



A Division of Harris Computer Systems

TAX BILLING: BILLING PROCESS

This tip sheet includes step by step directions for creating tax bills. The information provided assumes that the Commitment Process has been done in the **Real Estate** and **Personal Property Assessing** programs. For more information about this, refer to the **Real Estate: Commitment Process** tip sheet. Detailed information, including interactive screenshots, can also be found in the **Tax Billing Help File**, which is accessible from any program by selecting *Help > Tax Billing*.

1. Audit
2. Apply Pre-Payment Interest
3. Transfer New Billing Data
4. Commitment Book
5. Bills
6. Supplemental Bills
7. Printing
8. Account Associations
- M. File Maintenance
- X. Exit Billing

The main menu in the **Tax Billing** program is set up so that the first five menu options are the five steps of the billing process, in the order that they should be run. The steps to be run are: **Audit, Apply Pre-Payment Interest, Transfer New Billing Data, Commitment Book, and Bills.**

Audit

The Audit provides a preview of the totals that will be used to create bills, including the calculated tax. The amounts displayed in this step should be carefully reviewed and compared to the totals generated in **Real Estate** and **Personal Property**. If the totals do not match, make sure that all steps in the Commitment Process were run. This step can be run as many times as needed.

To run the Audit:

1. Select the Rate Record to use, or create a new Rate Record by going to *File > New*. The first time through this process, a new Rate Record will need to be created. However, if this step has been run at least once before an existing Rate Record can be selected and even edited as needed.
2. Verify or enter the information on the Rate Record as needed. Press **F12** to continue. The fields on the Rate Records are:
 - a. **Description/Title** – This is the textual description of the Rate Record and should be filled out with something easily identifiable, such as "2006 Tax Commitment" for example.
 - b. **Tax Rate** – This is the tax or mil rate to use in calculating the bills. This number should be filled out as a whole number (e.g. 9 instead of .009). Decimals can be used however, so .0145 would be entered as 14.5.
 - c. **Interest Rate** – Enter the rate to use for interest here. This figure should be entered as a whole number percentage, not a decimal (e.g. 10 instead of .10). Percentage signs do not need to be entered.
 - d. **Bill Date** and **Commitment Date** – These fields should have the dates the bills are to be sent and of the commitment. These are not used in any calculations, can be estimates, and are just used by the program for reference purposes. They will not print on the bills.
 - e. **Number of Pay Periods** – Select the number of pay periods here – up to four periods can be used.
 - f. **Interest Date** – Enter the date interest for each period should start accruing. This can only be filled out for the number of periods selected above.
 - g. **Due Date** – This is the date taxes for the period are due on. This is typically the day before the *Interest Date*, but can be set to any date before that.

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3. Select the tax files to process – either *Real Estate*, *Personal Property* or *Both* and press **F12**.
4. Select whether to run for *All Accounts*, a *Range of Accounts*, or a *Specific Account*. Also, select whether to display or print the calculated results. Press **F12** once the options are configured.
5. Review the calculated bills and totals. Even if *Display* was selected in the previous step, the Audit information can be printed out by pressing **F12** on the summary screen. If errors exist, correct those in the **Real Estate** or **Personal Property** programs and repeat this process. Otherwise, continue to the **Apply Pre-payment Interest** and **Transfer New Billing Data** steps.

Apply Pre-Payment Interest

This step is used to automatically apply earned or pre-payment interest for tax holders so that it will be reflected on the tax bills. In order for this process to be available, two settings must first be configured. First, in **File Maintenance > Customize**, the *Pay Interest on Pre-Payments* option must be checked off. Second, in **Tax Collections > File Maintenance > Customize > Rate Information** a *Pre-Payment Interest Rate* must be entered.

To apply Pre-Payment Interest:

1. Select **2. Apply Pre-Payment Interest**.
2. Enter the *Effective Date* to calculate the earned interest through and click **OK**.
3. Select the *Billing Year* to apply the earned interest to – click **OK** to continue.
4. If the **TRIO Budgetary System** is also used, the program will at this point create a journal for the entries created. Note the journal number so that the journal can be reviewed and posted later.
5. The pre-payment interest will now show as a credit on the affected accounts and their subsequent bills.

Transfer New Billing Data

This is the step in which taxes are actually applied to the Real Estate and Personal Property accounts. The steps for this process are very similar to the steps in the **Audit** process. Once this step is complete, the **Tax Collections** program will show taxes as being due, even if the Commitment Book and Bills have not actually been printed out yet. While ideally this step should only be run once, it is possible to retransfer taxes, if needed. **Please do so with caution**. If there are any concerns about having to redo this process, please contact TRIO Software's Support Department. It is recommended that an archive be made in the Real Estate program just prior to running this step so that information from the time of this billing can be accessed in the future.

To Transfer New Billing Data

1. Select the Rate Record to use, or create a new Rate Record by going to *File > New*.
2. Verify or enter the information on the Rate Record as needed. Press **F12** to continue. For more information about the fields on the Rate Record, refer to the **Audit** section of this help sheet.
3. Select the tax files to process – either *Real Estate*, *Personal Property* or *Both* and press **F12**.
4. Select whether to run for *All Accounts*, a *Range of Accounts*, or a *Specific Account*. Also, select whether or not to run the bills as of a specific date (April 1st, for example). Press **F12** once the options are configured.
5. The system will now create bill records for all eligible accounts. Once done, a summary of the totals transferred will display. Review the totals and close the window to continue.

Tax Year: 2005	
Description / Title	
2005 Tax Bills	
Tax Rate: 14.5	Interest Rate: 7.00
Bill Date: 07/01/2005	Commitment Date: 06/26/2005
Number of Pay Periods: 1	
Period 1 Interest Date: 08/31/2005 Due Date: 08/30/2005	Period 2 Interest Date: <input type="text"/> Due Date: <input type="text"/>
Period 3 Interest Date: <input type="text"/> Due Date: <input type="text"/>	Period 4 Interest Date: <input type="text"/> Due Date: <input type="text"/>

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- At this point, the system will ask if the Commitment Book should be printed – select *Yes* or *No*. If it is not printed now, it can still be printed later by selecting **Commitment Book** from the main menu in **Tax Billing**.

To Re-Transfer New Billing Data

- Select the Rate Record to use – this needs to be the same rate record that was used when bills were run before.
- Verify or correct the information on the Rate Record as needed. Press **F12** to continue.
- Select the tax files to process – either *Real Estate*, *Personal Property* or *Both* and press **F12**.
- Select whether to run for *All Accounts*, a *Range of Accounts*, or a *Specific Account*. Also, select whether or not to run the bills as of a specific date (April 1st, for example). Press **F12** once the options are configured.
- The program will detect that bills were created previously with this rate record. Three options are then available: *Skip Bills*, *Overwrite Bills*, and *Cancel*. *Skip Bills* will only create bill records for those accounts that did not get billed on the prior run of the Transfer process. *Overwrite Bills* will overwrite all existing bills with the information from this current run. Lastly, *Cancel* will close out of the Transfer process without creating any bills. Select the appropriate option and click **OK** to continue.
- If *Overwrite* was selected in the previous step, and this is the first time that bills are being overwritten today, a prompt to backup the database before continuing will display. It is highly recommended that *Yes* is selected at this point.
- The system will now create bill records for all eligible accounts. Once done, a summary of the totals transferred will display. Review the totals and close the window to continue.
- At this point, the system will ask if the Commitment Book should be printed – select *Yes* or *No*. If it is not printed now, it can still be printed later by selecting **Commitment Book** from the main menu in **Tax Billing**.

Commitment Book

If at the end of the **Transfer New Billing Data** step, *Yes* is selected at the prompt to print the Commitment Book, a print preview of the Commitment Book will be generated automatically at that point in time. Otherwise, the Commitment Book can be printed at any time by selecting **4. Commitment Book** from the Main Menu in **Tax Billing**. This menu option brings up the *Reports* selection screen. By default the *Real Estate Commitment Book* will be selected. Select the Sequence to use (*Account*, *Name*, or *Map and Lot*), enter the *Tax Year* and *Start Page* as needed in the fields of the bottom of the screen, and press **F12** to generate the report. The Commitment Book can also be run for a range of accounts, if desired, using the *Start* and *End* fields. The book can be printed in either Portrait, Landscape, or Wide format. The options will be the same when printing the Personal Property Commitment Book. Note that once **F12** has been pressed to generate the report, it may also be necessary to select the Rate Record to print the Commitment Book for – this option will only display if multiple Rate Records have been set up for the entered Tax Year. The Commitment Book can be printed as many times as needed and can even be reprinted at a future date.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Reports" with the following elements:

- Sequence By:** Radio buttons for "Account", "Name", and "Map / Lot".
- Report:** A list of report types with checkboxes:
 - Real Estate Commitment Book
 - Personal Property Commitment Book
 - Real Estate Collection List
 - Personal Property Collection List
 - Real Estate Accounts Not Billed
 - Personal Property Accounts Not Billed
 - Real Estate Transfer Report
 - Personal Property Transfer Report
 - Real Estate Previous Owners
- Mortgages:** A sub-section with radio buttons for:
 - Custom Report
 - Mortgage Holder List
 - Real Estate Accounts by Mortgage Holder
 - Real Estate List with Mortgage Holders
 - Real Estate & Personal Property Association
- Out-Printing:** A sub-section with radio buttons for:
 - Real Estate Out-Print Report
 - Personal Property Out-Print Report
- Start:** and **End:** Input fields for a date range.
- Tax Year:** Input field with "2005" entered.
- Start Page:** Input field.
- Paper Size / Format:** Radio buttons for "8.5 x 11 Portrait", "8.5 x 11 Landscape", and "Wide Printer".
- New Page on New Starting Letter**

Tax Billing: Billing Process *CONTINUED*

Bills

The **Tax Billing** system allows for both the printing of bills and the creating of an Out-Printing file that can be sent to a third party printing company (e.g. Wise Business Forms, etc.). Both steps can be run as many times as needed and can be found by selecting **5. Bills** from the **Tax Bills** Main Menu. Once the Bills have been printed or sent to the Out-Printer, the billing process is complete.

Print Bills

The **Tax Billing** program supports a wide variety of tax bill formats that can be used in the printing process. Additionally, Custom Bill format can be created from within the program by selecting **File Maintenance > Edit Custom Bill** from the Main Menu. For more information on setting up a Custom Bill format, refer to the **Tax Billing: Custom Bills** tip sheet.

To Print Tax Bills:

1. Select **5. Bills > 1. Print Bills** from the **Tax Billing** Main Menu.
2. Select the Bill Format to use from the drop-down menu. A preview of each format will display in the top section of the window on the screen. The checkboxes in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen will show what options are available on each Bill Format – these are for informational purposes and are not selectable. Press **F12** to continue once a Bill Format is selected.
3. On the next screen, select the various options to use in printing the bills. The options available will vary, depending on the Bill Format selected. There are options here for printing the *Distribution Breakdown*, *Return Address*, and *Discount* on the bills.
4. Choose whether to print bills for Real Estate or Personal Property accounts, or Real Estate accounts combined with Personal Property. The last option is only available on some formats. Also, it is possible to print the bills for a Range of accounts or a Specific account. This can be especially useful if the printer used for bills has problems printing a large number of bills at one time. Once all options are entered, press **F12** to continue printing the bills.
5. Depending on the options selected, the system may prompt for a variety of information to be filled out, including Distribution Percentages, a Return Address, and a Discount Message. Complete this information as needed, pressing **F12** to save and continue on each screen.
6. When the prompt to select a printer displays, choose the printer that will be used for the bills. Note that the bills will **not** print directly after this, so it will still be possible to load and adjust the bills after this point.
7. The last prompt will ask if all bills should be printed, or if a print preview should be done. It is highly recommended to generate a print preview the first time through the Print Bills process. This allows for a sample bill to be printed – the bills can then be checked for any issues, including problems with the information printing on the bills or the alignment of the bills in the printer. Once a sample bill has been successfully printed, rerun the **Print Bills** process and select to print all bills. At this point, all selected bills will be sent to the printer. Depending on the number of bills being printed and the speed of the printer, the actual bill printing may take some time.

The screenshot shows the 'Billing Format' window with the following sections and options:

- Tax Year:** 2005
- Distribution Breakdown:**
 - Don't Show Breakdown
 - Show Breakdown by Percentages
 - Show Breakdown by Dollars and %
- Return Address:**
 - Don't Show Return Address
 - Show Return Address
- Discount:**
 - Don't Show Discount
 - Show Discount
- Order Bills By:**
 - Name
 - Zip Code
 - Account
- Bill Copies:**
 - Send a copy to each mortgage holder
 - Send a copy to the New Owner
 - Use Laser Adjustment
 - Adjustment in Lines. Ex. 1,-1,1.5: 0
 - Transparent Boxes
- Don't print bills with a negative or zero balance:**
- Type of Bills:**
 - Real Estate
 - Personal Property
 - Real Estate Combined with Personal Property
- Bills To Print:**
 - All
 - Individual
 - Range
- Table:**

Bills to print	Start	End
Account		
Name	A	G
Location		
Map / Lot		
Tran Code		
Land Code		
Bldg Code		

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Out-Printing

Out-Printing allows for the creation of a file that can be used by a third party printer to generate tax bills for the town. A variety of formats are available for the out-printing file – check with the printer to see which format they require. For reference purposes, the bottom section of the screen will list the format of the file. Once the file is created, it can be copied to a disk or other location on the computer – this file can then be mailed, e-mailed, or otherwise transmitted to the printer. Before creating the out-printing file, make sure that the Distribution Percentages under *File Maintenance > Distribution Percentages* have been set up as needed.

To Create the Out-Printing File:

1. Select **5. Bills > 2. Out-Printing** from the **Tax Billing** Main Menu.
2. Enter the *Tax Year* to generate the file for.
3. Select whether to include Real Estate or Personal Property accounts, or both. Note that even if Both is selected, the system will still create two separate files for Real Estate and Personal Property. If the printer should not print bills for accounts with a zero or negative balance, check off the appropriate option.
4. If the printer should generate bills for *New Owners* and/or *Mortgage Holders*, check off the corresponding checkboxes.
5. If discounts are provided to tax payers, and this information should print on the bill, check off the Use Discounts option and fill in the Discount Percentage and Due Date fields.
6. Once all options are selected, press **F12** to start creating the file. If more than one Rate Record has been set up for the Tax Year and has bills associated with it, select the one to use and press **F12**.
7. After the file has been created a Summary Report showing the totals in the Out-Printing file will display – print this report for use in comparing to the totals the printer generates when printing the bills. **Note that if additional copies are being generated for New Owners or Mortgage Holders, or if bills are not being printed for negative or zero balance accounts, the grand totals on the report may not match the total assessment figures.** This is because the report is showing a total for all bills printed, which is not necessarily a reflection of how much tax will be actually collected. The totals for the extra copies will be broken out separately on the report.
8. Assuming that the totals on the Out-Printing report are correct, the file can now be copied to a location where it can be sent to the printer. This can be done by selecting *File > Copy File to Disk*. From here, select the location to save the file – to save to a floppy drive, select the A: drive. If the file should be placed in a specific directory, do so using the sections at the bottom of the window. The Real Estate and Personal Property files will be named TSREBill.fil and TSPBill.fil, respectively.