GSS Tax Collector Software – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

I. General Questions:

Q#1. I have an old Software Manual, can I get a new one?

A. Yes, if you come to the annual training session we always provide new manuals to attendees if the version changes, however please bring your binder as we don't reissue them. Otherwise the most current version is posted on this website for you to review and download. It is a very large manual and will take a while to open or download.

Q#2. I have a question on the Homestead/Farmstead Act, who do I call?

A. Act 1 is applied to the school tax and the School Districts are the responsible authority. However, since the county is involved in the implementation of segments of this law we can answer some of your questions. Assessment questions can be directed to the Assessment Office and if it related to the GSS software then Information Technology and Services will answer the question. We may defer you to the school district to answer your question if there is any legal issue involved.

Q#3. Where can I get information on millages, rates, discount, penalty, and exclusion amounts?

A. We post this information on this website for all Tax Collectors and the public.

Q#4. When I reviewed my Real Estate duplicate I noticed that not all the Homestead/Farmstead properties show the same Tax Reduction, is that correct?

A. There can be many different Tax Reductions amounts showing in your duplicate due to the limitations of Act 1 Homestead/Farmstead law. For instance if you have a home business only the portion of the home that is not part of the business falls under Act 1 and is eligible for a reduction which may affect the Tax Reduction. Similarly only buildings used for farming can be applied to a Farmstead reduction. Additionally, if a homestead property's assessed value does not equal the exclusion amount, the exclusion amount is adjusted to reflect the assessed value so that no credits are issued for Act 1 eligible properties.

Q#5. When I print Tax Bills the information at the top of the page is overlapping on some lines. What is the problem?

A. At the beginning of each year your software is replaced with a new version. One of the items installed is the font for the Bar-codes. Sometimes this does not activate on its own. However it is relatively easy to activate. First getting to the Fonts folder is a little different for the Tax Collectors using Windows 7. With Window 8 you should go to the search are on the "charm" and type in "Control Panel". After that follow the directions for Windows 7 and you should be good.

Step 1. If you use Windows 7 in the search window down by the "Start" button just type in "Fonts" and hit enter. Normally the font folder is the first response. Then just hit enter another time to open it.

Step 2. Then find the following font (they are in alphabetical order) IDAutomationHC39M Regular. Double click on it so you can see the bar-codes, then close the folder. That is all you have to do!

For Tax Collectors with Vista, Windows XP, Windows 98, or Windows 95 click on the start button, then select control panel from the right side of the popup window. Then find and open the font's folder in the control panel and follow the instructions in Step 2. above to find the font and activate it

Q#6. At the end of the year as I'm turning in, my Act 169 report doesn't show all my transactions, why?

A. When you select the month for your Act 169 report before closing with the Treasurers Office make sure you select "January" for your final report. We know that you will likely do a few transactions that will occur after December 31st and the January report is reserved for that purpose.

II. Payment Questions

Q#1. If I receive a check for more than the amount of the tax can I accept it?

A. Yes, enter the full amount of the check in the Payment Information Amount field. When the software prompts you "Do you want to accept the payment" click on the "Yes" button. The software will then ask if you want to apply a refund and show the amount. You should apply the refund! This will show on the receipts for deposit report showing the amount of the refund thereby putting your audit trail in place. Don't forget that you will need to Distribute Refunds (page 76 in your manual) after applying them!

Q#2. I received a bill past the end of a period but it was postmarked for the prior period. Can I receive the payment as a prior period payment?

A. Yes, the software allows you to change the "Date Received" to allow you to adjust for these types of issues. On your payment screen click on the "Change Date" button and then enter the date you want the payment received for. Remember you must hit your "Tab" key to apply the change. Note: Changing a Date Received does not change the day the payment was received in the system only the amount that you can accept as a full payment. Your receipt for this payment will still be tagged for the day you entered the payment in the system (system date), but will include a "Date Received" annotation to show the payment reflects when it was applied to a period.

Q#3. Can I take partial payments?

A. No, unless payments are allowed by a Taxing Authority as installments! By law you are not allowed to receive partial payments of tax so the software does not allow for that! However, you can receive each Tax Authorities portion separately or take an installment Payment. This payment may help those taxpayers who cannot pay a multi-authority bill at once. Currently only the School Districts allow installment payments.

Q#4. I have numerous bills that are paid by one large check, for example a Mortgage Company, is there any way to save time processing these bills?

A. Yes, the software can remember the payment information of the previous bill and apply it to the current payment. When you do these bills get them in a stack so you can process them consecutively. You will need to enter the payor information for the first payment and the check number used. Then as you process each consecutive payment you can just click on the "Previous Payor Information" button and “Previous Check #” button to load that data. A caution though, make sure the appropriate tax authorities are checked (left side of Payment Information screen) for each bill you process. The software also holds that information the same as the previous bill!

Q#5. Can I process an installment payment (1st payment) if they did not meet the deadline to begin the program?

A. No, by law the taxpayer must have the 1st payment made at Face (as stated on the installment payment coupon) to use the installment payment plan! The software will color the 1st installment payment red once the deadline has passed and will not let you enter the payment.

Q#6. Can I receive the installment payments out of sequence?

A. No, the software requires entry in sequence. If a taxpayer sends them to you out of sequence you may need to notify them that this occurred as a payment may have been lost in the mail.

Q#7. A taxpayer using installments was delinquent with the 2nd payment, can I receive the 3rd payment at Face?

A. Yes, except for the 1st payment that must be received at Face each installment payment stands alone and based on the date paid will determine if it is at Face or Penalty.

III. Adjustment Questions

Q#1. I have a property that needs the Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion removed, can I do it?

A. Yes, to remove a Homestead/Farmstead status just uncheck the “Homestead/Farmstead” checkbox in the Property Description portion of the screen and then you must enter one of the assessment fields (either Assessed Land or Assessed Improvements, it must have a value showing) by clicking your mouse in them and then “Tab” back out, this forces the recalculation to occur.

Q#2. I have a property that needs Homestead/Farmstead applied to it, can I do that?

A. Yes, this is a little more involved but it can be done. First though you will need to call the Assessment Office and find out what the Homestead and Farmstead (H/F) Values are on this property. These mounts could limit the amount of the exclusion your School District provided for H/F exclusion amount that you can apply to this parcel! Go to adjust an existing tax bill and enter the bill you wish to adjust. In the Property Description portion click on the checkbox next to “Homestead/Farmstead” to select the status. This action will then show the Installment Payments fields and the Exclusion fields. You must now determine if the H/F Values (you received from Assessment) will affect the exclusion you can apply. This is simple, if the H/F Value is less than the corresponding exclusion use the lower figure and put it in the appropriate exclusion field. If it is not less then enter the full exclusion amount into the appropriate field. When you are done with this please click on either one of the Assessment fields (Land or Improvements) and then Tab out to force the recalculation. As always you will need to enter the reason before accepting the adjustment!

Q#3. When I've adjusted a bill do I need to recalculate tax amounts?

A. No, if you adjusted an assessed value when you Tab out of the assessed value field the system forces the recalculation to occur! You can override the tax amounts though by entering values in those fields, but normally you will only adjust assessed values.

Q#4. When I'm adjusting a bill what period do I use?

A. All adjustments are done at Face values! Please do not use Discount or Penalty amounts in the adjustment screens as the resulting calculations will not be correct!

Q#5. The Assessment Office send me a notice to add a Real Estate bill to my duplicate, where do I get the "Control Number" from?

A. The Assessment Office will send a document to you with the data you need. They refer to each parcel with a Parcel Identification number or PID. The Assessment PID and the Control number on the adjustment screen are the same number.

Q#6. I need to adjust an amount for the Township but not the County or School, can I do that?

A. Yes, the software allows you to adjust for each Tax Authority individually or any combination of them you need. On your adjustment screen at the top left side the three taxing authorities are listed with a checkbox next to them. If you have not received a payment for that taxing authority you will able to select it for adjusting by clicking in the checkbox so that the checkmark is showing.

Q#7. I just added a new bill to the Real Estate Tax duplicate and the Map# in the adjustments screen did not print on the bill. Is there something wrong with the software?

A. No, prior to 2005 which was when the county changed Assessment software, the Map # (12 digits) was the Parcel Identification for the county's mainframe computer system. We kept that on the bills for 2005 through 2007, in 2008 we discontinued using this old number as it was no longer viable for parcel identification. We replaced it on the bills with the information you see in the field called "Description Line 1" which is the Map Reference number (the location the parcel is found when looking for it on an assessment map) from the new assessment software. So filling in the Map # field when adding a bill to the duplicate is no longer necessary.

Q#8. At the end of the year when I turn in I have trouble settling adjustments with the Treasurers Office. Why is that?

A. The module that the Treasurer uses to track adjustments adds them together when you turn them in. Currently your report is pulled by dates that you set (this is called a parameter report), you must make sure that the adjustment reports you turn in to the Treasurer do not overlap dates! For example when turning in you first Adjustment Report you turn in from 15 Feb to end of April, you must make sure the next adjustment report you turn in starts the 1st of May! Don't forget that since you receive the software before the mailing date you may have entered adjustments prior to March 1st, those need to be accounted for on the original turn-in to the Tax Authorities!