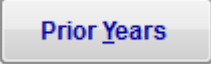
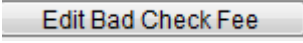


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I. New Features


As always, we've been working on improving the program by trying to streamline and simplify the way things are done. Here are some of the changes you may notice:

- We've changed the way you access prior years' data. Instead of choosing either the current year or a prior year when entering the program, you enter the current year by default. Then on the main screen, you'll see: . Click on this button, and then double-click on whichever year you'd like to view.
- We've also eliminated the Lockbox & Escrow button. You'll find all of those functions under the Payments button.
- We've added a Checkbook Balance report. You'll find it in the Reconciliation column on the Reports tab. We make entries for each batch you process (including refunds) and bounced/reversed checks and deleted batches. You can make entries for any checks you write, or an opening balance or any other reason.
- We've changed the change parcel process. For more details, see the changing parcel data section beginning on page 12.
- We've added a feature to delete an entire batch. This is not quite like reversing a batch. The batch actually gets deleted, leaving only a trace file for the auditors. This is for occasions where you realize you really shouldn't have posted that batch and need to start over.
- We've also added the ability to change a bad check (service) charge after the reversal has taken place. This can help if you realize you should have/shouldn't have added a bad check charge and did it the wrong way. Just go back to the reversal screen, select the line you need to change and click on . Change the fee as needed in the box to the right, then hit save.
- We've made improvements to the receipt. We now list the "paid by" information either in the lower left corner or towards the middle of the receipt.
- We've also added a spot for credit card payments on all payment screens, and on each report it was needed on. This will allow you to properly report credit card payments taken online or in your office.
- Name and address changes may only be done from the lookup or payment screens. Just put a check in front of Edit Name and Address, change what you need to and then exit the screen.
- We updated the refund process so that it works more like the new faster way of making payments.

II. Start of Collection/ Maintenance Functions

This is a list of the procedures necessary to load data at the beginning of a collection. Some of these steps are useful during the collection season.

A. Back up data





1. On the main screen of the program click on 
2. There are two backup options from within the program, Internet Backup and File

Backup.

- a. The File Backup will backup your tax data in a place you specify on your computer. Make sure it is not in your data folder.
- b. The Internet Backup will backup your tax data to our web server.
 - i. This is only available to customers with Internet Lookup.
 - ii. Valuable in case of a computer failure.
 - iii. Useful to our staff in diagnosing and fixing problems.

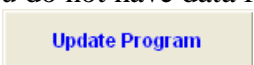
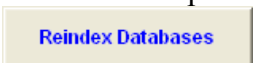
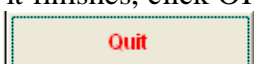
B. Update tax program

Note: Make sure that you are connected to the Internet for this step. This will need to be done for each computer, one at a time. If you need to manually update, go to www.townsoft.com, click on software updates and Download Version 11 or higher.

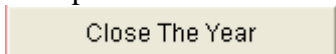

1. On the main screen of the program click 
2. Click  and wait for the download to finish.
3. Click 
 - a. The tax program will close and a new window will open.
 - b. Click on .
 - c. When the window disappears, re-open the tax program.


C. Special Updates and Reindexing

Note: This step should only be performed at the beginning of collection, or when one of our staff asks you to do so.



1. Make sure that all other computers are out of the tax program for this step.
2. If you collect for another district (village or town or school) you'll have to do these steps for each district you collect for.
3. At the top of the main screen, choose Administration, and then Reindex/Update Data Files.
4. Under Special Updates Options, make sure there are checkmarks in all of the boxes unless you do not have data for previous years:
5. Click on 
6. When it finishes, click OK.
7. Under Reindex Options, make sure that there are checkmarks in all three boxes unless you don't have data for previous years.
8. Click on 
9. When it finishes, click OK.
10. Click 

D. Close the year

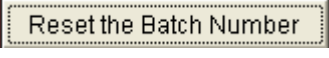
1. At the top of the main screen, choose Setup/Year End.
2. On the Start Of Collection tab, click 
3. Make sure the year to close is appropriate, then click on 

- Next click on 
- The program will close when the operation is complete.



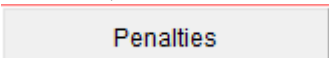
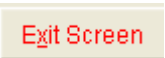
E. Clear the County Folder

- At the top of the main screen, click on Setup/Year End.
- On the Start Of Collection tab, click 
- Click 

F. Reset the batch number

- At the top of the main screen, click on Setup/Year End.
- Click 
- Reset the batch back to your beginning number. (For example, if it says 5079, set the batch number back to 5000.)
- This will need to be done for every computer using the tax collection program. Starting batch numbers should be spaced far enough apart that there will be no overlap. If you use a lockbox, be sure to start at no less than 1000 (the lockbox usually starts at 1).



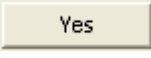
G. Check Printing Information

- At the top of the main screen, click on Setup/Year End.
- Click 
- Check that all the information listed is correct. Pay special attention to the Bill Title and all of the dates to the right, including tax year.
- When you are finished, click 
- Also click on  to change penalty dates and make sure that penalty amounts are correct.
- When you are finished, click 

H. Move and Rename the RPS files


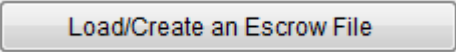

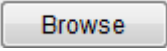
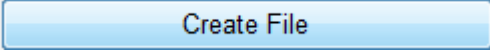
Call us at (607) 722-4933 if you need help with this step.

I. Load Data

- The RPS files need to be renamed and in the county folder.
- At the top of the main screen, click on Setup/Year End.
- Click 
- If you have an Anti-virus real time scan, it must be off.
- Check the dates, and make sure the T/S/V/C is correct.
- Click on 
- Click on 

8. There will be information written across the screen. This is normal.
9. When the data is finished loading, print a warrant report. Check this against the warrant the board approved. Schools: remember our warrant already has the STAR amount removed.
10. Remember to turn the Anti-virus real time scan back on.




J. Make Escrow File

1. From the main screen, click on 
2. On the right hand side, click on the Escrow/Lockbox tab.
3. Click 
4. Then click on 
5. At the bottom, enter a location for the escrow file by clicking 
6. Click 
7. After you are done creating the escrow file, you will have to transfer it to a disk or attach it to an email.

K. Prior Years Data on the Internet


If you would like to keep the data for prior years on the Internet, you must call us before loading the current year of data to the Internet.

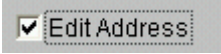



L. Load Current Data to the Internet

1. On the main screen, click 
2. In Step 2, make the Taxpayer File is checked.
3. Click 
4. Username and password are master and master to login.
5. Place checkmarks next to both load payment history file and load taxpayer file and then click 
6. For day to day use, you won't need to do the taxpayer file.


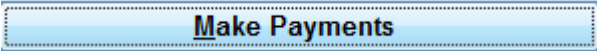


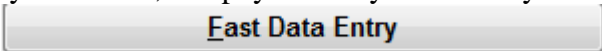
III. Daily, Weekly and Monthly Use

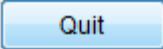
A. Looking up Parcels

1. On the main screen, click on 
2. Remember to type in what you'd like to search on and then click on the appropriate button.
3. One new feature is the "Starts with" checkbox. If you have a check in the box, it will give you a list to pick from rather than providing the exact match.
 - a. If you are searching by bill number, tax map id or account number, it will give you a list clustered around the number you typed in.

- b. If you are searching by owner name, it will give you a list of owners whose names start with what you typed in.
 - c. If you are searching by number + street, we recommend only typing in 12 main instead of 12 main street. You will also get a list to pick from.
 4. The parcel lookup screen has also been changed slightly. All of the information that is frequently used is still on the Bill Info tab. Also, you will find buttons for the following:
 - a. History Report: a multi-year report of billing and payment information.
 - b. Bill: reprint a bill
 - c. Receipt: print a receipt
 - d. Split This Parcel: begin the process to do a divided assessment
 - e. Change parcel: change the assessment, exemptions.
 5. Another feature is that you may change the name and address associated with the parcel directly on the lookup screen.
 - a. Under the name and address area, put a checkmark in Edit Address.
 - b. Click in the name and address area and make the necessary changes.
 - c. The checkmark must remain for the change to stick! 
 - d. Click  to make your changes permanent.
 6. On the Misc/Prior Years tab you'll find the comments, book, page, etc. 
 7. You may also click on a prior year in the grid and then click . Then you can reprint a bill or receipt from a previous year. To get back to the current year, simply click on the Bill Info tab.

B. Entering Payments

1. On the main screen, click 
2. There are two types of payment entry:
 - a. Standard Data Entry
 - i. Click 
 - ii. Change the posting date if necessary (for postmarks, etc)
 - iii. Select the correct place of payment
 - iv. Search for and select the parcel
 - v. Make sure the amount paid is entered in the appropriate box (cash or check) and the paid by info is correct.
 - vi. Click  or 
 - b. Fast Data Entry: for exact, full payments by owner only
 - i. Click 
 - ii. Change the posting date if necessary (for postmarks, etc)
 - iii. Select the correct place of payment
 - iv. Type in the bill number and hit enter, or scan the barcode.

- v. To exit, click 


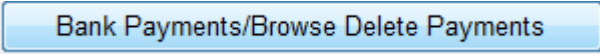
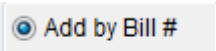
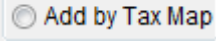

C. Entering Over/under payments

If the overage is an amount you intend to refund, add the overage into the tax box on the payment screen.


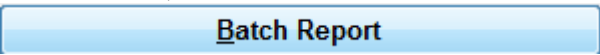

If it is over/under by a little bit, make the adjustment in the misc box on the payment screen.

D. Adding Bank or Escrow Payments


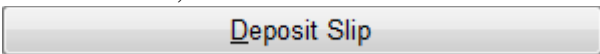
Note: If you have a large number of bank or escrow payments, you want to begin this process with an empty batch.

1. On the main screen, click 
2. Click 
3. Change the batch date if necessary (for postmarks, etc)
4. Select the correct place of payment
5. Enter the paid by information (bank name, check number) under the grid on the right.
6. To enter many payments from one bank, enter the bank code in the box at the lower left hand corner and hit enter. All parcels with that bank code will be placed in the grid. Add/delete as necessary.
7. To add just a few parcels, select either bill # or tax map.  Add by Bill #  Add by Tax Map Type the parcel's information in the box to the right then hit enter.
8. When you are finished, click  and check the batch report.

E. Batch Report



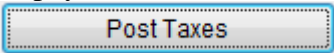
1. On the main screen, click 
2. Click 
3. Change the order the report will display in, or payments displayed if desired.
4. Click  and print the report.
5. Make sure that you verify that every payment is for the correct amount.
6. Also verify that the monies you have collected match the dollar amount collected on the report.
7. Checking each entry for accuracy now will save you time and aggravation later.

F. Deposit Slip

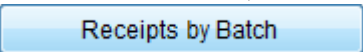
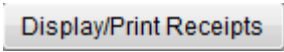
1. On the main screen, click 
2. Click  and print the report.
3. Take it to the bank with your deposit, or keep it for your records.

G. Posting Payments

Note: You should double-check that all the entries in your batch are correct by examining the batch report and/or shopping cart before you make your entries permanent. Mistakes are much easier to fix before they have become permanent.

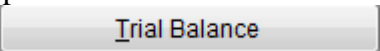
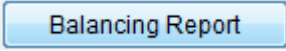
1. On the main screen, click 
2. Click 
3. Check the deposit date to make sure it is correct.
4. Check at least the total amount and number of payments below the shopping cart. If you find an error, you can check on a payment by clicking on the bill number. You can even delete a payment from the screen that pops up.
5. Click 
6. Print the reports that follow for your records.

H. Printing Receipts by Batch

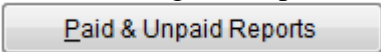
1. When you collect a batch of mail or escrow payments, it is quicker and easier to print receipts for the entire batch at once.
2. The batch must be posted.
3. At the top of the main screen, click on Reports.
4. Click on 
5. To print receipts for just one batch, enter that batch number into both the Starting Batch # and the Ending Batch # and then click 
6. You may also print a receipt for an individual parcel from the parcel lookup screen.


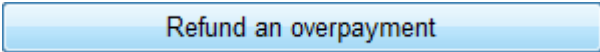

I. Balancing and Other Reports


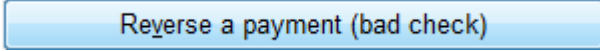
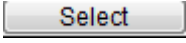
We have a wide variety of reports, only a few are mentioned below. To access the reports from the main screen, at the top click on Reports.

1. Balancing Report
 - a. Click 
 - b. Click 
 - c. This will give you totals and break payments down into certain categories. If there are overpayments, they must be refunded before the program can balance.
2. Paid & Unpaid Reports
 - a. Allows you to run a variety of reports that will show who has paid in full, not paid or paid a partial payment. The overpayment report is also located here.
3. Warrant Report
 - a. This is what you should check after loading your data.


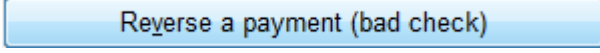

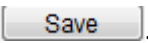

J. Refunds, Reversals & Bad Checks



1. Refunds
 - a. From the main screen, go to Reports.
 - b. Click on  and run the overpayment report. This will show you the parcels that may need to be refunded.

- c. Exit to the main screen.
 - d. From the main screen, click on .
 - e. Click on .
 - f. Change the posting date and place of payment (you can use the refund option) if necessary and find and select the parcel you need to refund.
 - g. Make sure that the amount to refund is correct, and enter a reason for refund. If the amount is not correct, you may change any of the numbers.
 - h. Click .
 - i. Finish processing this batch like you would any other batch.
2. Reversals/Bad Checks

- a. From the main screen, click on .
- b. Click on .
- c. Find and select the parcel.
- d. Enter the bad check fee (if any) and a reason for the reversal. Make sure to check the Bad Check/NSF checkbox if this is a bad check and should show on the bad check report.
- e. Select the payment that needs to be reversed by clicking on  in the grid.
- f. Click REVERSE BUTTON.
- g. Click Yes-Reverse it!
- h. This is an immediate action and will not require posting.

3. Adding or Removing a Bad Check fee
- a. If you find after a payment has been reversed that the bad check fee is incorrect, you can easily correct it.



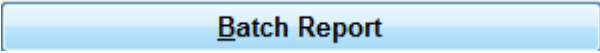

- b. From the main screen, click on .
- c. Click on .
- d. Find and select the parcel.
- e. In the lower left corner, click on .
- f. Enter the correct Bad Check Fee in the box that appears (0.00 if you'd like to remove the fee), and then click .
- g. The fee will change in the grid above, click  to exit the screen.

4. Reversing an Entire Batch: Clerical or other Errors
- a. From the main screen, click on .
 - b. Click on .
 - c. Enter the batch number to delete.
 - d. Enter the reason for deletion; it must be at least 14 characters.
 - e. When you click on Delete the batch, it will all but disappear. The only record of

- the batch will be in a trace file (for your own records and auditors).
- f. Please be aware the only way to reverse this process is to re-enter the batch, so be really sure you are doing the right thing before you reverse a batch.


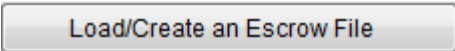

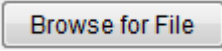
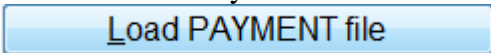
K. Credit Card Payments

1. Before you download credit card payments from the Internet, make sure that you have no payments in your batch.


2. From the main screen, click on 
3. Click on 
4. Click 
5. Change the order the report will display in, or payments displayed if desired.
6. Click  and print the report.
7. Make sure that you verify that every payment is for the correct amount.
8. Checking each entry for accuracy now will save you time and aggravation later.
9. Once you are sure everything is correct, you may post the batch.


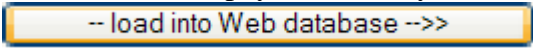
L. Loading an escrow disk

1. Before you load an escrow disk, make sure that you have no payments in your batch.

2. From the main screen, click on 
3. On the right hand side, click on the Escrow/Lockbox tab.
4. Click on 
5. Click on 
6. Enter the location of the file by clicking on 
7. Make sure that the entries in the Full or Partial and Escrow Pmt # are correct. If the disk has only full payments on it, the Escrow Pmt # doesn't matter.
8. Change the date if necessary.
9. Click on 
10. After the escrow disk loads, check your batch report and the report and the check the escrow company sent.
11. When everything matches and is correct, post the batch.




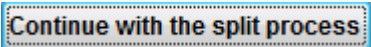



M. Daily Steps







1. Every day, or at least a couple of times a week, you should backup your data and upload your data to the Internet.
2. On the main screen of the program click on 
3. Perform either an Internet Backup and/or a File Backup.
4. If you have Internet lookup, go down to step 2.
5. If you haven't done any address changes, splits or small claims adjustments, you don't need a check in front of Taxpayer File.

6. Click .
7. Username and password are still master and master to login.
8. Place a checkmark next to load payment history file (and taxpayer file if you needed it) and then click .




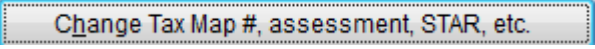

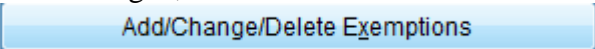
IV. Less Commonly Used Features


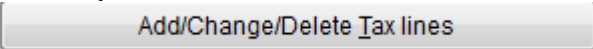


A. Splits/Apportionments

1. Before splitting a parcel, do a backup of your data from .
2. You must have all of the information about the new parcels available before starting the process.
3. If the parcel is paid, please call us before splitting the parcel: there are additional steps that need to be taken.
4. To split a parcel, look up the parcel and print a bill for the original parcel.
5. You'll need to have complete information for each of the new parcels to continue: a new tax map #, owner name and address, assessment and exemption amounts, and the tax amount for each levy line.
6. Then click on .
7. Step 1:
 - a. If all of the new parcels have different Tax Map #'s from the original parcel, choose the first option, "DIVIDED INTEREST- ALL different map #'s".
 - b. If one of the new parcels retains the original tax map ID, choose the second option, "DIVIDED INTEREST- ORIGINAL PARCEL + NEW PARCELS".
8. Enter in the white box the number of parcels that you want.
 - a. Click on .
 - b. Make sure that the correct Tax Map IDs are in the table.
 - c. If they are not correct, double click on one that is incorrect and replace it with the correct number.
 - d. When the Tax Map IDs are correct, click .
 - e. Click on the owner name of the first parcel in the table, and then click on .
 - f. Make sure that all the information on the screen is correct.
 - g. Especially check to see that the owner's name and address and the Landassess and Assessment are correct.
 - h. When everything is correct, click on .
 - i. If the property has any exemptions, make sure they are correct in the table.
 - j. If exemptions appear and they shouldn't, simply double-click in the amount box on the exemption line in the table enter 0.
 - k. When everything is correct, click on .
 - l. Make sure that the tax amounts are all correct.

- i. Schools: in the grid, the taxable value and tax needs to be the pre-STAR value. We subtract the STAR savings down near the bottom of the screen.
 - ii. To change a tax amount, double-click in the Tax box (it will turn blue), and then type in the correct tax amount. Do not use commas when typing in any number.
 - m. When all of the tax amounts are correct, click on 
 - n. Now click on the next parcel in the table, and then click on 
 - o. Change all the information for this parcel like you did for the first parcel (steps f-m).
 - p. Continue until you have changed all the information for all of the new parcels.
 - q. When all of the information for all of the parcels is changed (they will all be yellow in the table), you may proceed.
 - r. Click on 
 - s. If the bills are off a penny or so, select one parcel, click on  and change the tax amounts so that they are correct.
 - t. When you get the message that the new bills balance with the original, proceed.
 - u. Click on 
 - v. Print the report and make sure that all of your information is correct, especially name, address and taxes.
 - w. Click on 
 - x. The new parcels will be posted to the permanent file, and given the next available bill numbers. The split process is now complete.
 - y. Look up the new parcels and print new bills for the taxpayers.
9. If you need help with any of the steps, call us to let us help you through it. Also remember that there is a button to abandon the split process if you need to start over.

B. Changing Parcel Data or Assessment (Warrant Adjustments)

1. On the main screen, click 
2. Choose the parcel you need to change, and reprint a copy of the bill for your records.
3. If all you need to do is change the owner name/address, check Edit Address and then edit whatever you need to in the box above. Just make sure edit address is still checked and click  and it will make the change for you.
4. If you need to change something besides owner name/address, click 
5. Click  and change any information that needs to be changed, then 
6. Click 
 - a. To change an exemption, change the amount in the table.

- b. To add or delete an exemption, click on the appropriate button.
 - c. When you are finished, click .
7. Click .
8. If you have changed the assessment or exemptions, make sure the assessed and taxable values are correct for each tax line. Schools: remember that the taxable value should be the pre-star amount.
9. Check and double check all of the tax amounts, then click .
10. If you have installments, be sure to click on the button to check/change the installment amounts.
11. Click  This is the only opportunity you have to print this sheet.
12. Reprint a new bill.

V. Some Tips and Tricks

- Splitting a paid parcel: The lien on the parcel has already been satisfied. There is no further legal action required on the part of the tax collector.
- Informing taxpayers/banks that haven't paid: There is no legal obligation to do so.
- Receipts: You are only required to send receipts in two cases.
 - A receipt has been requested.
 - If a tax bill is paid by a bank or escrow company, you must send a receipt to the homeowner.
- Modified tax bills: You may have to give the taxpayer additional time to pay without penalty after the change to the tax bill has been approved. Check with your treasurer, school business administrator and/or school board.
- Tolerance: By law, a collector cannot receive anything other than the exact amount due. However, it is accepted practice to collect over or under by a certain amount (\$0.25, \$1.00, \$5.00 etc). There is no penalty in the law for collecting within a tolerance.
- If a parcel was paid with multiple checks and one of them bounces: The entire payment must be reversed. The money for any check that didn't bounce should be refunded to the payer. If you get a new payment in a penalty period, the penalty should be charged on the entire amount due.
- Making address changes: These are handy for receipt printing purposes. Any changes you make are for your system only; they don't get transferred back to the county. The assessor or county must also make the changes in their files.
- Printing receipts and bills: Make sure you triple check before you send anything out. Make sure that the penalty dates, fiscal year and places to send or make payments are all correct. Human error does occur! Especially with bill printing, make sure you (and a couple of other people) check the first few that come off of the actual printer before you let all of the bills print.