

ParcelTrak Refresher Guide  
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(prguide.doc)

### Purpose of the document

- To remind users of key concepts and ideas within the program
- To remind users on the operation of the system
- To advise users of items that they had not used
- To advise new concepts that have been added since installation
- To advise of add-ons that are available for the program

### Reason for producing the document

It is critical that for proper operation of the ParcelTrak program that -

1. The depot gave proper time for training at the time of installation
2. The depot staff have read the training manuals supplied with the system
3. The depot has run the Lotus ScreenCam videos supplied with the system which demonstrate the basic operation
4. The depot is aware that HELP screens are available at any point in the program by holding down the ALT key and hitting the letter 'H'.
5. Where staff have changed then the new staff have been given the proper instructions on the operation of the system

Failure to abide by these will mean that the system does not run at its full potential.

## Basic operations

### Logging-in

ParcelTrak is a true multi-user system and maintains a table of users that have access to the system. We do not treat a single-user or multi-user system differently as this allows a smooth upgrade path for the depot when they move from single to multi-user versions. There is nothing new to learn as a result.

To control the users of the system you log in as MANAGER. This takes you into a special menu that is only seen by the Manager user.

While there are several options on this menu, the main one is entitled NAME TABLE.

The NAME TABLE is where you insert users and give passwords and rights to use the system. You do this by choosing USER NAMES on the bottom menu.

To insert a user you go down to a blank space and press ENTER. A box will appear. The first item is the USER NAME. Just enter a valid name on this field. (Note that user names must be unique and it is recommended that you use real names). The next field is the PASSWORD. You can leave this field blank but if you do enter a value then you must remember that this field is CASE SENSITIVE i.e. it differentiates between 'UPPER' and 'lower' case.

The next two fields relate to printing and diary. We recommend that you press ENTER on these.

The last field is critical. This is ACCESS LEVEL and is a number between 0 (zero) and 255. You get more access as the number increases. So 255 is the maximum access level and lets you into everything. Every program has a set access level (which can be changed). Setting users access level to 254 would mean that they couldn't print customer listings.

You cannot log into ParcelTrak if your name is not held in the NAME TABLE.

You cannot log in under a particular name from more than one computer at a time.

If you try to log in and get the message 'this user is already logged in' then means that either the username is being used on another computer or the user was still logged in when the computer was switched off.

If you get this message and are not currently on the system then log in as MANAGER. Go to the NAME TABLE. Take the option of CLEAR ACTIVE USER. Go down to the name and press ENTER. Confirm that the user is not logged in by hitting 'Y'. The user can now log in.

## Hot keys

ParcelTrak is also a true multi-tasking program. It will allow you to pop-up and run another program over the top of the existing screen. Associating a key combination with one of these normally performs this action.

These are combinations that you can use (you can add more):

ALT & C	Calculator
ALT & D	Diary
ALT & H	Help
ALT & P	Print spooler
ALT & U	Users logged in

You simply press ESCAPE to close them.

## Print Spooling

This is a very useful facility that allows you to capture, store and reprint printouts. You activate it by using the key combination of ALT & 'P' which then brings up a menu. The top three options of the menu are the most used.

'Turn spooler on' activates the spooler and then stores printouts as files on the local hard disk for later use. Once switched on all subsequent prints are captured until either you turn it off or exit the program.

'On line print' turns the spooler off and resumes normal printing.

'Single files' are where the stores files are held. Taking this option takes you into a listing. The latest file created is at the top of the list. You go down the list to the one you want and then press ENTER. Further options will then be given. You can look at the print on the screen by choosing 'screen'. You can print the whole document by choosing 'print' (the spooler must be off or it will be captured again). Choosing 'reprint' allows you to print a range of pages. 'Delete' will remove the spooled file from the list.

You can switch spooling on and off on ANY ParcelTrak screen and at any time.

ParcelTrak will allow you to store up to 999 spooled files after which you must create space for new ones.

### Customisation of screen colours for different users

You can alter the screen colours by choosing the option of USER FUNCTIONS; this appears as a menu item after you log in. Now choose USER SETTINGS and then SCREEN COLOURS. You choose your colours from the menu.

Once saved, the system will remember your preferences when you log in again anywhere in the system.

### Use of ParcelTrak in Microsoft Windows

ParcelTrak currently runs under ALL versions of Microsoft Windows and you can run it in a full or windowed screen except for Windows 2000, which will only allow it to run in a window. The program will actually run under ANY combination of computers running DOS, Windows or Novell NetWare.

ParcelTrak can be run as a full Windows application but there is a cost issue as it adds £3,000 to the cost for a 4-user system.

You should note that ParcelTrak would require the following settings:

1. In DOS, Windows 95, Windows 95 the CONFIG.SYS file will need a setting of FILES=255
2. In Windows NT and Windows 2000 the CONFIG.NT file will need a setting of FILES=255

It is recommended that in Windows 95/98 you consider adding the following line in the CONFIG.SYS file if at any time you get a message that says 'out of environment space': -

```
SHELL=C:\WINDOWS\COMMAND.COM /P/E:32000
```

This line is not required by ParcelTrak but we have noted occasions where other programs have been installed and affected its operation afterwards when the new program altered settings in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

These are both included in the ParcelTrak Help Manual.

## Advice on printer problems within Windows

Problems with printing within the Microsoft Windows 95/98 operating systems are our commonest support call.

These problems are usually: -

1. No print at all
2. Partial printouts
3. Garbled printouts
4. Slow printing

It is our experience that the majority of support calls (around 95%) that we get are connected with either printers or networks and not directly with our products, the effect is just seen within our products as they are being used most. Many of these problems are resolved by amending settings in the computer BIOS or within Windows itself. Often loading the latest Windows printer driver from the manufacturer or the latest Microsoft Windows service pack resolves the issue. In reality this is not a problem with our products. It is therefore not always covered by our support contract.

You should test the printer with another program and ensure that a printout actually occurs. However, the fact that it runs in one program and another is no proof that the program it does not print in is at fault. Many times we have encountered reported problems within our programs that also occur in other programs as well. You should be able to go into Wordpad and print successfully. If you cannot print from this program then you will not be able to print out of anything else within Windows. Have you just added the printer?

Before you do anything else go to START, PROGRAMS, ACCESSORIES and SCANDISK. Run Scandisk in STANDARD MODE and choose FIX ALL ERRORS.

If you cannot print out of Windows then, on the computer that has the printer connected, go to START then SHUTDOWN and RESTART IN MS-DOS MODE. This will take you to a C: \> prompt. Type the following line and press ENTER: -

```
DIR > PRN
```

This invokes generic printing, like ParcelTrak. If the printer does not print then either the cable is faulty, the printer lead is faulty, the computer is faulty or it may be a Windows Only GDI printer. This is nothing to do with software. Replace components or check by using alternatives. Continue until this works.

If it prints and you are running ParcelTrak then try to run the program in DOS mode, usually by typing PARCEL or SINGLE. Try printing a report. (The message PRINTER NOT RESPONDING means that there is no communication from the operating system to the printer. ParcelTrak prints in a very simple manner and uses no special functions. It has been extensively tested with printers and it is extremely unlikely that any printing problem is due to anything to do with the program).

If unsuccessful hold down ALT and press P. Choose the option of CONFIGURE PRINTER. Try again.

If successful then the problem lies in Windows.

Extensive help lies within Windows to resolve printing problems, including the Print Trouble-shooter tool. Extensive help is also available on the Microsoft web site at <http://support.microsoft.com> and is the subject of article Q128345 which deals with all printer problems (this is 15 pages of really good advice). If you seek advice directly from Microsoft then you will need to be the owner of a registered version of Windows.

You should also seek advice from the supplier of the printer or the manufacturer. There are particular instructions for EPSON printers when running in Windows using non-A4 paper. EPSON are good at making printers but not so good on the supplied software drivers.

You must ensure that you are using the EXACT Windows printer driver for the printer that you are using or unpredictable prints may occur.

Once a print fails in Windows then all subsequent prints may also fail. Go to START then SHUTDOWN and RESTART. Try again.

Try switching off the printer. Hold down the key marked LF on it. With the key held down, switch on the printer. It should test print. If the printed characters have bits missing then the print head of the printer is faulty.

The commonest causes of problems (in order) with printers are: -

#### 1. No printout at all

- Jammed in print queue within Windows. See Printers in Control Panel. Empty print queue.
- Cable disconnected. Yes, this is very common. The lead has half fallen out.
- Using a printer switch box (and it doesn't switch correctly). Switch printers off then on again and retry. (Try connecting directly and miss the box out).
- Out of paper in printer.
- Printer ribbon jammed.
- Faulty printer port.
- Use of printer offline option enabled within Control Panel/Printers.

## 2. Partial printouts

- ECP printer port on computer and Windows 95 - known problem. See Q128345 to resolve.
- Faulty cable. Did the cable cost £2.99 or £15? Does it conform to the IEEE1294 specification?
- Wrong Windows printer driver.
- Data corruption on hard disk - run SCANDISK to resolve.

## 3. Garbled printouts

- Wrong printer driver.
- Faulty cable.
- Data corruption on hard disk - run SCANDISK to resolve.

## 4. Slow printing

- Wrong printer driver.
- Out of date printer driver.
- More than one driver for the same printer (will appear as COPY 2, COPY 3 etc)
- Badly written printer driver - use the official Microsoft one if available.
- Low on available computer memory.
- Low on hard disk space.
- Data corruption on hard disk - corrupt Windows swap file - run SCANDISK to resolve.

If the printer prints out of Wordpad but gives an incomplete printout when using ParcelTrak in Windows mode then it is most likely that the printer driver is incorrectly set not to print MS-DOS jobs. These are settings within the printer driver and nothing to do with ParcelTrak (they will happen in any MS-DOS program producing printouts). As a general guide you should increase timeout settings by 15 seconds and consider the option of printing directly to the printer port (but not the Eltron range of thermal printers). If you do use the option of print after first page is spooled then set the data format to RAW. There is a well-known problem when using Windows 95 on Pentium machines and dot-matrix printers. You should visit the Microsoft web site on <http://support.microsoft.com> and enter Q128345 on the search box. This gives extensive information on how to resolve this problem. If you are using an EPSON printer then you may need to use an alternative printer driver and is explained in Troubleshooting Tip #0247 at their site of <http://support.epson.com> (using the LQ-850 driver resolves most problems). There are also known specific problems with HP LaserJet 4 printers.



Sometimes the problem can lie within the settings of the computer in Windows 95/98. Get to a MS-DOS prompt of C:\> and type EDIT CONFIG.SYS

Add/alter the following lines and save it. (Then reboot):

```
device = c:\windows\himem.sys
device = c:\windows\emm386.exe noems
device = c:\windows\ifshlp.sys
device = c:\windows\command.com /P /E:1024
dos = high
files = 255
```

If your printing is slow until you come out of ParcelTrak then it is likely that your printer driver is trying to use the same memory area. This may alleviate the problem by telling Windows to use memory more efficiently.

If you have slow printing and you have a network card installed then you should see Microsoft help sheet Q140036. This suggests that you add the following after the section marked [386enh] in system.ini: -

```
[Network]
PrintBufTime=10
[IFSMGR]
PrintBufTime=10
```

Slow printing with the Eltron Orion may be due to the printer previously being set up to internally use its memory to store graphic images within a previously used program. See the printer manual on how to flush the memory, or download the Eltron DOS utility program off our web site.

If you are using the Eltron on a RS232 serial port then printing may be slow. If printing labels try using our RS232 label program instead of Multilab.

If you have done everything that appears in this report and you still have the problem then you can ask for us to resolve the issue.

If the problem is not covered by our support contract then you should be aware that we might apply an additional charge for resolution. If the problem is within our products then there will be no charge at all.

ParcelTrak uses a generic method of printing. This allows it to work on a number of operating systems without modification as it passes all print requests to the operating system rather than doing it itself, it should therefore print in situations where other programs fail. There are NO settings in ParcelTrak that affect printing.

ParcelTrak will not work with WinPrinters (GDI) or USB printers unless they have DOS emulation software.

The effects experienced are not restricted to sites running our products. Similar advice pages can be found on the Hewlett Packard and Epson web sites, as this is a common problem. The large manufacturers recommend that their products are only used with a printer cable that conforms to the IEEE1294 specification, this means that every single cable in the cord is connected at both ends. There are 36 cables in the cord and different printers use a different number of these, different signals go down each cable. This can be why one program will work and another will not, as one uses a signal down one cable that the other doesn't. If all the connections are not made then the signal cannot ever arrive and the program doesn't work. If the cable costs £2.99 then it is unlikely to conform to the IEEE1294 standard.

The simple advice has got to be that in a business environment:

1. Use the IEEE1294 type printer cable
2. Use the latest printer driver available
3. Ensure that your version of Windows has the latest patches from Microsoft
4. Run Scandisk on a regular basis

If you are using the Windows NT operating system then the operation of printers may be different. Printing non-standard paper sizes requires extensive knowledge of the NT operating system.



## Multilab Barcode Printing

The Multilab program performs ALL barcode printing within ParcelTrak. It is designed to be easy to use on both single and multi-user systems. ParcelTrak does not actually print barcodes, it creates a file containing all the required information and saves it on the local hard disk. Multilab finds this and builds up the label from it, prints it and then deletes the file.

Before loading the program ensure that you have loaded the printer driver and that the page size is set correctly.

Multilab either loads upon startup or via an icon on the Windows screen. You click on POLL to activate it. The program then runs in a minimized mode on the task bar.

If the Multilab program is not running then the created files sit on the computer until it is. The labels are then caught up. The great thing about this is that if you have two printers and only one cable then there is no problem.

The only setting in ParcelTrak for Multilab is on the PARAMETERS final screen where you get a choice between the barcode printing mode of (U)niversal or (L)ocal. Universal is the normal setting when using one printer. Local is used where you want to use more than one printer.

Always use the latest printer driver and if using a RS232 serial port and not the LPT parallel port then ask for out serial printer driver instead of Multilab.

There is a multiple format version of Multilab that allows the program to print different designs of label (including images) for different parcel/pallet systems. You can even print to different printers using different paper sizes!

## Page sizes

There is only one setting used within ParcelTrak that relates to printers. This is the page length.

Most printers print 66 lines of text on a piece of paper, however some inkjets and laser printers have between 60 and 70. This can vary from printer to printer.

The way to test the page length is to print a document of at least two pages. The combined manifest is a good example. Hold the pieces of paper side by side.

If the second page starts lower than the first then the page length is TOO LONG.

If part of the second page appears on the first then the page length is TOO SHORT.

To adjust the paper length, go into ParcelTrak and onto the UTILITIES MENU. Choose MOD MANF and then COMBINED. Choose HEADER. The first value holds the page length. Initially this is set to 66. Increase or decrease this figure depending upon whether the page is too long or too short. Press the ENTER key on the other

values in the header. When you get to the next page go to EXIT. Escape and choose the option of SAVE. Test this again.

While testing the page length it is a good idea to switch the printer off and on between attempts. Printers often have a memory area and can store pieces of previous runs. This will throw your testing out.

Do not test this operation using the spooler. The spooled files are saved at a specific length at the time of creation. If you have one at 66 lines per page and then alter the page length then the one in the spooler is still at 66 lines per page.

Once you have got the correct length then alter the other options in UTILITIES, like the invoice to the same length.

The thermal printing program will not be affected by any changes.

### Running multiple printers with ParcelTrak and Microsoft Windows

You can run ParcelTrak on a network and use several printers. This is all down to logical setting-up within Windows.

The thermal printing program does not require any special setting-up of printers on a network. There is no need to redirect printers as the program takes care of this itself.

ParcelTrak prints to declared printer ports of LPT1, LPT2, LPT3 and LPT4. It is therefore possible to print to four distinct printers.

As an example, if I have two computers networked together and a printer on each (connected to LPT1) and I need to print to both then this is quite simple. I load the printer driver on the first computer for the printer attached to it. I ensure that I SHARE the printer (MY COMPUTER, CONTROL PANEL, NETWORK). I do the same on the other computer. I then ADD ANOTHER PRINTER using MY COMPUTER, CONTROL PANEL, PRINTERS and ADD A PRINTER. I choose the option of NETWORK PRINTER and browse for the printer on the other computer. I ensure that I choose the option of CAPTURE PRINTER PORT and choose it to capture print jobs sent to LPT2. I do this on both machines.

If I send a print job to LPT1 then it goes to the local printer. If I send a print job to LPT2 then it goes to the other printer.

I then go into ParcelTrak as MANAGER. I choose UTILITIES and choose the options of PRINTER DEFINITIONS, PRINTER MAINTENENCE and then NEW PRINTER. I call the printer REMOTE with an O/S filename of PRINT2. Set the print speed to 80. Leave PASSWORD and ACCESS LEVEL alone. Alter the SYSTEM NAME to LPT2. Auto compression wants to be NO. Set the maximum lines per page to 66. This is now fully set.

Log into ParcelTrak as normal. Bring up the PRINT SPOOLER using ALT and 'P'. Choose CONFIGURE PRINTER. Choosing LOCAL will result in printouts coming

out on the current computer. Choosing REMOTE will cause it to come out on the other printer.

ParcelTrak retains the last choice until changed.

Choosing either setting will not affect printing using the Multilab program.

The message 'printer number out of range' when you first log into the system means that at one time you used multiple printers and used the configure printer option, you deleted this printer as MANAGER. To correct this simply hold down ALT and press 'P' then choose CONFIGURE PRINTER. Choose another printer.

### Network drives

ParcelTrak will happily work on all current network types and even a mixture of these.

The program is run by a simple DOS batch file, which may be called PARCEL.BAT, MASTER.BAT or SLAVE.BAT – these are all effectively the same.

One thing that you must do is to MAP A NETWORK drive for the remote computers to link to the server. Almost as a standard we tend to use F: but you should not take this as a 100% certainty.

Mapping simply makes the hard disk on one computer available as a hard disk on another. If I have two computers, a SERVER and another called SLAVE, connected on a network then both may have a C: drive. I use MAPPING to make the C: drive on the SERVER the F: drive of the SLAVE. F: just appears as a drive letter on the SLAVE.

MASTER.BAT or PARCEL.BAT is run on the SERVER (this relates to a C: drive) while SLAVE.BAT is run by the SLAVE computer (this relates to the F: drive).

If you run ParcelTrak on the SLAVE computer using SLAVE.BAT and it says 'the working folder is not available' it means that the F: drive has not been mapped or the connection has been broken.

If you run it and the main screen comes up and then disappears it means that the SLAVE.BAT refers to one drive letter and you have mapped a different one.

## Accuracy of information

It cannot be stressed too highly that the information that ParcelTrak produces is only as good as the information that it contains.

Changes in depots, gazetteer and pricing must be done immediately. While we try to ensure that the program does as much as possible we cannot get the ESP function to operate properly at all times.

On installation we perform as many checks as we can in an attempt to ensure accuracy. You should still check the depots and gazetteer at a minimum.

You should ensure that at the time of invoicing that you check the printout. Any errors should be found, their reason determined and suitable amendments made to correct them.

There are a couple of rules when we enter data into ParcelTrak : -

1. Where default values are suggested on input screens and we don't have any reason for changing them then we leave them alone
2. We don't invent things for the sake of it and just enter what we know to be reality

## Pricing

ParcelTrak allows for a multitude of pricing options and is almost limitless. It is important to form a strategy for pricing from the outset. Do not overcomplicate. It is better to spend 95% of your time dealing with 95% of the pricing and not 95% of your time dealing with 5%. Wherever possible, keep things simple.

Pricing in ParcelTrak will allow you to virtually do any combination and you can have every customer at different charges. Look for patterns in pricing and use them to your advantage.

The key concept with pricing is that an item moves from one location to another in a certain time at a dictated rate.

Often you will write a letter to your customer quoting his rates. We refer to pricing rates as 'contracts' because they are formed by a legal contract between you and your customers. We only put what you tell the customer into the pricing, so if you only quote for rates to England and Wales then we don't put rates in for other areas (this is caught by a default rate anyway).

The best place to start with pricing is to work out what we are going to charge to customers who do not have special rates. Normally we do this by getting a map and drawing zones on it. So we then know that the cost of sending an item from one zone to another is a dictated price. We refer to these as FULL TARIFF RATES. These are maximum rates that we would charge for services. You have to imagine producing a leaflet with the map on it and a pricing band in the corner.

We give zones numbers and they can go from one to twenty. We reserve zone (or region 1, we often display this as zone 01) as your own local area. The difference between this area and another is that usually you have no costs to pay anyone else for delivery.

Another useful reason for using zone 1 is that you can operate under several depot codes and the program still realises that they are local deliveries.

So if we sat with a map and a pack of crayons we could mark these different zones on it and other people could understand how much a delivery would cost. Don't forget that these are maximum general rates, individual customers can have different charges.

As a general guide, we suggest regions like this: -

1. Local area
2. England and Wales
3. Southern Scotland (Lowlands)
4. Northern Scotland (Highlands)
5. Northern Ireland
6. Southern Ireland

You can use the other areas as you want, remembering you have 20 to work with. Try to keep this simple.

The next thing is, 'how do you know what zone a place is in?'

This is actually quite simple as ParcelTrak contains a gazetteer of 43,000 postcodes and towns. Every individual place contains the postcode, town, delivery depot and pricing zone. When ParcelTrak is initially installed, your local postcodes are set to pricing region 01 and everything else is set to 02. This covers 90% of the codes.

You alter the covering depot and pricing zone using options on the GAZETTEER MENU. Bulk Change (Split) will alter a band of postcodes to a particular depot and in a particular pricing region. Before you use a new pricing region you must ensure that you have a covering FULL TARIFF RATE (this holds a field as to whether the region has VAT applied to it – the program will allow zero VAT areas).

When you look at FULL TARIFF RATES you see that they are bands of pricing that have a START REGION and an END REGION. This means that the item started in the START REGION and was delivered in the END REGION. A band of 01 to 01 is an item that started in the local delivery area and was finally delivered in the local delivery area. A band of 01 to 02 means that it started in the local delivery area and was delivered in England/Wales. Note that full tariff rates are KILO BASED. They are fallback rates if the program cannot find anything to use.

FULL TARIFF RATES also contain the very important fields of VATABLE and DAYS TO DELIVER (used for checking late deliveries).



Where individual customers have rates other than the FULL TARIFF RATES we use CONTRACTS for their pricing.

There are actually two types of contracts: -

1. Standard contracts where they are individual to that customer
2. Global (or special) contracts that are pricing schemes that you can use for any customer. A good example is a fixed mileage rate for direct deliveries.

In addition to these, we can add SURCHARGES for additional services, like 9AM deliveries where you can add an additional charge to an existing rate. There is a standard set of SURCHARGES on the PRICING MENU. In addition, every customer can have an individual variation on individual rates and entered in the PRICING MENU as DISCOUNTED TIMED SURCHARGES. Again, you use this only for the variations.

Pricing is done in these steps: -

1. Work out what pricing zones/areas you are going to use and set the gazetteer entries to them
2. Set up a set of default FULL TARIFF RATES for the zones that you are going to use
3. Set up a set of default SURCHARGES
4. Set up any individual CONTRACTS for customers
5. Set up any individual DISCOUNTED TIMED SURCHARGES for customers
6. Set up and GLOBAL CONTRACTS that you may wish to use.

There are a number of shortcuts that can be used. If you discover a customer that has the same rates as another then there is a COPY CONTRACTS function on the pricing menu.

## Contracts

Contracts can be based upon: -

1. Kilos – like, up to 10kg is £7.00 and then 50p per kilo
2. Parcel – like, the 1<sup>st</sup> parcel is £7.00 and subsequent parcels are £6.00 with a weight limit of 5kg
3. Pallet – like, the 1<sup>st</sup> pallet is £45.00 and subsequent pallets are £40.00 but if the average exceeds 1000 kg then add 8p per kilo.
4. Half pallet – same as pallet
5. Mileage – like, up to 10 miles is £10 and then 50p per mile
6. Cubing – volumetric calculation based upon size

There is an ‘intelligence’ option on the KILO rate where the contract can jump to another based upon an averaged weight breakpoint.

All contracts are given a name. This simply implies to the person using the system what it does. Good names are KILO, PARCEL, PALLET, ITEM, NDAY, DPACK, 16, 12, 10, 9 and similar.

You can use the names time and time again and it's a good idea to get into a pattern. It is possible to use a rate called KILO for one customer to different regions at different prices. You can also use the same name for contracts on different customers at different prices. Always think of the other people that use the system and try to keep the naming convention simple.

Contracts are created on the pricing menu under the option of CONTRACTS. It will first ask for the customer account reference and then ask for a name. It then asks for a START REGION and an END REGION then a service.

SERVICE is either 'A', 'B' or 'C'. 'A' means next day, 'B' means two day and 'C' means three day. These are just general guides.

You are then asked how the contract will be charged and enter K, P, L, H, M or C. These are (K)ilo, (P)arcel, Pa(L)let, (H)alf Pallet, (M)ileage or (C)ubing.

There are sections for customer charge, trunk/hub cost and deliverer cost. These can be mixed so, as an example, you can charge the customer on a parcel rate while paying costs on a kilo rate.

On some options you get the 'Use intelligence' option. Normally this is NO. We can use this to jump to another rate at a breakpoint.

You then get onto BANDS. There are four items across by several down. You don't get into column 4 unless it is a pallet or parcel type rate.

A kilo rate of £7.00 up to 10kg and then 50p per kilo is entered as: -

```
10    7.00  0.50
9999
```

The number 9999 is used as an end block. The 10 in the first column means UP TO 10 KILOS.

A parcel rate of £7.00 for the first parcel then £5.00 for subsequent and 10p per kilo if overweight is entered as: -

```
1     7.00  5.00  0.10
9999
```

The 1 in the first column relates to the ITEMS as we are working in PARCELS. Don't put the weight limit in the column as it's on the previous page! Note that the 10p is shown as £0.10 and not 10.

There are more rows so that we can have breakpoints where the values change.

Put in the hub and delivery costs if you want. Concentrate on the customer rates first. There is a bulk change option for hub and delivery rates that you can use.

After the values are entered you can SAVE. You then get a further menu where you can exit or COPY. So if your 01 to 01 rate was the same as your 01 to 02 rate then you could choose copy and let it copy from 02 to 02.

When looking at customers always check and see if you have already entered one with the same rates and just use the COPY CONTRACTS function.

To check that a CONTRACT is correct, simply go to CONSIGNMENT ENTRY and enter a dummy consignment. Ensure that you have got one customer right before going on to another. Always work on one customer at a time and don't jump around.

After entering new prices. Pay attention to the next invoice run and check for accuracy. Amend any prices as necessary.

Wrong VAT on a consignment indicates that you are using a CONTRACT for a combination of pricing regions and don't have a corresponding full tariff rate. We have included a utility program in MASTER UTILITIES that will adjust incorrect VAT if you find yourself pressed for time.

If your customer does not have an additional surcharge for items like 9AM deliveries and it is at a different kilo or breakpoint from the normal rate then you will have to create an additional contract to cover it.

## Invoicing

ParcelTrak can invoice at any time that you want. Customers have a field on their create/amend screen called INVOICE PERIOD, this dictates if the customer is included on the current run. The field contains D, W, T and M and stands for Daily, Weekly, Two-weekly and Monthly periods. Another way to think of it is for periods 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Despite the naming, you can run these at any time you wish. They are not fixed and are simply guidelines.

The rule is that if you run Daily, then only the Daily customers are included.

If you run the Weekly, then the Weekly and Daily are included.

If you run the Two-weekly, then the Two-weekly, Weekly and the Daily are included.

If you run the Monthly option, then ALL are included.

Any customers where on the create/amend screen the INVOICE option is set to NO will not appear on any invoice. However, if the option is later changed to YES then all items will be caught up on the next invoice run.

The invoices are not fixed until they are posted by running the INVOICE SUMMARY.

Until the INVOICE SUMMARY is actually run then you can print the invoices as many times as you like. After it has been run you can recreate invoices by running the VIEW INVOICE option and choosing PRINT.

You must ensure that when the INVOICE SUMMARY is run that the date coincides with the last invoice run. It is worth running a copy of the invoices immediately before into the PRINT SPOOLER.

Be careful NOT to issue invoices in the SALES LEDGER between the time of printing the invoices and the invoice summary or you may push the invoice numbers out of sequence. There is a warning message to advise you.

Should you post the invoices before printing them then the postings can be reversed using the REV SUMMARY option on the UTILITIES MENU. While this all looks complex, it is actually very simple. There is a hidden field called INVOICED that we push a 'Y' into when it has been invoiced and 'N' when it is not. The REV SUMMARY simply takes the 'Y' out. Invoicing skips any consignment that has a 'Y'.

If you need to reverse a summary then check that it is the last one that was done. Reversing the summary pushes the last invoice number back to its earlier value and it is important not to get it out of sequence.

At the time of the INVOICE SUMMARY a posting file will be created for the Sage Line 50 accounts package if you are using it. The message 'unable to create file' at this point means that you have missed some settings at the bottom of the first page of UTILITIES/PARAMETERS.

Any alterations to the invoice format are done by choosing the option of MOD INVOICE on the UTILITIES MENU.

Incorrect VAT on an invoice indicates that one or more consignments are being sent to pricing zones that are being used on CONTRACTS where there is no corresponding FULL TARIFF RATE. There is a REPRICE VAT option within MASTER UTILITIES that will recover this at short notice.

A set of stars like "\*\*\*\*\*" on an invoice means that the displayed length of the field is shorter than the real value (this is true on any document that the program produces). This is easily amended in MOD INVOICE on the UTILITIES MENU.

ParcelTrak charges and applies VAT at the time the consignment is entered. If the VAT rate alters and you wish to apply it on all consignments that are not invoiced then alter the VAT rate in UTILITIES/PARAMETERS and run the REPRICE VAT option in MASTER UTILITIES.

Note that zero rated items will not be affected.

## Holidays

This is a very important item on the POD MENU that is often overlooked. It holds all public holidays.

These are used when calculating late deliveries and when working out when your deliveries should actually be delivered. An item sent on Friday on a next day delivery will be have a delivery date of Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday.

## Consolidation

This appears at the bottom of the MANIFEST MENU and is a report. The program looks for items going to exactly the same place that could be consolidated into ONE consignment to reduce delivery costs.

## Dates

Dates can be entered into the system with either a two or four digit year.

121101 and 12112001 are treated as the same.

ParcelTrak has always been year 2000 compliant, even if date fields were displayed with a two-digit year. All dates are valid until the year 9999.

## Consignment Entry

In general, putting a 'A' in the number field causes Parceltrak to auto-number this field. The shortcut code and the next consignment number are found on the last page of PARAMETERS.

ParcelTrak deals with duplicate numbers itself and treats them as individual items. It is possible to reuse the same number time and time again.

If you use a number that is already in use then you will first be asked if you want to amend the previous one, choosing EXIT allows you to put in another consignment with the same number.

ParcelTrak uses the consignment number, date, customer and several other fields to work out that the consignment is unique. This is why we only need use a 6-digit consignment number. It is unlikely that you would ever have more than 999999 consignments for one customer on the same day!

ParcelTrak will accept numbers and letters in the consignment number field, check if this is OK with your system and comply with their instructions. Don't use the characters '/' and '\' on this field as the Multilab and the Web based POD retrieval programs won't like them as they are used to indicate directories.

The combination of number, date and source depot means that uniqueness is very easy.

## Entering Excess Freight

If you receive EXCESS FREIGHT then simply enter it into CONSIGNMENT ENTRY.

Remember a few rules. The account is the party picking up the delivery bill, possibly the hub account. Use 'A' on the number field to auto-number and put the original number on the ORDER NUMBER field. The date MUST BE the DESPATCH DATE and not the current date. The ORG DEPOT is the depot requesting the delivery and the FROM DEPOT is the depot it came from.

## Network problems

When clicking on the ParcelTrak icon and you get the message 'the working folder cannot be found' or when in the program and the screen corrupts with the message 'unable to browse network drive'.

This is not a problem in ParcelTrak. Your network connection within Windows has failed and it is nothing to do with our program.

Try shutting the computer down and restarting the system.

Go into MY COMPUTER and look for a drive with a red cross underneath it. Try double-clicking on the icon to re-establish the connection. You may get the message 'unable to browse the network'.

Double click on the NETWORK NEIGHBOURHOOD icon and look for other computers. You may see none, one or several. You need to see more than one.

Check the cables that run to the computer, they may have been dislodged.

Click on START. Go to HELP. Find and run the NETWORK TROUBLESHOOTER.

Networking problems are our second most common call.

## Red Box Errors

The program is very tolerant of problems, both internal and external, and it is very unlikely to crash. Instead it will bring up a red box with a warning message. Pressing SPACE will often rollback the system to before the problem occurred.

All error codes are in the Parceltrak Help Manual and are complete with solutions.

You may get a message in the box like 'error at line 1678 of AUTOMATIC-ENTRY. Short record write'. This message means that it was processing line 1678 of the program called AUTOMATIC-ENTRY when you ran out of space on your hard disk.

Many errors indicate hardware problems and should not be ignored. Effectively the program has a built-in diagnostic system. Don't forget that if these problems occur in ParcelTrak then they are likely to occur outside it as well.

Ignoring errors is bad enough but if you ignore errors and don't keep a proper backup then sooner or later you will have a major disaster. We can recover just about anything but if the hard disk fails even our normal miracle cures won't work.

In general, Parceltrak should easily survive you pulling out the computer plug while it is running.

### Add-ons

We write many add-ons for ParcelTrak including: -

1. Windows based POD image storage and retrieval
  2. Web based POD image query system
  3. Web based POD text query system
  4. Depot Windows based POD retrieval by customer dial-in
  5. Microhub mini-network system using Clone and Clone Remote programs
  6. Export/imports for numerous systems (see note below)
  7. Multi-user Windows customer implant
- The NCN export/import has very extensive features including pricing on importation, optimisation of outbound freight tariffs and automatic gazetteer updates.