before PORSCHE in the list. Of course, since PLYMOUTH is at the top of the "P" list, it will be selected if you simply enter "P", but PONTIAC will be selected if you enter "PO".

While we see this as a nice feature for fields such as MAKE or COLOR, the real value will be in the longer fields that support PickList Help. For example, the FROM and TO fields in the Truck & Driver Call Detail screen, which are 35 characters long, can really benefit from this lookup feature. Suppose you often tow vehicles from a certain location: "Sherwood Forest Country Club". You could make an entry in the LOC97.PLH file with those words, and then simply type "S" in the FROM location. When you press Enter, the entire "Sherwood Forest Country Club" will be entered for you. Up to 30 Characters may be inserted in this way. Of course, this entry must be the first in the file that starts with an "S". If you had another entry in the file, for example, "Southwest corner of E. North St.", and you put this entry before the "Sherwood" entry, then the lookup feature would select the "Southwest" entry. You could still select the "Sherwood" entry by using 2 letters, "SH", in the FROM field.

The Case (Upper/Lower) of the character(s) that you enter for the lookup feature to use is not considered in performing the lookup. In the above examples, the lookup feature would respond the same no matter if you entered "S" or "s", "SH", "Sh", "sH"(this would be pretty weird!) or "sh". However, the Case Rule for the target field is honored. That is, if the field only accepts Upper Case, then the lookup feature will enter the information into the screen for you in Upper Case, even if the PickList entry is in lower case. If the field accepts Upper or Lower Case, the case of the entry in the PickList Help file is honored. For example, the MAKE field always is an Upper Case only field. This means that if you enter, or if the PickList lookup feature enters for you, a make such as "Ford", the program will display it as "FORD". But a field such as the FROM location can accept either Upper or Lower Case characters.

So, to recap this new feature, if you enter one letter and press Enter, the lookup will insert the first entry it finds that starts with that letter. If you enter 2 letters and press Enter, the lookup will insert the first entry that starts with those 2 letters. If you want the lookup to insert an entry that starts with the same 2 letters as another entry that is earlier in the list, you will have to use the standard PickList Help to select that entry. Also, if you enter 1 character in a 1 character field (such as Hot Post Destination) or 2 characters in a 2 character field (such as T-Code), the lookup feature will not activate. If you do not want the lookup feature to be active at any field, set the Environment Variable LU=N.

A side note to this new feature: If you edit the PickList Help files, you should save those files in another subdirectory or on a floppy. This is because if you install an update, the update will overwrite your modified files. So, unless you want to re-do that work, you should save your work so that you can restore it after an update. And by update, we mean a system update, not just the quarterly updates that many of you receive. Those quarterly updates DO NOT overwrite the PickList Help files.

**HINT:** If you decide to modify a PickList Help file, call up the PickList and look at the top of the box that opens. The name of the file which you need to modify will be displayed. All PickList Help files use the filename extension ".PLH".

**BETTER HINT:** If you decide to modify a PickList Help file, call up the PickList and Press Alt-E (or Alt-A). This will take you into the Editor with the PickList Help file that you have "up", so that you can now Edit the PickList Help file "on-the-fly". This would be helpful if, for example, you are towing many vehicles from one location, such as a Police Sobriety Checkpoint or an Apartment Complex. You could add this address to the PickList Help file that is brought up when you ask for Help at the "From" location in the Truck & Driver Call Detail screen. Then, each time you get another call to tow from that location, you can use the PickList or the PickList Lookup to quickly enter that location. Note that if there is NO PickList for an item, you will not be able to edit it "on-the-fly". You will have to use OPENING MENU choice 11 to first create that PickList. However, almost all items that can have a PickList already do.

This next item only affects existing users - new users already have this in their TOW.BAT file. Check your TOW.BAT to make sure that the following line is present, after the PF environment variable is set (if used) and before the line that starts your programs:

```
DEL %PF%*.PLH
```

This line in your TOW.BAT file will make sure that you start each DATOW Software session with a "clean slate". That is, the temporary files that we use to speed up the PickList features will be deleted and the program will create them as it needs them. This means two things: When you first use a PickList, it will take a little longer as the program makes the required file. Subsequent uses of that PickList will go much faster. This applies to each field that supports the PickList features. Secondly, anytime the program makes a new PickList, the speedup file will be automatically deleted. So, you will see a slowdown the first time you access a PickList after you have changed that PickList. The exception is when you are using our PROfessional Edition programs on a network. If you change the PickList at, for example, the server and you simply copy those changed PickList files to a workstation, you will need to exit the workstation to the \TST> prompt and type TOW to restart the programs. This will cause the line you added to TOW.BAT, in the above paragraph, to execute so that the program will use the new PickList file(s) to make the speedup files.

NOTE: The lookup feature is disabled in search screens. For example, if you press Alt-H at the Dispatching / Call Access screen to search for a call, an "F" in the Make field will NOT automatically become "FORD". This is by design.

We noticed that other towing programs have a feature similar to our PickList Lookup feature. However, we think, and we hope you will agree, that no other program performs this feature with the ease, power and flexibility that we do. We look forward to your comments.

### ***Additional Notes about the PickLists:***

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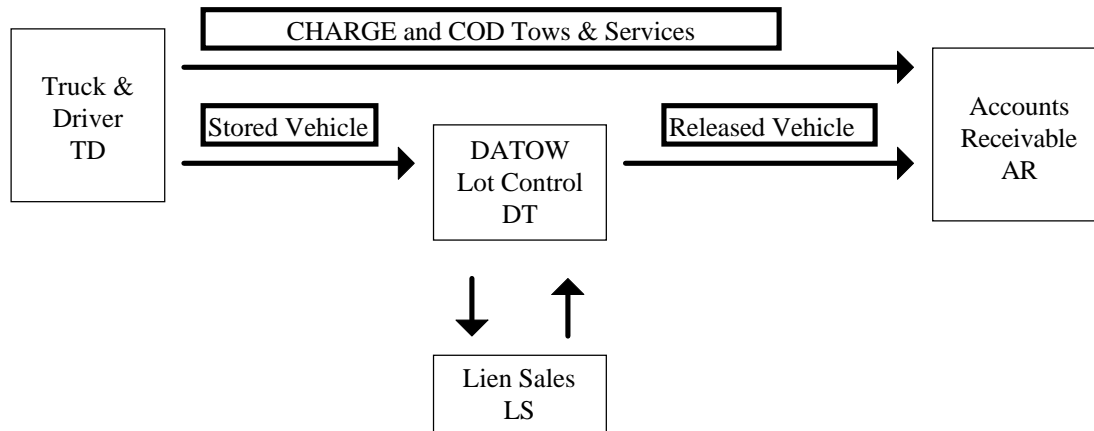
If you are using the PROfessional Edition of DATOW Software on a Local Area Network, you will need to send any changes to the PickLists to all other users. To do this is simple, but it requires a basic understanding of DOS's copy command. The PickList files that you modify are usually stored in the hard disk of the computer that performed the modifications. This is usually the C: drive. The subdirectory \VIDEO has those files. You can confirm this by exiting to the DOS prompt and using the SET command. This will show you the environment variables. Look for the variable HP. Usually it will point to the \VIDEO subdirectory. You must now copy these files (the filename extension is PLH) to the other users.

When you create a PickList Help file, you are NOT creating a physical document. It is a file. Some users have been confused about this because they expect something to print on their printer. If you want a physical piece of paper listing, for example, your customers, then choose the Summary or Detail option instead of the PickList option.

We believe we have created, or given you the ability to create, PickLists for all the items for which this feature would be useful. If you discover that we have missed any, please let us know.

## HOW TO USE:

### DATOW Software -- Hot-Posting and Batch-Posting



### OVERVIEW:

This example assumes that you are using Truck & Driver (TD), DATOW Lot Control (DT), Lien Sales (LS) and Accounts Receivable (AR). If you don't use one or more of these programs, just ignore that portion. For example, if you do not store vehicles, ignore the DT and LS portion. Each program can be used alone or in any combination with the other programs. (If you do not use TD, skip to the "A closer look at Batch-Posting DT RELEASED Vehicles to AR:" section of this manual.)

#### ***Begin at the beginning:***

All calls are entered into TD. This entry can be either:

1. after the call is complete. Some users wait until the driver turns in the tow ticket before entering information about that call into the system.
2. while the call is being performed. We call this "real time" and it takes advantage of the automatic time stamping, ETA warning, color coding by status, call ticket printing, Alpha-numeric Paging and other features. We recommend this approach.

#### ***The Call is completed. Now where does it go?:***

After the call is completed, it becomes eligible to have its information transferred to either the lot control program (DT) or to the accounts receivable program (AR). If the call results in a vehicle being stored in your yard, you simply put a "Y" (for Yard) in the "Where does it go from here?" place in that call's detail information screen. (The actual screen prompt for this field is "To <Y>ard? or To <A>cc. Rec. or <P>aid (Y/N/A/P)".) If the call is a charge for a commercial customer or it is a COD, you put an "A" (for AR) or a "P" (for AR with a Payment, even a partial payment) in that same place.

The call's information can be sent to where ever you tell it to go -- either immediately or later. We call the method of sending it immediately, or one at a time, *Hot-Posting*. The method of doing it later is called *Batch-Posting*. You can even mix and match these two methods, Hot-Posting some calls and Batch-Posting the rest. For example, you may choose to Hot-Post calls that result in a stored vehicle, but Batch-Post all others. It is best to Hot-Post stored vehicle calls, so that the vehicle is immediately available for inquiry and/or release. No matter where the call's information is sent, you return to the TD dispatch screen immediately after a Hot-Post, so you are ready for the next call or other event.

## ***A closer look at Hot-Posting TD Calls to DATOW - Lot Control:***

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When a **completed call** is stored, the program will give you an option to Hot-Post this call. The program considers a call competed when it has a 10-98 time. It then looks to see if it has already been posted, because it knows it cannot post a call twice. If it hasn't been posted, it looks at the Post Destination ("Where does it go from here?") field of the that call's information, and it gives you some options.

Lets assume that you have put a **"Y"** in that location. This told the TD program that this call is about a vehicle that is being stored in your **Yard**. When you press the F2 key to store that completed call, the TD program will give you four options: They are:

1. Press **"P"** to **Print** a call ticket. TD always gives you this option whenever you store a completed call. This option **DOES NOT** Hot-Post the call. It simply stores it Un-Posted and prints a call ticket. You can Batch-Post or Hot-Post it later. Some companies do this so they have a printed record of the call with all the completed information on it. They then have someone else Post it later, but the Lot Control program will not know about this vehicle until it is posted. This can be a problem if someone calls about the vehicle or comes to redeem it before it gets posted. So it is a good idea to not use this option, unless for some special reason you do not want that vehicle to go to the Lot Control program.
2. Press **"D"** to Hot-Post this call to **DATOW**. If you choose this option, the program will do a lot of your work for you. It will transfer most all of the call's information to the Lot Control program and it will bring that information onto the screen for you. At that time, you can press the Enter key and you will go directly to the VIN field. This is because the dispatch program does not know about the VIN (when was the last time you were dispatched to a call based on the VIN?!?!), so you can enter it easily. You can also enter other information that DT tracks but that TD does not. Information like the Vehicle Code Section under which the vehicle was stored/impounded, does it have it's keys?, is it on a PD hold? and other information. When you are finished entering this extra information, or if you choose to not enter extra information, you will return to the TD Active Calls screen. But now the vehicle is known to the Lot Control program so you can search for it and answer questions about it or even release it just moments after it comes into your yard. Other things have happened too. The lot control program assigned that stored vehicle a log number and it told TD what that number is. TD stored that number in the call's detail screen and marked that call as posted. If you bring that call back up onto the screen, you will see that the log number is there and that a blue "POSTED" message is flashing. Also, if you had entered an extended comment about this call, that information was also transferred, so you can see at any time any additional notes that the dispatcher put in about that call.
3. Press **"B"** for **Both**. This will do both 1 and 2 listed above. That is, it will Hot-Post the call to the Yard *and* print a call ticket. In this case, the call ticket will also show the log number that DT assigned to that vehicle. Good for record keeping.
4. Press **"AK"** or **Any Key**. Just about any key, other than "P", "D" or "B", will return you to TD's Dispatching / Call Access screen. The Spacebar is a good key to use whenever a program (any program) prompts you to press "any key" to continue or as an option. If you do this, the call will be stored, but it will **NOT** be posted. It is the same as choice number one, except a call ticket is not printed.

A few things to note about this Posting process (either Hot or Batch). The system will respond to the information it is being told to post. For example, if you do not enter a Year for the vehicle, the system will put in two question marks (??) in the lot control program for you. A blank plate will result in the word "NONE" being used. If you have entered an Order Number, that will go to the field labeled IC/DR, but if you didn't it will put the call number into the IC/DR field. As you use the program, you will see how it reacts differently to different situations. Another thing to remember is that inaccurate information will be transferred too. That is, if you have entered the plate incorrectly in TD, then DT will have the plate wrong too. If you make a mistake, you will have to correct it in two places. So try to be accurate.



## **A closer look at Hot-Posting TD Calls to Accounts Receivable:**

When a **completed call** is stored, the program will give you an option to Hot-Post this call. The program considers a call competed when it has a 10-98 time. It then looks to see if it has already been posted, because it knows it cannot post a call twice. (Actually, calls destined for the AR can be re-posted -- more about this later.) If it hasn't been posted, it looks at the Post Destination ("Where does it go from here?") field of the that call's information, and it gives you some options.

Lets assume that you have put an "A" in that location. This told the TD program that this call is about a vehicle that is NOT going to be stored in your yard. Instead, it is going to be sent to the **Accounts Receivable**, because it is a charge call. When you press the F2 key to store that completed call, the TD program will give you four options: They are:

1. Press "**P**" to **Print** a call ticket. TD always gives you this option whenever you store a call. This option **DOES NOT** Hot-Post the call. It simply stores it Un-Posted and prints a call ticket. You can Batch-Post or Hot-Post it later. Some companies do this so they have a printed record of the call with all the completed information on it. They then have someone else Post it later, but the Accounts Receivable program will not know about this charge until it is posted.
2. Press "**A**" to Hot-Post this call to the **Accounts Receivable**. If you choose this option, the program will do a lot of your work for you. It will transfer most all of the call's information to the Accounts Receivable program. It will create an invoice in the AR under the customer that you specified in the call and it will bring that invoice onto the screen for you, showing any discount that you may have set for this customer. At this time, you can press the Enter key and you will be able to change most of this invoice's information. For example, you may want to put some additional information onto the invoice, or you want to change the due date. When you are finished editing this invoice, or if you choose to not edit the invoice, you will have an opportunity to print the invoice. Some of our clients print the invoice and fax or hand deliver it to the customer ASAP. They have found that this results in a quicker payment. It is, of course, your option. You do not have to print the invoice now, or ever! When you are finished you will return to the TD Active Calls screen. But the AR now knows about this charge, so that when it comes time to print monthly statements (or *whenever* you want to print a statement), the information is there in the form of an invoice. Also, should the customer pay the invoice, it is there to be paid. Other things have happened too. The AR program will honor the invoice number you entered into the TD call detail screen by using it as the invoice number for this transaction. If you did not enter an invoice number into the TD call detail screen, the AR program assigned the next one in the AR's "book". If this happened, the AR told TD what that invoice number was. TD stored that number in the call's detail screen and marked that call as posted. If you bring that call back up onto the screen, you will see that the invoice number is there and that a blue "POSTED" message is flashing.
3. Press "**B**" for **Both**. This will do both 1 and 2 listed above. That is, it will Hot-Post the call to the Accounts Receivable *and* print a call ticket. Good for record keeping.
4. Press "**AK**" or **Any Key**. Just about any key other than "P", "A" or "B" will just return you to TD's Dispatching screen. The Spacebar is a good key to use whenever a program (any program) prompts you to press "any key" to continue or as an option. If you do this, the call will be stored, but it will **NOT** be posted. It is the same as choice number one, except a call ticket is not printed.

A few things to note about this Posting process (either Hot or Batch). The system will respond to the information it is being told to post. For example, if you have entered an Order Number, that will go to the invoice in the field labeled Order/Call Number, but if you didn't it will put the call number into that space. As you use the program, you will see how it reacts differently to different situations.

Another thing to remember is that inaccurate information will be transferred too. That is, if you have entered the charges incorrectly in TD, then AR will have the charges wrong too. If you make a mistake, you will have to correct it in two places. So try to be accurate.

## **A closer look at Hot-Posting TD Calls to AR with a PAYMENT:**

If you enter a "P" or a number 0 to 9, into the Post Destination field, the same steps as is described above in the section about Hot Posting to AR will occur. But one more thing will happen. Before returning you to the TD Active Call screen, you will be given the opportunity to apply a Payment to the invoice.

If you choose "A" or "B", (but not "P" or "any key" because these two choices will NOT Hot Post the call to the AR), you will be able to create a payment transaction in the AR and have it immediately applied to the customer's account by paying the invoice you just created with the Hot Post. This payment can even be a partial payment, since it is a true payment transaction. We are not simply marking the call as paid, but doing all the steps that make it a transaction. This way, the statement, your reports and on-line queries show the payment. Also, you can delete or edit the payment using the AR under the rules it imposes to ensure accuracy.

Applying a payment is as simple as it can possibly be. You need three items of information to apply the payment. You need a unique reference number, a date and an amount. The program will create a reference number for you using the call number. If you received cash, just use this number. If you were paid with a check, put in the check number. If you were paid with a credit card, you can use some other number to indicate that. As long as it is unique. This prevents the accidental double posting of a payment. The next thing the program needs is the date. It will guess that the date is today, the date of the transaction. The last thing it needs to know is the amount. It assumes that you received payment in full, so it defaults to the amount of the invoice. If, however, you received a partial payment, just put in how much you received. A fourth, and optional, item is the How Paid Code. Use a number from 0 to 9 if you want to get a report about how payments were made, i.e. Cash, Check, Credit Card, etc. When you press F2 to store this payment, you will return to the TD Dispatching / Call Access screen.

Most of the time, the system will guess and default to the correct reference number, date and amount. So most of the time, paying an invoice is just one keystroke. How's that for efficient?

A few things to note about payments of this type. Normally, when you enter a payment into the AR, an audit trail is generated to show you what you did during that payment session. We have chosen to not do this during a Hot-Post payment, so that you are not creating mounds of paper and so that it goes quickly. If you need to see what payments have been applied on any given day, you can run a transaction report in the AR and specify just that day (or date range) and ask for Payments only.

If you accidentally tell TD that this is a paid call, but realize it wasn't paid *before* you apply the payment, just change the payment amount to zero and no payment transaction will be created. Just remember to change the "P" to an "A" back at the TD call detail screen for that call, for accuracy.

If you accidentally Hot-Post a call, either with or without a payment, you can abort the transaction at the point where the invoice is first displayed to you in the "TD to AR Posting" screen. However, if you proceed past that point, and then decide that you do not want to post the call, the invoice must be removed from the AR using the AR's Add/Edit/Delete an invoice feature. You cannot abort the transaction once it has begun, but you can abort the optional payment portion of the transaction by entering a zero amount for that payment when prompted. If you find that you have sent the invoice to the wrong account, you can use our Move an invoice feature to delete it from the wrong account and send it to the correct account. Again, be sure to change the TD call detail for that call to reflect the change. Changing the information in AR or DT does NOT change the information back in TD. Note that you cannot Delete, Edit or Move an invoice if there is a payment against that invoice. You must delete the payment before you can Move or Edit or Delete that invoice. Then you may move the invoice to the correct account and re-apply the payment.

If you discover that a call was posted with incorrect information, you can use our REPOST feature to delete and then re-create the invoice in the AR after you have corrected the information in the TD call detail screen. This procedure is described later in this manual, and in the TD Operations manual.

## ***Batch-Posting -- An Overview:***

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Some users prefer to wait until an entire day's, week's or even month's transactions are entered before posting those calls. We DO NOT recommend waiting until the month is complete, because it can become an overwhelming task. If you choose to do Batch-Posting, it is best to do it no less often than once a week.

Batch-Posting has the same effect as Hot-Posting, in that the call information is transferred to either the AR or DT. Batch posting to DT is NOT advised, since you really need to have the vehicle available for inquiry/release as soon as it comes into your possession. Batch-Posting to AR is an acceptable practice. Also, there is a Batch-Post (but no Hot-Post) from DT to AR. The DT to AR Batch-Post transfers RELEASED vehicle information from DT to AR, so that the AR has a complete picture of all of your business.

When you Batch-Post, you have an extra capability that you do not have if you Hot-Post. That is the option to Consolidate invoices. Consolidation means that if you have more than one call for an account with an account number of 99 or less, you can tell the program to only generate one invoice in the AR that represents all the invoices for that customer. The advantage is that it is easier to pay one invoice than to pay dozens. You usually don't need the detail of those calls in AR, because that detail is still in TD or DT and you can look there if you need to see it. You still want the invoice to be generated in the AR, so that the AR has the total picture, so you still want to post. This consolidation feature is not available during Hot-Post.

Also, a Batch-Post will result in a report that shows you what got posted. This report does not occur during a Hot-Post, since it would create too much paperwork and it would slow you down. This is not an issue during Batch-Posting, so the program will automatically generate that report.

## ***A closer look at Batch-Posting TD Calls to Accounts Receivable:***

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The process of sending more than one call's information to the Accounts Receivable is called Batch-Posting. You specify a date range for the calls you want to post, and all Un-posted calls will be posted. Before you perform this procedure, you should be prepared by having first performed a BACKUP of all systems and by printing a Call Listing (TD Main Menu choice #12) that will show you which calls can be posted.

You can perform this Batch-Posting even if other users are using TD. But the backup will require that all users exit from all programs.

To begin the Batch-Post, print a Call Listing. Leave the Truck, Driver, Inc. Code and Cust ID fields at the default (00). Change the From: date to the date you wish to post. If you are just posting one day's calls (and we recommend that you do, at least until you have done this a few times), make the To: date the same as the From: date. If you are going to post more than one day's calls, make the To: date the last day that you wish to post. Send this report to the Printer. Select U for Un-posted. F2 to start the report. You will be asked if you want to include Lot calls, etc. Just press Enter for the default Both (or All). Normally this report is in call number order, but the next question allows you to get this report in Driver, Truck, Income Code or Customer order. The default is N for Normal. But if you have your tickets in Driver order, you may want the report in that order.

You will use this report to check the accuracy of the calls that you are going to post. Make sure the invoice numbers are correct, that the customer ID's are correct and that the dollar amounts are correct. Also, check to see that all calls scheduled to go to the Yard are posted. If you need to make corrections, do so by accessing the call using TD Main Menu choice #1 (Daily Calls Entry - DISPATCH).

HINT: If you are processing just one day's calls, or if you are going through a driver's tickets, use the Alt-H key at the Active Calls/Dispatch screen to Search for the calls, using either the date or the driver number, whichever is appropriate. Then, when the first call is displayed to you, press the Alt-K key. This will Keep you in the call detail screen even when you press F2. This way, you can make a quick modification to a call, store that call and use the Page Up key to go to the next call. When you are finished, press Alt-K again to turn this "Keep you in the call detail" feature off.

If you have made a lot of corrections, you should re-print the call listing report and check it again. You will be saving this report, so you want it free of too many manual corrections.

When you have made all your corrections, you are ready to post. Step #3 in the TD Main Menu is used for this purpose. So select that menu choice and put in the dates you want to post. Expenses are also posted here, but you can ignore that for now. When and if you begin to use the Expenses portion of TD, the expenses will be applied to the trucks using this step. But that is probably not a concern of yours right now. When you press F2, you will be asked if you want to consolidate invoices. As described earlier in this document, only calls with a Cust ID of 99 or less are eligible for consolidation. If you answer Yes to this question, all invoices for an account will be consolidated, or combined, into just one invoice. This is usually acceptable, since these are usually CASH calls that you don't need to run statements for. BE AWARE that the date used for a consolidated invoice will be the date of posting, so you may want to change the computer's date in the event that you are posting calls from a prior month. Just remember to change the date back to the current date when you are finished. Most first time users should enter a No to this question. It is an advanced feature and only suitable for certain yards. The question about scanning for zero balance calls is also an advanced feature, so just go with the default.

A new feature for Batch Posting in Truck & Driver is the "Select" Option. using this feature, you can selectively batch post. For example, you could choose to only batch post one driver's calls, all calls but only for one or a few customers, just one or a few income codes, and more. Simply follow the screen instructions.

Some of our users have gotten into the excellent habit of noting the current AR figures before beginning a posting and then again after the posting. The AR should change by the amount of the posting. That amount will be shown to you in the TD to AR POSTING REPORT and it should match the call listing report that you ran before the posting. If not, then something did not get posted and you will need to look over these reports to determine what that was.

If you have unposted calls that are scheduled to go into the Yard, the Batch-Post program will ask you if you want to send them to the Yard. BE CAREFUL!! If you respond with a Y or an F2, and those vehicles were manually entered into DATOW Lot Control, using DATOW MAIN Menu choice 1 (New Vehicle Entry), you will have the vehicle in the lot twice. Pressing No to the Post to Yard question will mark the call as POSTED, but NOT send it to the lot control. Pressing F1 is like answering No to all calls with a "Y" in the "Where to go from here?" field.

The TD to AR POSTING REPORT will show you each customer for which calls were transferred and invoices created. In the case of consolidated invoices, only one entry for the total amount will be shown. Also, consolidated invoices will be assigned an AR invoice number, not a driver's invoice number. This report will break down each charge and give you totals for each category of charge (product code). You should staple this report to the call listing report you generated at the beginning of this procedure and save it for future reference. Please do not throw it out. If you have any questions, we will need to see those reports to determine what may have happened.

## ***A closer look at Batch-Posting DT RELEASED Vehicles to AR:***

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DATOW Lot Control can send calls to the AR in a Batch, just as TD does. In fact, this is the only way to send RELEASED Vehicle information to the AR. There is no Hot-Post option for DT to AR. And, of course, this procedure works only on released vehicles, because current vehicles are not income until and unless they are released.

There is no need to run a Released Activity Report (which is like a Call Listing report in TD) before beginning the Batch-Post. The program will generate this report for you, before it completes the posting. If there are errors, you can simply abort the procedure, make your corrections and re-do the procedure.

Batch-Posting from DATOW to AR is DATOW Main Menu choice # 8 AR Posting. Again you answer the screen questions and follow the screen instructions. Posted calls are so indicated in the released vehicle by an "X" in the Posted Flag portion of the record. The same rules about consolidation apply here as they do to TD.

## ***Hot-REposting:***

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Truck & Driver supports a special feature that allows you to REPOST a call. That is, if a call has already been posted to the AR, but you notice that the information about it is incorrect in the TD call detail, you can make the change to the call detail and REPOST that call to the AR. There are some limitations to this process, and it should be used with caution. But, if you need to use it, it is much easier than the old way of going to the AR, selecting Add/Edit/Review Invoices, bringing up the customer, bringing up the invoice, editing the invoice and then returning to TD.

To Repost a call, simply get access to the call detail screen for that call in TD. Then, make whatever changes you need to make. For example, perhaps the PO number was left off in the original posting, or the dollar amounts are incorrect. Then position the cursor in the field labeled "Post/Repost Cancel?" and put an "R" (for **R**epost) in that field. (Hint: To quickly get to that field, press the End key and then the up arrow key 2 to 4 times - varies by password authority.) When you press Enter (or down arrow), the program will *immediately* evaluate the call and, if it qualifies for Reposting, it will repost the call *immediately*. To qualify, the call must have already been posted to the AR, there must NOT be a payment applied to the AR invoice, the date of the AR invoice must be after the last AR EOP date. If you have changed the invoice number, or the Cust ID to another customer, you will still have the option to repost this call. The invoice will then be either a DUPLICATE or in BOTH customers' accounts.

An interesting variation of this feature is that an Unposted call may be *immediately* posted if you put a "P" in the "Post/Repost Cancel?" field and the call is completed and unposted. This applies to ALL Post Destinations. Using this feature is similar to storing the completed call and then answering the Post question with a "D" (if the Post Destination is "Y") or an "A" (if the Post Destination is an "A", "P" or number 0 to 9). The advantage to using this feature is that you save a few keystrokes.

## ***A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT Hot-Posting:***

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One thing that has confused some of our users is that sometimes a Yard posted call will have a Date-In that is one day past the date shown on the call. That is, you send a call to the Yard, but the Lot Control program thinks the car came in the day after the date of the call. This is because the program looks at the 98 time and compares it to the time the call was received. If the 98 time is before the received time, the call must have started one day and the program assumes it finished the next day. That is, it crossed midnight. Therefore, the Lot Control program will advance the date one day to compensate for this.

SUMMARY: You may have noticed that the description for Hot Posting to DATOW and to the AR are very similar. That is because the process is very similar. We designed the program this way so it is easy for you to learn and to use.

## ***Slow Posting***

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If posting is taking too long, it is probably because you have thousands of invoices in the account you are posting to. The AR has a flag in the System Maintenance section that tells the posting program to check for duplicate invoice numbers and to assign a new invoice number if a duplicate is detected. This can take a minute or more for each posting.

A way around this is to turn off the DC (Duplicate Check) flag in the AR. The danger here is that if a duplicate invoice is created in the same account (duplicates in different accounts are OK), the Sort program, which runs automatically during an AR End of Period, will be unable to determine where the payments, if any, belong. So it will set the payments to Unapplied Credits. Obviously, this is not a desirable situation.

So, to allow you to safely turn off the DC flag, we now have the ability to search the entire AR for Duplicate Invoice numbers by running an Invoice listing in Dupe Check **ONLY** order. This report is available in the AR Main Menu choice #5 Reports Menu Choice #8. When you press F2, you will be able to select the Dupe Check Only option.

If you have turned off the DC flag, you must run this report periodically, and certainly before a Sort or an AR End of Period. A good habit would be to run this report at least once per week, and immediately before an AR End of Period. You can run this report On-Screen. Save a tree.

If, when you run this report, you get an Error 5/3450, it is because the report found more than 4500 eligible transactions. Simply narrow the report to include fewer days and/or fewer accounts. This Error is not serious, since this is simply a report and does not alter the data. If the report indicates that you have managed to create a duplicate invoice number within the same account, you **MUST** edit one of the duplicates to either delete it or to assign it a different invoice number. See the AR Operations manual for detailed instruction about how to perform this procedure.

If you find duplicates, and you edit to assign a new Invoice number, please run the Dupe Check Report again. Although unlikely, you could have assigned an Invoice number that is a duplicate of another invoice! So, run this report until it runs "clean".

Also, keep in mind that you may need to change the Invoice number that was recorded with the Call in Truck & Driver or the Release Invoice in DATOW Lot Control. Change it as soon as you have determined that you have properly assigned a new and unique invoice number. If you do not, you will forget about it and it will probably confuse somebody somewhere down the road. In fact, if you use our AMIOK program, it will report that the invoice number found in TD does not match the invoice in the AR. And remember, duplicates in different accounts are not a problem for the programs. But, it is not an acceptable business practice. The decision is, of course, yours.

# HOW TO USE:

## DATOW Software Error Handling and Support

### OVERVIEW:

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Computers and computer programs sometimes encounter conditions that they are unable to resolve. These are called "errors" and they *will happen* on occasion. Some are serious but most are not. The following list will help you to determine how you should proceed.

### ***How to Use the Error Handler:***

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If a DATOW Software program encounters a problem that it cannot handle itself, it will report this problem to you. Sometimes, you can simply correct the problem, such as a printer that is out of paper, but sometimes the problem is more serious and will require that the program stop execution. If this happens, the program will tell you the error number and the line number. The error number is an indication of the type of problem the program encountered. The line number tells us where the program was when the error occurred. If, after using this document to determine if you can solve the problem yourself, you decide to call us for help, we will need to know the error number, the line number and what exactly you were doing when the error occurred. Also, if you have more than one computer using DATOW Software, we will need to know what the other computer(s) were doing at the time the error occurred.

### ***Error numbers:***

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These are some of the error numbers you might encounter:

2 This error almost always relates to a printer problem. Most often, if the program finds that it cannot communicate with the printer, it will give you the opportunity to fix the problem and re-try the print job. But if you do not fix the problem and you re-try the print job, or if you press F1, the program will terminate with an error 2. This is not a serious problem. Just fix the printer and try printing again. Sometimes, the printer and even the computer will need to be turned off and back on again for the problem to go away. But usually, it is because the printer is off-line or out-of-paper or some other such simple thing.

3 Return without Gosub. This is a programming error and you should never see one of these. However, no matter how much testing we do at our development lab, we can never re-create all the conditions that our users can. So if you get one of these errors, call us.

5 This can be a rather serious error, but not always. It usually means that some data has been destroyed or modified in some unusual way. The DATOW Lot Control and the Accounts Receivable program have sorting utility programs which will usually fix the problem with little or no loss of data. The Truck & Driver program has 2 utilities, TDC and TDE, to repair the call & expense files. You will probably have to call for help. However, there are times when this error is not serious. If you have gotten into the rather bad habit of pressing F2/F2 when you are searching through stored vehicles (instead of the more proper F1/F2 as the screen suggests), and you have done this more than 255 times for the same vehicle, you will get an Error 5/2365 in DATOW Lot Control when you try to F2 the vehicle. The DTSORT program will fix this. Also, certain reports may cause this error. For example, the AR Invoice Report in Invoice, Date or Dupe Only order will cause an Error 5/3450 if you have selected more than about 4500 invoices. Try again using the dates or the customers to narrow the report to include fewer invoices.

7 Out of memory. This is a pretty unusual error and we almost always find that some other program is the problem. Did you change anything? Did someone load a "nifty" program for you that starts your coffee in the morning or some other such nonsense? You can use DOS's MEM command to find out what programs are running that may be taking up space. If you have the SU Series of our programs, it means that you are trying to run more than one copy of the program at the same time. If you are running under Windows, you probably have more than one copy of DATOW running. This is not allowed, and the program will fail to execute. You can see what you are running under Windows 3.1x at any given moment by pressing Control-Escape. This will bring up a Task List. In Windows 95, to the right of the START button is the Task Tray. You should only see ONE running version of DATOW Software. If you see more than one, then you must select and shut down the other running program executions of DATOW Software. If you do not understand this, call us.

11 Divide by zero. Since grade school you have known that you cannot divide by zero. Well, computers can't either! But, sometimes they will try, and an error will occur. We have seen this in new installations where the income code has been changed to show zero dollars for storage and then an attempt to print the income code list alphabetically is made. This report gives you average charges, and the error can occur. This is not a serious error. Just think about what you are printing, and check the data to ensure that you have reasonable information to work with. Other parts of our programs also work out averages for you, and are susceptible to this error. We think we have traps on all conditions, but you may find a new one! We would like you to call us and let us know if this happens to you, but rest assured that this is not serious.

14 Out of string space. How much space does string take? No, it is not that kind of string. This error means that you have exceeded some limit. Again, we think we have traps set so that this shouldn't happen to you, but if it does, you will probably need to call us. One exception is if you are an SU Series user and you are running under Windows. You may have managed to run more than one DATOW at the same time! It is not that hard to do, but it causes this error. Use Control-Escape to see a list of all the tasks that are running, and if you see DATOW Software in the list more than once, then that is why this error occurred. If this is not the case, call us. Also, earlier versions of the AR may show this error in the event that a sort (which happens automatically during an End of Period) encounters an account with more than 2,000 transactions. Newer versions of the AR do not have this limitation.

24,25,27 Device faults. Usually your printer is not able to work if this error occurs. Our printer error handler should take care of it for you, so that you should never see this error number. If you do, call us.

52 Bad file name or number. Usually this is an installation issue. Not enough file handles. Could also be a printer problem, especially if you are printing labels or envelopes. If you were printing when this happens, just try the print job again. If not, call us.

53 File not found. You are not likely to see this, unless you are testing a new feature for us. Call us if you get this one.

54 Bad file mode. Same as 53

55 File already open. Same as 53

57 Device I/O error. Usually a printer error, but could be a drive problem. Under Novell, it could be a phantom problem. If you were not printing, try again. Then call us.

58 File already exists. Unusual. Call us.

59 Bad record length. Unusual. Call us.

61 Disk full. This is just what it sounds like. You have run out of disk room. This usually occurs during a sort, which happens automatically during an AR End of Period and certain other times. Rule of thumb is that you need twice as much room to sort as the file or files that you are sorting. For the AR, you can look at the size of the ARICUST.xxx and the AR4ARCV.xxx (where xxx is your customer code) files added together and make sure that you have twice that number available. For DATOW Lot Control, add



together the sizes of TOW1VEH.DAT and TOW3REL.DAT. For Truck and Driver, add TD1CALL.DAT, TD3TRUK.DAT and TD4DRVR.DAT. If you don't think you have enough room to proceed, you can call us and we will assist you in cleaning up space on your disk.

62 Input past end of file. This indicates that the computer probably got turned off while it was still running one of our programs. The sorting program for that system will usually fix it.

63 Bad record number. Same as 62

64 Bad file name. Same as 53

67 Too many files. We doubt you will ever see this one. Call us if you do.

68 Device unavailable. Same as 24

70 Permission denied. If you have the SU Series of our programs, it means that you are trying to run more than one copy of the program at the same time. You may have a network, but that doesn't make the SU Series program a multi-user program. You will need to purchase the PROfessional Edition to enable more than one user to use the program at the same time. If you are running under WINDOWS, this error may mean that you are running more than one DATOW at the same time. SU Series programs may not run multiple sessions, so shut down one of them (see Error 7 & 14). If you are a PROfessional Edition user, then some other user is doing something that requires that you not access the file at this time. Things like sorts or backups. If neither of these conditions are true, then call us for help.

71 Disk not ready. Often indicates a network error. See error 75. This may also be a printing error. If you were printing when this error occurred, check your printer and try again. Note that some computers seem to remember that the printer didn't work and will refuse to try again. So sometimes you may have to turn off and turn on both the printer and the computer to get things working again.

72 Disk media error. Just what it sounds like. Generally not good news. Call us.

75 Path/File access error. A common error, especially for users of networks. This usually occurs when the server is not responding. Perhaps someone has turned the server off. Or perhaps the server is in what is called a "Critical Error". Examples of critical errors are Data error reading a drive, Drive not ready and lots of others. Usually these errors are followed by the option to Abort, Retry, Ignore or Fail. While the server is waiting for an answer from you regarding this critical error, it is NOT serving the other users. If this condition persists for too long, the other users will get this error. Another reason for this error is an installation issue. If the environment is not large enough, the program will fail with this error. This could also happen if you add a new program to your computer. It may be taking up environment space and not leave enough for DATOW Software.

76 Path not found. A lot like 75

### ***Errors without numbers:***

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Sometimes an error will occur without an error number. This is because DATOW Software is not the only program you may be running. We believe that ALL DATOW Software programs will return an error number if a problem is found, but other programs may not. These other programs include DOS, Windows, PKARC and the paging program.

### **DATA ERROR READING (or WRITING) DRIVE A: or SECTOR NOT FOUND DRIVE A:**

This error is almost always found during a backup. Notice the reference to Drive A:.. This is your floppy diskette. This means that you are having a problem with the diskette or the drive. Usually replacing the diskette will solve the problem. But you must first abort the backup and start from the beginning. If you do not know how to do this, call for technical support. Another reason for this is a dirty drive. Tow yards can get pretty dirty, and the floppy drive is the first thing to suffer from this dirt. If your error is DRIVE NOT READY or WRITE PROTECT ERROR, try blowing some air (NOT 120 psi shop air -- you can blow the insides apart!) into the place where you insert the diskette. Also, there are cleaning kits available

that will clean the heads, just like in a VCR. You can try these. If all else fails, you may need to replace the floppy drive. They are not expensive. Figure about \$50.00 for the part and the same for labor.

### **ERROR IN ENVIRONMENT DEFINITION**

This means that you tried to run a DATOW Software program without first setting the environment. The environment is set when you execute the TOW.BAT file. This is most often an installation issue, but can arise if new programs are installed. See error number 75 for a similar situation. The solution is usually to expand the size of the environment. See the README file for information about how to do this in the CONFIG.SYS file and the How to Use DATOW Software Under Windows document for instructions about how to resolve this problem using the Properties Command Line /E: parameter.

### **SHARING VIOLATION:**

Similar to error number 70, but you will get this error if you are attempting to perform a backup, and you have another user using DATOW Software. This could also happen in a single user environment if you are running more than one session under Windows. To correct, make sure all users/sessions are out of DATOW Software and press R for Retry.

### **OTHER NON-ERROR PRODUCING PROBLEMS:**

Sometimes conditions can arise which are not actual reportable errors but which need your attention. Examples of these are: Less than 10 spaces remain in the release file? You must purge some of the released file to an archive file. System "sluggish"? A sort will often dramatically speed up the programs, especially DATOW Lot Control. Cannot find a stored vehicle? Re-sort the Lot Control program's data files. Cannot find an AR invoice? Re-sort the AR.

### ***Operator Errors:***

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Most of the calls we receive for technical support are due to operator errors. That is, mistakes that are the result of data entry errors or misuse due to misunderstanding of how the program works.

### **CANNOT FIND A CALL or CANNOT FIND A STORED VEHICLE:**

When you are searching for a call or a stored vehicle, the information you tell the computer to search by must be accurate. If you tell the system to search by a plate of 1ABC123 and the plate is 2ABC123, the program will not find it. But if you used ABC, it would. In general, the less information you search by, the better. If the program finds a vehicle that you are not looking for, just take the appropriate action to continue the search. It will then show you the next vehicle that meets your search criteria.

### **DATE NOT CORRECT:**

There are two main reasons for this problem. The first is a problem with IBM type computers running MS-DOS. If you leave your computer running, and you are not inside of one of our programs, and 2 midnights pass, the computer will lose a day. That is, suppose you go home on Friday and do not use the computer all weekend. On Monday, the computer will think it is Saturday. You can type DATE at the DOS prompt to correct this, or you can use our menu choice to change the system date and/or time. However, if you leave our program running, by exiting to one of the ENTER YOUR PASSWORD screens, the screen will go black after about 10 minutes and our program will make sure that the date is correct when you return on Monday. In a related matter, you may notice that your computer loses or gains a few minutes a day. This is normal. Use our menu choice to change the time or type TIME at the DOS prompt and follow the screen instructions.

Another date situation that we get calls regarding is a stored vehicle with a date-in date of one day after the actual date-in. This happens when you POST or HOTPOST a call into DATOW Lot Control and the Rec'd time of the call is AFTER the 98 time. To the computer, this means that the call must have started

on one day and completed the next. So when it sends this information to the Lot Control program, it advances the date of the call one day and uses that as the date-in. Remember that the program uses military or 24 hour time, and 2 PM is not 0200, it is 1400. So watch your times!

In the AR, we get calls about missing transactions on reports. This is also usually a date related problem. If you ask for a transaction report to a certain date, and there are transactions, such as payments, AFTER that date, the report will not show those transactions. So, check the top of the report to see if you have used a date that would result in the exclusion of transactions. Also, some reports will look very strange if you use a starting date. For example, an aged trial balance could show a large credit balance if you use a beginning date that excludes sales, but includes later payments.

### **HONEY, I SHRUNK THE SCREEN:**

If your screen "shrinks", DON'T PANIC! Simply press Alt-Enter to Restore your screen to full size. This is a function of WINDOWS. If you do not understand, consider getting one of the many books or videos that are available that will help you to learn more about WINDOWS and what it can do for you.

### ***Other Sources for Help:***

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All DATOW Software programs have built-in help. We call this feature "*Smart Help*", because it knows where you are and gives you help that is specific to where you are. USE IT! Press Alt-H and, if there is a flashing yellow "+" sign at the end of the first line of help, press Alt-H again. (This feature only works if you are running one of our programs. It will not work if you are at the DOS prompt or if you are presented with a "pop-up" question. It does work whenever you are in one of our screens, such as Main Menu, Call Entry, Reports, etc.) It is amazing how many calls we get about things that are clearly described by *Smart Help*. If what you need to know is not there, or is unclear, then call for assistance. We want to know how we can make the help better, so every call we get helps us to help you. But try the built-in help first.

MS DOS, since version 5.0, also has a built-in help program. You should use it to learn more about what your computer can do for you. To activate this, just type word HELP at the DOS prompt. If you know what you want help about, you can type HELP "that thing". For example, to get help about the copy command, type HELP COPY and press enter. Follow the on-screen instructions.

Another source of information is books. There are some excellent books available, including some for complete novices. The "DUMMIES" series of books are pretty good, as are the "Complete Idiots" series.

Magazines. There are a million of 'em out there now. You could go broke in a hurry. So don't get carried away and subscribe to a bunch of them. Besides, they come and go too quickly. So pick one up at the local rack now and then. BYTE is the premier mag, but PC World is good and so are a lot of the others. If you are looking for hardware, get the "COMPUTER SHOPPER", which looks like a telephone book and comes out one a month. Stay away from the game and multimedia mags. Too much hype and grand wastes of time.

Don't like to read? Most of the DUMMIES books are available on VHS tape.

TV is not the "vast wasteland" that former FCC commissioner Newton Minnow once described it to be. PBS runs a series called "The Computer Chronicles", CNN has a weekend half hour (also check out their Science show) and even the Sci-Fi channel has CNET, an up-to-date fast paced program. DO NOT watch those fools on the QVC Home Shopping Network. They are just pushing hardware and usually don't know a byte from a hole-in-the-ground. Same goes for Andy Rooney.

Friends, employees, and your kids. Nothing like having someone sit there with you and hold your hand as you learn. You can also hire professional help. Expect to pay at least \$50 per hour up to \$100 per hour. And don't be afraid to tell them to leave if you are not getting out of it what you need. There are a lot of

"consultants" out there who are just Radio Shack rejects who prey on inexperienced users. Same goes for CNEs. (If you don't know what a CNE is, thank your lucky stars!)

Classes. A lot like hiring someone to teach you, but a lot cheaper. Unfortunately, these classes are usually over your head or baby stuff. It is hard to find one that will really help you, but it is better than not learning this stuff.

User Groups. A great way to get "connected" to other people in your area. These are clubs, some with small dues and some without any dues, that meet once a month or so for an evening. If some of you old-time DATOW users are interested in starting a user's group in your area, let us know. We would be glad to help coordinate and support your efforts.

Last, but not least, DATOW Software can help you. We can help you to get the most from our programs. We can perform on-site training for you and your staff. We can help you over the telephone. And we love to show you our programs and help you to get the most from them at the conventions and at CTTA chapter meetings here in Southern California.

If there are any other ways you can think of that you would like to explore, give us a call. Those of you who have known us for a while know that we are very open to your ideas. And those of you who are new to DATOW Software, don't be shy! Speak up and ye shall be heard!

### ***DATOW Software's SUPPORT POLICY and SUPPORT PRICING:***

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Support is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week including holidays. And we want you to call us if you are in need of assistance. However, if it is a question that can wait, please do not call at 3 AM! We want to help you, but let's try to keep it reasonable. Also, if you can formulate your question into a fax and send us that, we can get back to you quickly with an answer. By the way, we operate on Pacific time. Our normal hours are 8 to 5. The Bulletin Board is up 24 hours/day except from 8 to 9 AM and 3 to 4 PM (while we connect to CA DMV and process your CA Vehicle Request data). So, please avoid calling either the Bulletin Board or our voice lines during these hours. But if you have to, then call.

**NOTE:** If you call and there is no answer or it rings busy, please just wait about 10 minutes and try again. There is always someone here to answer your call, but sometimes we just are unable to answer it immediately. For example, if we are on hold with DMV, we must ignore incoming calls or risk losing our call to DMV. Or sometimes (how to put this delicately) nature calls. So just try again in 10 minutes. Also, if you get a tone that sounds like a pager, it is! Just enter your telephone number and we will call you right back. Likewise, if you get our cellular voice mail, leave a message and we will call you back as soon as the cell phone gets back to a service area. If you have access to the Internet, point your browser to [www.smartpage.net/tonyb](http://www.smartpage.net/tonyb) and you can send a message to an alphanumeric pager. Or just send us a fax. The bottom line here is that we are really "plugged-in" and you should be able to reach us 24/7.

Reasonable telephone support for PROfessional Edition users is included with the purchase for the first year. Also, reasonable telephone support is included with our PROfessional Annual Software Maintenance Contract. This support is to assist you when problems or questions arise. It is NOT a substitute for training. Training is available either on site or via telephone at our normal rates.

SU Series users are provided limited *installation* support at no charge using our 562-426-2255 telephone line. **Calls placed to our 800 line will be charged at the prevailing support rate.** Questions or problems or training calls beyond installation issues are subject to charge at our prevailing rates.

Rental or Rent-To-Own clients, either PROfessional Edition or SU Series, are supported the same as SU Series clients.

Sometimes we can answer a question quickly and we do not charge you for that call. This is most often the case when you call on our 562 line and you are at the computer with the problem and you have formulated your question. **If you call on our 800 line, we must bill you for that call.**

If you call our 562 line with a problem and that problem is determined to have been caused by a flaw in our program, there is no charge for that call. Also, if you call our 562 line with a question about our programs and we find that we did not provide a means for you to determine the answer by yourself, by using the *Smart Help* or *Extended Help* features, by reading the manuals or by reading the other support documents such as the README file or the .TXT or .DOC files, then we will not charge you for that call.

Often we are called about problems or questions that are not related to DATOW Software programs. We are happy to assist you in these matters, which range from hardware malfunctions or upgrades, to questions about Windows and other software products, to advice regarding hardware purchases. We will do our best to help you in these matters, but these calls are subject to billing at our prevailing rates.

**Our rate for support is currently \$60.00/hr travel time and \$90.00/hr on site with a 4 hour travel/on-site minimum. We charge \$10.00 for 10 minutes on the telephone with a \$30.00 maximum per telephone incident.** This means that if you call with a problem or question, no matter how long it takes us to resolve the problem or answer your question, you will not pay more than \$30.00. However, calls that begin with one question and go on and on and on with question after question are considered to be more than one incident.

### ***DATOW Software's Customization POLICY and PRICING:***

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If you think you have a good idea for a change or improvement to our programs, we want you to tell us about it. We suggest that you put it in writing and send it to our fax machine. We value your input and we will consider all suggestions. Most of our best features come from our clients. There is no charge for these calls.

Sometimes you may have a need that is not supported in our program. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you and, most of the time, we can customize the program to suite your exact needs. There is a charge for this service, which is based on the time needed to design, implement and test the change and, if it is deemed to be exclusive for you, an additional maintenance fee may be applied. But we will tell you how much the change will cost you before we begin work on it. Then you can approve or cancel the change. If we determine that the change you are requesting is one that would benefit many of our users, we will perform the change at a reduced fee or even at no charge, based on the circumstances.

### ***DATOW Software's UPDATE POLICY and UPDATE PRICING:***

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We are constantly making changes to our programs. Some are very minor and some are major. Minor changes include things like allowing statements to print for some customers and not others. Major changes include new lien sale forms or procedures. PROfessional Edition updates are a part of the Software Maintenance Contract. The fee for this is \$300.00 per program plus \$30.00 per additional user per program. So, for example, the fee for a client using DATOW Lot Control and Lien Sales on three computers is \$720 per year. This covers an unlimited number of updates per year mailed to you, or downloaded from our Bulletin Board or our web site, for you to install. On-site or telephone installation is extra and is billed at our normal rates. Unlimited reasonable telephone support is included.

SU Series Software Maintenance fees are \$95.00 per program per update. This fee does not include the unlimited telephone support that is available to PROfessional Edition users.

All updates assume that you return to us your original disks. If you prefer to have us create new diskettes, there is a small (\$5.00) fee per diskette. Applicable sales taxes and shipping are extra.

## **DATOW Software's UPGRADE POLICY and UPGRADE PRICING:**

Sometimes as a business grows, you need your software to grow with you. We have a policy that will help you in this area. If you are using our SU Series of programs, which are designed to allow a Single User to run these programs at one time, and you find you need more than one user to run our programs at the same time, you need our PROfessional Edition programs.

We will apply the *entire* purchase price of your SU Series program toward the price of our PROfessional Edition program. Also, since \$500.00 of the price of the PROfessional Edition program is for training which you will probably not need (since you already know how to use DATOW Software), we can reduce the price by that amount. You just pay for the difference. If you find that you do need additional training, you can simply buy it as you need it.

## **DATOW Software's TRADE-IN POLICY and PRICING:**

We sometimes talk with towing operators that are using, or have purchased and are *not* using, some other software program. We wish they had come to us first, but we are often able to take their existing program in trade. We calculate the credit we offer for the trade in based on the time since they purchased the other program. Using 36 months as the amortization time, we will credit you, up to the price of the software you are buying, based on this. For example, If you purchased a \$360.00 program 6 months ago, we will credit you \$360 less \$60 or \$300 towards the purchase of DATOW Software. This offer applies to programs written for the towing industry, not to general purpose programs such as Quicken or Dbase.

## **DATOW Software's Referral POLICY:**

The old saying that "Word of mouth is the best advertising" is true. We get most of our new customers because our current customers tell others about our programs, services and support. WE APPRECIATE THIS and to show you our appreciation, we offer a referral fee. It is a percentage of the sale, and we base it on how involved you are in the sale and how much we are involved. If you send us a customer, please let us know. And please ask that person to tell us that you referred them to us.

## **Conclusion:**

DATOW Software strives to provide you with quality programs that do not have flaws. But due to the complexity of these programs, errors can happen. Also, due to circumstances beyond our control, such as printer malfunctions, errors can happen. This document should help you to deal with these conditions. Also, so that you can determine what support is provided at no charge and what support is billable, this document details our policy and pricing for these issues.

If you find that we have omitted a situation that you are facing, please give us a call. We are here to service you 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year and we have been doing this now for over 18 years.

**If you find that you need to call us for support, please be at the computer where you are having the problem. Please have that computer running and at the point where the error occurred. The less time we spend with you on the telephone, the lower your support charges will be and the more time we will have to support other users.**

## **The small print:**

DATOW Software & Buzzanco Computer Consulting Service reserves the right to change the rates charged and the above described support policy without notice.

# HOW TO USE: BACKUP SYSTEM

## ***OVERVIEW:***

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DATOW Software includes the ability to perform backups of the data you enter into the computer. A backup is like making a photocopy of your work, except that it only takes a few minutes and it doesn't cost you but a few pennies. Why do backups? Mostly, it protects you in the event of a computer failure or an operator error. It can also save your business in the event of a fire, flood, theft or other disaster. Usually, you will never need to use your backups, but if you need them, you will be very glad you have them!

## ***DEVELOPING A BACKUP PLAN:***

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We recommend the following plan for doing your backups. Each day, at the end of the day, you do your backups. Also, once a week, you do an extra backup that you take off site with you. Once a month, you retire whichever diskette set you used on the last day of the month (or just before you do your Accounts Receivable End of Period) and replace it with a fresh set.

You should use 3 sets of diskettes. Lets call them A, B and C. At first, you can do all your backups on one diskette, but as you continue to add information to your computer, you will need a separate disk for each program (DATOW, TD and AR). The first time you do a backup, you use set A. The next time you use set B and then use set C. On the fourth day you go back to set A again. Diskettes are like video tape in that you can record over and over on the same diskette. However, each time you do, you wipe out the previous backup using that diskette. It is like you are recording Jeopardy! on your VCR. If you use the same tape each day, (and lets make believe that a tape only holds one showing), you will record over yesterday's show when you record today's show. We never want to record over yesterday's show, or even the day before's show, so we use 3 tapes (actually, diskettes) for this purpose. This way, even if something goes wrong right in the middle of your backup, you still have yesterday's. And sometimes, we need to look back a few days into your data in the event of a real strange problem. Having a few day's worth of backups can really help.

Once a week, you do a backup and take it home with you. You do the same 3 disk set rotation, but you keep the newest diskettes at home. This protects you in the event of a fire, theft, etc.

This concept of rotation is simple, yet powerful. There are more complex schemes, but we have found this to be adequate. If you do not understand this, please call us for assistance. It is important that you do these backups. We can't stress this point enough.

As mentioned above, at first all your backups will fit on one diskette. However, as time goes on and you add more and more information into your computer, the space on the diskette will eventually run out. When this happens, you will make a diskette for EACH program. You will know when this is about to occur because the backup procedure includes a DIRECTORY listing of the diskette. This listing will show you how many bytes remain on the floppy diskette. As the information that you enter into the programs gets larger, this number gets smaller. If it reaches zero (or nearly zero) your backups will fail. You will get a message that says "Insufficient Disk Space" as the backup procedure attempts to write the new backup file to the floppy. So, if you are using just one diskette each day to backup more than one program, get some more diskettes and put each program on it's own diskette.

Eventually, even this approach will fail. If you allow your Truck and Driver program to hold more than 10 or 12 thousand calls, the backups will fail. If you never clear old paid invoices from your Accounts

Receivable, the backups will fail. Sometimes we are asked if we can make a backup "split" across more than one disk. This would seem to solve the problem, but it actually just causes more trouble. Sure, we could do that, but then you would probably never maintain your TD and AR files. (Note: DATOW Lot Control should never take more than one diskette.) And if you were to split your backups until the TD or AR program fails, it would fail on your busiest day. And then you would have to stop whatever you were doing to take care of the problem. But, by using the backup system as a sort of "Early Warning System", you will be able to maintain your TD and AR files BEFORE the problem becomes a headache.

The backup procedure shows you how many bytes are free or available on the floppy diskette you are using. When that number reaches 50 or 100 thousand, it is time to consider clearing out old calls (if the TD backup diskette is running low) or old paid invoices (if the AR backup diskette is running low.) So please learn to use the backup procedure to notice this situation. If you wait until the backups no longer fit onto one diskette and you have already separated each system to a different floppy, then you have waited too long. We can help you to correct the problem, but it will be a chargeable support call.

### ***DOING A BACKUP: (NOTE: ALL Users must be logged out!!!)***

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Whenever you exit from a DATOW Software program that you entered into by using the TOW command, you will see the backup reminder menu. If you don't see it, because you entered DATOW or TD or AR without benefit of the TOW command (actually a batch file), you can see the backup menu by typing BMENU and pressing Enter at the \TST> prompt.

This menu is not really a menu program. It is just a reminder of how to do a backup. The backups are actually batch files numbered 1 to 6. You can edit them if you want, or use them as they come to you from us. They come to you set up to use the A: drive as the backup device. If you want to use the B: drive, you will need to edit them (or have us or someone else do it for you). If you choose to edit them, please use a different name for each file, or save them on a floppy or other area of the hard drive. This way, when and if you ever get an upgrade from us, your changes can be restored. Our upgrade would put them back to the original condition. You can also use the DOS SUBST command to substitute the B: drive for the A: drive. To do this, you must insert a diskette into the B: drive and use the command:

SUBST A: B:\      When you are finished, use the command SUBST A: /D to go back to normal.

NOTICE that the backups for DATOW Lot Control and Truck & Driver are simply the numbers 5 and 6 respectively. The backup for the Accounts Receivable requires you to indicate your company's three letter code. An example would be the command "4 ABC" where your company code is used instead of ABC. Also, notice that the command to Restore your data is similar, but you use the letter "R" with the number. However, if you think you need to restore your data, you should call us first. It is rare that you will need to do so, unless you have talked to us and we have recommended that you do it.

The BMENU reminder screen contains all the information you need to begin doing your backups. Follow the on-screen instructions. If you are not sure if your backups are working correctly, please call 562-426-2255 for technical support. Backup are very important and we want to be sure that you are getting them completed correctly. If you get a Sharing Violation, make sure all users are logged out.

HINT: After you do a backup, use the command "DIR A:" to see what is on the floppy disk. You should see the file you just created. For the AR, the file is called ARBAKxxx.ARC where xxx is your company's 3 letter code. For DATOW Lot Control, the file is called TOWBAK.ARC and for Truck & Driver the file name is TDBAK.ARC. The file should not be zero length and the date and time should be the date and time of the backup. If you do not understand this, contact us for training.

WARNING: If you do not do your backups on a regular basis, and something goes wrong, there is little we can do to help you. So why not make it easy for us to be able to assist you. DO YOUR BACKUPS!



# OTHER BITS & PIECES!

## OVERVIEW:

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These are some items that do not fit into any other document, but that we think you should know about.

### **DATES and TIMES:**

In all date and all time fields in all programs, you can use the letters D or d or T or t and the current date or the current time will be inserted, whichever is appropriate.

### **Visual Beeps:**

When you enter something that the computer doesn't like, such as trying to tell it that there are 13 months in the year, our programs will balk and beep. But sometimes, that is just not enough to get your attention. Towing companies can be pretty loud places, so we now flash the screen so that you are not likely to miss the warning. This is called a Visual Beep.

### **OPENING MENU:**

Did you know that there is a version of this program that will not ask for the password to get into this program? It is called ACMENU.NPW. Simply use the command:

COPY ACMENU.NPW ACMENU.EXE

to use the No PassWord version of ACMENU. All other passwords still will be required.

The version of DOS that you are using is now displayed. Even in WIN 95, where there ain't no DOS!

### **ATTENTION: AAA Contract Stations:**

AAAAutoCall, our system for interfacing with AAA DRC or teletype systems is available. Contact us for details.

Also for AAA Contract Stations -- We have added a special report just for you. If you ask for a call listing, and you put in a customer ID to qualify the report by that customer, and you specify that you want the report to go to the printer, the program will ask you if you want a Sorted, Condensed AAA report. This report will give you all calls for that customer, by day, by Order Number. If you specified that you wanted a Summary, then just the Towing charge will print. If you specify Detail, then the other charges (over mileage, Net dollars, Call #, Vehicle Type, Yr, Make, License and T-Code) will print. This report is being used with great success for those AAA areas that allow you to fax a report to them the next morning showing them what YOU think you did for them the day before. The AAA center then checks it against their records and any discrepancies are resolved BEFORE they (or you) post the calls to accounting. In this way, you are more likely to get paid the correct amount the first time around, rather than having to wait a month or more and then trying to resolve a problem or discrepancy and then having to wait another month or more to get paid.

Another interesting new addition to this report is the inclusion of the How Paid codes. If you ask for this report to include Paid calls, then you will get a breakdown at the end of how the qualified calls were paid. For example, of 80 calls for \$800.00, 40 were paid in cash for \$400.00, 20 by check for \$200, 10 by credit card for \$100.00 and 10 by charge (to your AR) for \$100.00. (Obviously, these numbers are just for example purposes. We hope you are getting a bit more than \$10.00 a tow!)

### **TickerTape & AutoHelp:**

Many screens now have the ability to scroll a message while the computer is waiting for you to type something. We call this feature TickerTape (aka TeleType). To activate or deactivate this feature, you simply press Alt-M. Each system (DATOW Lot Control, Lien Sale Processing, Truck & Driver, Accounts

Receivable, Opening Menu and even BioRhythms) can have it's own message (TOWMSG.TXT, LSMSG.TXT, TDMSG.TXT, ARMSG.TXT ACMMMSG.TXT and BIOMSG.TXT respectively). As currently configured, we are using a variation of the manuals or our product literature. If the appropriate file is not available, the program will simply scroll a small "commercial". In the future, we think we would like to add such things as the Quote of the Day, the Joke of the Day, etc. We may even be able to link to broadcast news services and/or Internet sites for sports scores, stock market quotes, etc. However, even in the current configuration, you can modify these files to make them say anything you want.

There is also a new, and optional, Environment Variable that is used to control this feature.

Set TT=#                      Where # is a number that controls the speed that the TickerTape scrolls across the screen. If this variable is present, the programs will automatically start the TeleType in any screen where this feature is active. Larger numbers cause the program to scroll more slowly. NOTE: Pressing Alt-M will toggle this feature on and off, even if this variable is not set. Typical values for # are from 1 to 200. But you can experiment to find the speed that you like best.

An interesting variation of the above new feature is called AutoHelp. We think it is especially useful to new users. It uses the TeleType feature to scroll the help for the field that you are in, in the same way the TeleType feature scrolls messages. As you move from field to field, the scrolling window will display the help for that field. It is as if you pressed Alt-H to see the help, but now it will be Automatic!

To activate this feature, there is a new Environment Variable:

Set AH=Y                      This must be a capital Y. It tells the system to activate the AutoHelp.

Note: When you are familiar with the help, and you no longer want to see it, either press Alt-M to turn it off temporarily, or remove the AH Environment Variable to turn it off all the time. You can do this by typing SET AH= at the DOS prompt or by editing your TOW.BAT file (or DTDEMO.BAT if you are using the Full Function Demo). However, the OPENING MENU will, by default, display the TickerTape even if you have disabled it for all other programs. Also, you may notice the system is a bit slower moving around the screens if this feature is active. We think this is a fair trade-off for the added convenience, but you can decide for yourself. Remember, it is optional and can be easily turned off.

NOTE: The TT and AH features are new and are still considered EXPERIMENTAL. That is, although we have extensively tested these features, we cannot say that they will function correctly in all conditions. Also, we may remove these features in future versions or we may greatly modify their operation. IF these features cause you a problem, you can simply disable them. Therefore, if there are bugs in an experimental feature, we may or may not fix them and we may or may not send you an update. This is because these features are considered experimental. However, we believe they can be used to advantage, and we encourage you to try them. How will you use these features? What would you like to see scrolling by as you work? Let us know!

### **Horizontal Printing:**

Do you use a laser printer? We have been experimenting with a Horizontal format for certain reports. If you type LASER3H or LASER4H at the \TST prompt, you will activate this new feature. If this does not work well for you, you can revert back to the old way with the commands LASER or LASER4. To try this new feature, use the appropriate "H" command, as described above, and then run a report in compressed mode. The usual question for this, in the report screen, is "Compressed?" or "17Char Pitch?". If you answer Yes, the report should print out sideways. This makes Current, Released, Incoming and many other reports much more easy to read. Try it out and see how you like it. If you do like it, let us know. It is a lot of work to go through each program making this change. But, if our customers like it, we will do it.

## ***Additional programs:***

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**TAXME** A program to reverse calculate sales taxes. Will also do regular calculations. Not a menu choice. Use it by using the command TAXME at the \TST prompt.

**PAGING** AlphaNumeric Paging. This program is integrated with the dispatching program, although you could run it directly from the \TST prompt. Use the command ACSPAGE to do this. Of course, before using it, you must have set it up. The command PKXARC ACSPAGE at the \TST prompt will unpack the required files. Then read the README, ACSPAGE.DOC and TDPAGE.DOC files to complete the installation. Or call us. **AlphaNumeric paging is a bit hit!** The companies that are using this inexpensive yet powerful technology really love it. But we found that at some companies, things are a little more complex than just the simple case of each Driver or Truck having their own pager. So we now support the use of an alternate pager number and, coupled with fancier behind-the-scenes logic, we believe that we have covered all bases. Watch for future developments in this area as we watch the mobile 2-way market mature to where it is reliable and cost effective.

**VINTEST** A simple little program that allows you to enter a VIN to see if it complies with the 1981 or newer VIN criteria. This program is also "built-in" to DATOW Software wherever you see a VIN. See your DATOW Lot Control and/or Lien Sale Processing documentation for details.

**AMORTIZE** You can now save your work into a file and re-call it for future work.

**BIORHYTHM** Cheaper than the Psychic 900 telephone lines and works better.

**ARFILE** This is a utility program that can look into your AR data in a variety of very powerful ways. We use it to solve problems that may occur. The program is now enhanced, and, although you will probably never need to use it, the improvements will help us help you.

**DTSHOW** This is a part of our Introductory Slide Show program. You run it at the \TST prompt with the command DTSHOW. It was developed to allow prospective customers to see our screens and learn about our programs. But you may find it useful, too. In fact, many of our existing customers who have run this program have called us to say that they learned about a feature or two that they did not know our programs featured. If you know of another towing company that is interested in computer software, give us a call. We will send them our promotional package, including the Slide Show.

## ***WHAT'S NEXT?***

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The Internet. Unless you have been living under a rock, you have heard about this. It is a way for computers to communicate. We have been looking at how we can use the Net to better service our customers. We expect to be able to use it to distribute updates of our programs and the documentation, to post notices about changes we have made or are considering, and we would like to be able to use it to conduct training. As more of our customers become more technically savvy, we will be able to do these things. For now, our site at [www.datow.com](http://www.datow.com) is mainly aimed at potential new customers. We have our demo programs available there, along with some documentation. In fact, you might have downloaded and printed this document from our web site.

We have been experimenting with card readers for the new "credit card" type of drivers license. However, our tests of this technology were disappointing. It seems that many people think that the magnetic stripe contains their driving record, so they damage it to make it unreadable. Actually, there is more information printed on the front of the CA DL than there is encoded on the magnetic stripe. The State should have educated the public about this before they began to issue these types of licenses.

As mobile, 2-way systems become more reliable and cost-effective, we will use that technology to improve links between your dispatcher and your drivers. AVL (Automatic Vehicle Location) via GPS (Global Position System), remote credit card readers and remote printers will be a part of this development.

And, of course, let us know if there is something you think we should include in our programs.

## ***Common keyboard symbols***

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The following are some keyboard items that you should be able to locate. If you call for technical support, we may ask you to type some of them, and it is a big help to us if you know the difference between a slash and a backslash. It will help us to help you, and to help shorten your time on the telephone, and therefore keep your technical support charges lower.

This is a slash	/	Used to separate commands from switches. Ex. DIR /P
This is a backslash	\	Used to define a path. Ex. DIR \DAT
This is a star	*	A wildcard. Matches anything. Ex. DIR \DAT\*.DAT
This is a dot	.	Aka period. Separates parts of a filename. Ex. TOW.BAT
This is a minus	-	Used in commands. Ex. DIR /O-D
This is a colon	:	Used to designate a device. Ex. DIR A:
This is a semi-colon	;	Rarely used. Shown here to distinguish from a colon.
This is a pipe		Used for redirection. Ex. DIR   Sort
This is a greater than sign	>	Used in prompt. Also for redirection. Ex. DIR > PRN
This is a less than sign	<	Rarely used. Shown here to distinguish from greater than
This is a typical DOS Prompt	C:\TST>	Usually seen when you exit a program.

There are many books on the market that can help you to learn more about how your computer works. This manual is to teach you about how DATOW Software's programs work. It cannot teach you about DOS, Windows, how to put paper into your printer, how to load other programs and many other things that you may want to learn. We encourage you to pursue your education.

We can provide training to you. See the How To Use Support section of this manual for details.

## ***Notes***

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