

Dear Keystroke POS User,

The end of the year is near and there are a few topics that you may want to review in preparation. While most of these procedures are optional, some may be necessary steps to maintain your data and maximize the benefits you receive from the Keystroke system in the coming year. If your business operates on a non-calendar fiscal year, some of these topics may still be helpful now, while others will pertain to your particular fiscal year.

If you have further questions, depending on the nature of the issue, please contact your local Authorized Keystroke Dealer, SBS technical support 800-275-4727, or your accounting/financial professional. SBS hours are 8am to 6pm Mountain Time, and if you are not subscribed to Software Maintenance Service we will be happy to explain your options when you call.

Data Backup

Perhaps the most important task you should perform annually is to review your normal data backup process and make a separate backup copy, in addition to your normal procedure. If you do not already have a regular backup procedure in place, now is a good time to start.

Think of your data backup procedure as a very inexpensive insurance policy. If you ever experience a loss of data caused by natural disaster, equipment failure, or even human error, a recent usable copy of your data is the only thing that can restore your Keystroke system. You can always build a new building, buy new inventory, buy a new computer and re-install the Keystroke software, but it would be impossible to accurately re-create your sales history, accounts receivable records, and inventory levels without a copy of your data files.

A data backup is merely a copy of the computer files where the Keystroke system stores your business information. It is a snapshot of your data at a point in time (i.e., when the backup copy was made). A data backup is not only helpful in the event of a catastrophe, it can also be useful to generate reports based on the point in time when the backup was made. Although we also suggest you run certain reports at the year-end, such as accounts receivable balances and inventory value (see below), having a complete copy of your data is another way to create the ability to view data as of a previous point in time. This is necessary because the Keystroke system is real-time, and data is therefore perpetually changing as new transactions are entered.

For more information or assistance on how to create backup copies of your data files, it is best to contact your local Authorized Keystroke Dealer. Your local dealer can help you be sure you are making reliable data backups, and teach you how to maximize the efficiency and benefit of your data backups. While it is not a replacement for an automated backup system, the Keystroke system does include a relatively simple Backup utility in the Configuration Manager module. For more information on this utility, go to the Files menu, select Backup, then the Standard option, and press F1.

Inventory Quantities

The Keystroke system maintains inventory on a real-time basis, meaning that when a sale or purchase transaction is entered, inventory quantities are adjusted immediately. In a perfect world this would result in you always knowing exactly how many of each item are in stock at any given time. However, there are two issues you must periodically address when using a real-time perpetual inventory system.

First, the inventory levels in the system do not reflect unrecorded inventory changes such as theft, damage, spoilage, entry errors, etc. In Keystroke, we call these **Variations**, and there is a special function you can use to record them. Just like sales and purchases, Variations are transactions which adjust inventory quantities. The main difference is that Variance transactions are typically used to adjust the Quantity On Hand to a known value which is determined by physically counting available inventory. The attached document VARIANCE.PDF includes step by step instructions on how to use the Variance function. Although New Year's Eve is probably not when you want to count your entire inventory, you may still use the Variance function to take a snap shot of inventory levels on that day.

Second, since inventory levels are real-time, if you need to know the value of your inventory on a particular date such as the last day of the year, you will need to make a record the inventory levels on that date. There are several ways to accomplish this. The most obvious way is to print a report (in Report Manager, Inventory menu, Database function). The Totals report Forms will include your current Cost Of Inventory and QOH for all inventory items. Review the report settings carefully being sure to include all Inventory items, except perhaps Service items. It may be helpful to send the report to a file especially if you have many thousands of items which could require many pages of paper. Other options to record the inventory levels on a particular date are discussed earlier in this document, including making a Data Backup, and using the Variance function.

Accounts Receivable

Just like inventory, Accounts Receivable balances in Keystroke are real-time. Therefore, if you need to know Accounts Receivable balances on any particular date, such as the last day of the year, you will need to record the information on that date by either: printing a Receivables report, or saving a backup copy of your data. As soon as you begin entering new sales or ROA payments in January, your customers' balances will be affected and will no longer reflect the end of year balances.

Reset/Clear Cumulative Data Fields

Similar to Inventory Quantities and Customer Amount Due, there are a few other data fields in Keystroke that are perpetually updated. These include Total Sold, Total Received, and Total Purchased in Inventory; and Total Purchases in the Customer and Contact databases. If you never edit these fields, they represent totals since you first started using the Keystroke system, which can be misleading. While that may be desirable depending on how or whether you use this information, you may wish to periodically reset or clear any or all of these fields in order to define them to represent year to date (YTD) or other limited values.

Keep in mind that you can also run specific reports in Keystroke to determine most of these data values; however, resetting them will provide access to YTD values (for example) that can be used in report filters and viewed immediately on database records. The easiest way to reset any of these values is to use the Search & Replace function on the Find menu in the Database Manager. As the name implies, this is a two part function. Search is used to define whether you want to affect all records or only records which satisfy certain criteria. Replace is where you define how you want the records to be affected, such as to zero or delete the Total Purchased field. You can find more help by pressing F1 from either the Search or Replace screen.

Warning: If you are careless, the Search & Replace function has the potential to cause significant data loss. This is yet another reason to be sure you have a complete and working data backup system.

Sales Tax Rates

January 1 is often the date when new sales tax rates take effect. In Keystroke, you can define start and end dates for Sales Tax formulas so there is no reason not to put in the new tax formulas as soon as you are notified of rate changes. When configured properly, new rates will automatically become active when they should, and old rate formulas become inactive.

For example, let's suppose your state sales tax rate is changing from 3% to 3.25% on January 1, 2005. Do not change the Tax Amount on the existing formula. Instead, change the End date on the current 3% formula to 12/31/04, AND using the same Tax Code (and other settings) add a new formula for 3.25% with a Start date of 1/1/05. The attached TAXRATE.PDF document also offers more extensive instructions.

Review Transaction File Settings

The Keystroke system offers some unique methods to manage large volumes of transactions without slowing system performance at the point of sale. There are many configuration settings available which your Authorized Dealer may have used to fine tune the system for your needs; however, there are two settings in particular that you may want to review at this time of year. These are the Transaction Lock and Transaction File settings; both are located in the Configuration Manager, Settings menu, Databases function.

The Transaction Lock Date/Time allow you to limit all users (regardless of Security Level) from "editing" sales invoices prior to a specific date. There are various reasons to adjust these settings at year end, such as after transferring data to an accounting system, or providing printed reports to an accountant or bookkeeper. Previous transactions remain available for reporting and even reprinting, but users are prevented from changing transactions in the previous year.

The Transaction File settings are used to control when the Keystroke program will split to a new transaction file. The file split can be determined by Size Only (ranging from .3 Mb to 6 Mb), or by various calendar options (Week, Month, Quarter, or Year). How you use these settings depends mostly on the volume of transactions your business processes. For example, if your business averages about 1000 transactions per month, you could set the system to split on Quarter and the size to 4 Mb (1000 transactions requires about 1 Mb, so you would want to increase the Max Size setting to well over 3 Mb). If you are not yet familiar with how Keystroke splits transaction files, you may want to speak to your local dealer to learn more. The F1 Help will provide additional information regarding these settings.