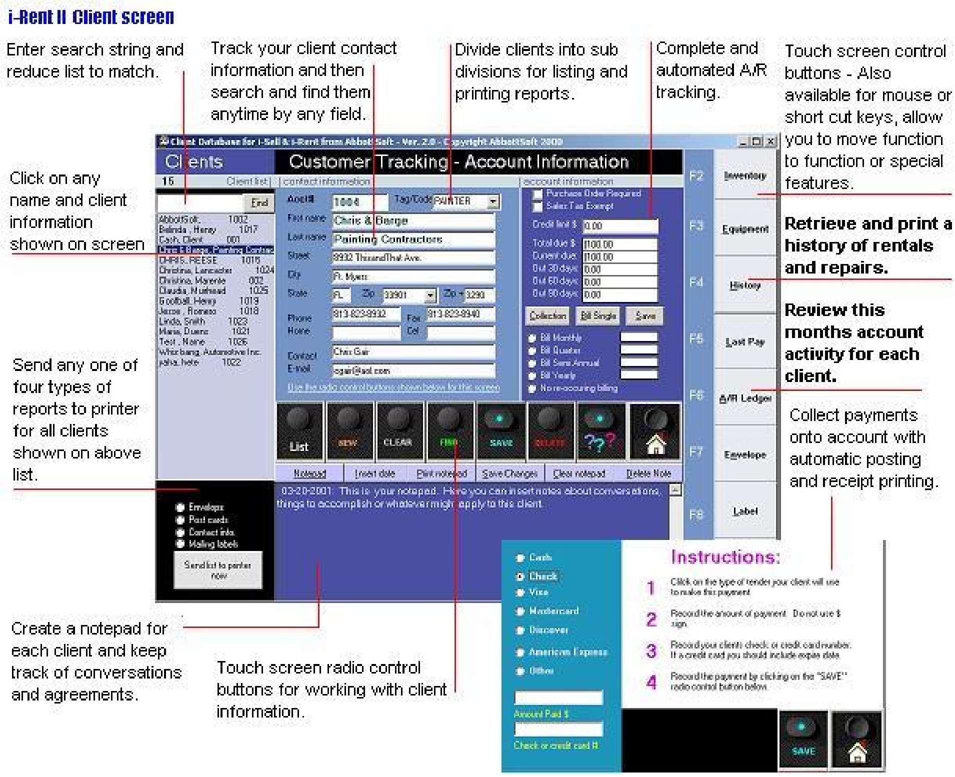
Client Database Tutorial

This database module is for use with the following programs from AbbottSoft

- I-Rent Software
- I-Sell POS Software
- XPressSell POS Software
- QuickFix Repair shop Software

INTRODUCTION:

Your client database is both a powerful stand-alone program. . When used with **i-Sell** or **i-Rent** from AbbottSoft, it becomes just one small module.



i-Sell is a Point of Sale Program with inventory tracking and income/ billing.
i-Rent is a Rental Management Program with rental equipment / inventory tracking and income/ billing.
QuickFix XP is a repair shop software package. Tracking inventory, work orders and A/R

Computer Settings:

It is very important that the client database is properly installed and the computer settings are correct.

This program should be installed on the same drive and directory as your primary program and the sub directory \ ACCR be in place. Example: d:\pos – and - d:\posl\ ACCR

Your video settings must be a minimum: 800x600 (Hi Color 16bit or True Color). A high quality video card approved for Windows Vista is strongly advised.

Knowing your client:
It is important to know who your clients are, how much business they are doing with you, What they need from you. Information which will help them do business with you.

Your client database will do all of the following and more.

The client database helps you build a listing of your clients, how much business they have done with you during the current month and year. It will track their account automatically and – at the click of your mouse – print a statement showing the current condition of their account, it will even report all they have rented, or purchased from you and any repairs. (limited to the modules you are using)

Keeping in Touch:

You probably agree that it is Important for your business to Stay in touch with your clients.

You probably understand that it is important you make it easy for your clients to deal with you.

There are times when you will need discuss with your client, matters related to a purchase or payment on their account.

During any given business day, you or several of your staff may access your client information and accomplish different tasks using this program module. Others will only need to be made aware of client requirements such as the need for a Purchase Order or the available credit for any client.

No matter what you need, you have the ability to find your client information and modify it at anytime, both quickly and efficiently and record the contract information for future reference.

Your client database has been designed to do all the above and more. It has been designed using the KISS principle.

Even if it appears so simple that “must not do much” – realize – hidden behind the screen is a powerful program, search engine and relational database, which will automate much of you work and help, reduce costly errors.

FINDING AND LISTING CLIENTS TO YOUR SCREEN OR PRINTER;
Your client database module offers many ways for you to find clients or a group of clients then list them together onto your screen printer.

You can easily find just one client or you can find and list all clients who match your search criteria and automatically create various reports or mailings.

Following are some guidelines and instructions that you need to understand for the above.

FINDING YOUR CLIENTS:

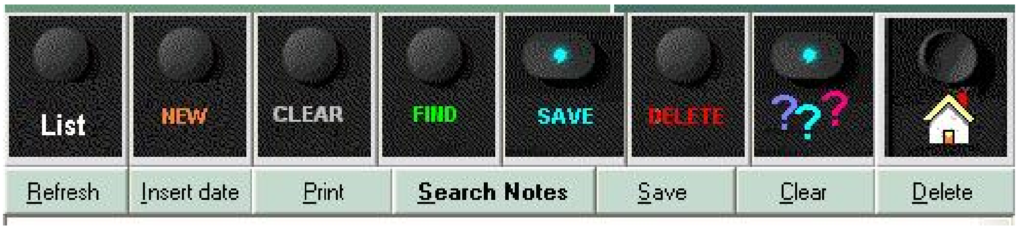
You may need to track just a few clients, a few hundred clients or even thousands of Clients. You may need to find just one individual client or a grouping of clients.

Your client database has many methods you can utilize, which allow you to quickly find just one client or find many clients, which share similar characteristics

The ease and versatility with which you can find clients depends on how thoughtfully You define the client information when you insert clients into your database.

CONTROLS:

You have two types of controls and other menu choices, which help you accomplish tasks while using you client database.



1. **Radio Buttons** – are a graphical control resemble push buttons like you would find on an expensive stereo system. They have a descriptive title telling you what they do and anytime you want to initiate their action, click with your left mouse Button or if using a touch screen system you can just touch the button.
   When you mouse pointer is over a radio button it will form the shape of a pointing Hand similar to using the internet browser.

2. **Standard Control Buttons** - are similar to what you see on most window programs
   Rectangular or square in shape they have a description of their actions and like the radio control buttons you click with your left mouse to initiate their actions.

   Most also have a shortcut key sequence which you can initiate by holding down your ALT key the pressing the underlined letter shown on the control.

   When your mouse pointer is over a control button it will assume a special arrow symbol.

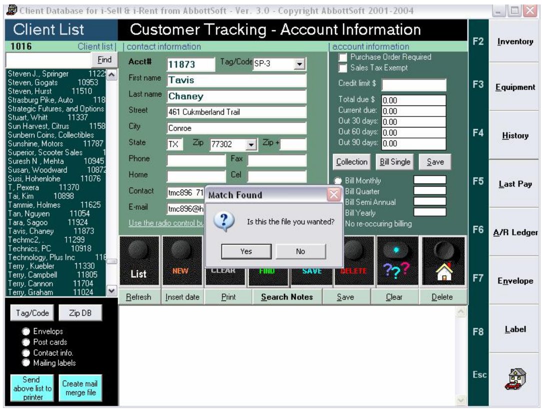
3. **Touch screen Choices** – are scattered about you pages. They may be across the top or most likely along the right side of your screen… Just touch or click and the function will start. Your mouse can change to either a pointer hand or a special arrow symbol as described in the above two controls.

FINDING AN INDIVIDUAL CLIENT: (direct search)
From the main client screen you can click on any field and then type in all or part of What you expect to find listed for the client you want found.

EXAMPLE:
If you were going to try and find any client with the first name Harold you Could type in the letters "har" in the first name field.
Typing in "har" on the first name field will find any clients with the first name Harold. It will also find clients with the first name Charles or others with "har" embedded. If you type too much information you can pass over a client because you misspelled or over spelled the name
Example:"Danel" won't find Daniel but Dan will. Donald won't find Don but Don will find Donald. Searching the first name field for "Bill Smith" won't find the client if the first name field holds Bill and the last name field holds Smith. **Note**: You can use the "Client list on the right side to search faster and even combine the first and last names if you wish.

Once you have the search Information entered into the field of your choice you then click on the Radio Control Button marked "Find" – your computer will quickly search your database looking at the information stored in each client folder until it finds a match. Once a match is made then the stored information for that client will be presented on your computer screen and you will be asked if the client shown is the client you wanted or should the search continue?

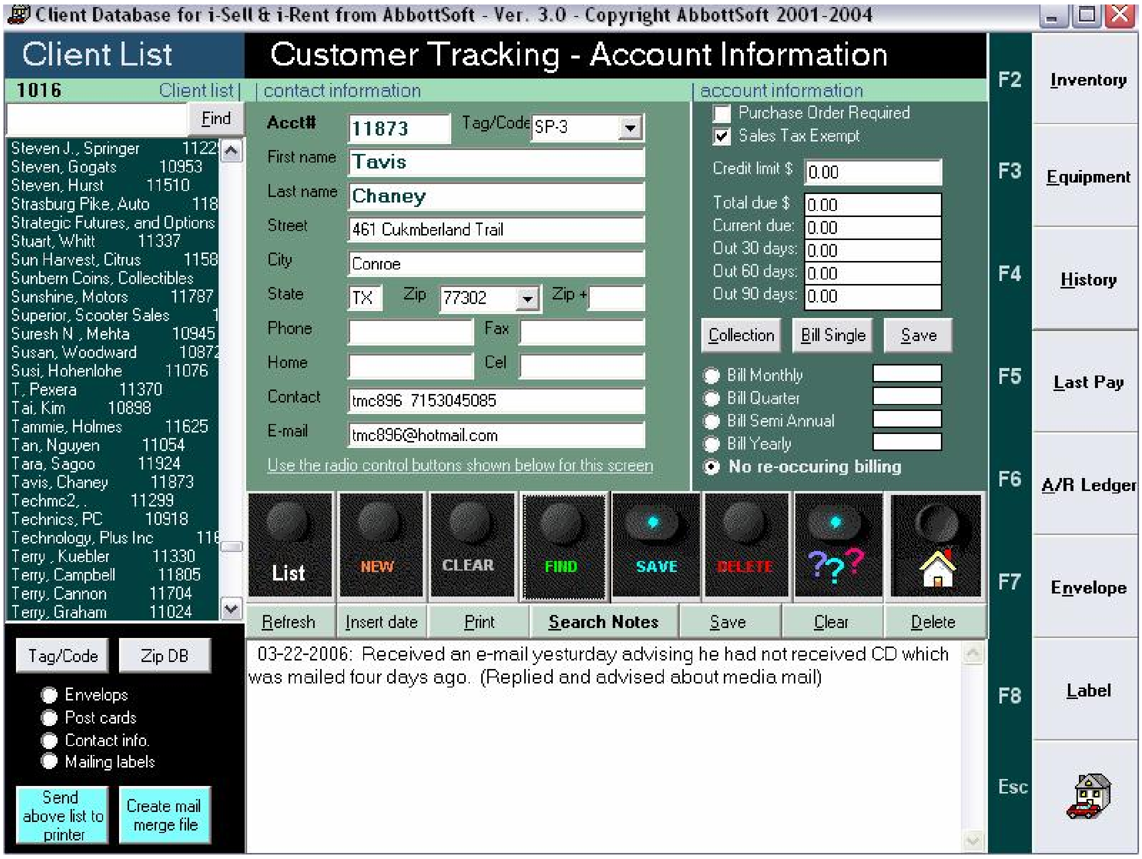
There are three levels of searching. The fastest way to find a client is to type in their Account number then click on the "Find" Radio Button. The next fastest method is to type in all or part of either the first or last name. The slowest method is to type in all or part of any other field of information.



Client home page Figure 1

The second search method: for finding a client, is either to use the sorted list shown to the left of the client information. You can select any client by clicking their name with your mouse. Once selected, their information will appear in the center of your client page.

Quick Search: When you first open the client list window all the clients will be shown on the client list on the left. If you had hundreds of clients in your database the list will be quite long. The list will is alphabetized but even then it might take you some time to scroll down the list and find a particular client. You can narrow the list by using the "Search" field above the list. Type in all or part of the Clients name and then press the enter key on your keyboard.



Picking from client list – Fig 2

Click on the "Find" radio control button with your mouse. The list will reformat with only clients who match the search information you provided. It should now be much smaller and when you find and click the client, you will see the client information shown on the screen.

The third search method for finding a client, or grouping of clients, requires you type in all or part of the search information on any field shown on the main client screen. Next click on the "list" radio button and resort the client list. You can then click on clients sequentially or you can more easily find one or more which matches and can be reviewed quickly.

SENDING A LIST TO YOUR PRINTER:

Using the method explained in searching by the "long" list method, type in all or part of the search information, on any field shown on the main client screen. Activate your choice, click on the "List" radio control button and the client list will be reduced to match the search information you specified. Once you select the type of list you want printed, the clients on the list will be included.

NOTEPAD:

Your client database allows you to create a freeform notepad attached to any client you wish. Generally this notepad is used to track verbal or telephone conversations with the client and record anything you wish.
The client notepad is just like a simple text editor. You can type information, use your delete key to remove information, highlight then copy, cut, etc. Automatic word wrap is built in. You can save new changes, clear the notepad, create a new one or delete the notepad whenever you wish. Another feature is the ability to insert the date so you can track when you made a note. The ability to search the notepad database and reduce the matches onto the client list is a powerhouse if you want to find clients by other information than what is provided.

There are control buttons directly above the notepad which allows you to control the notepad.

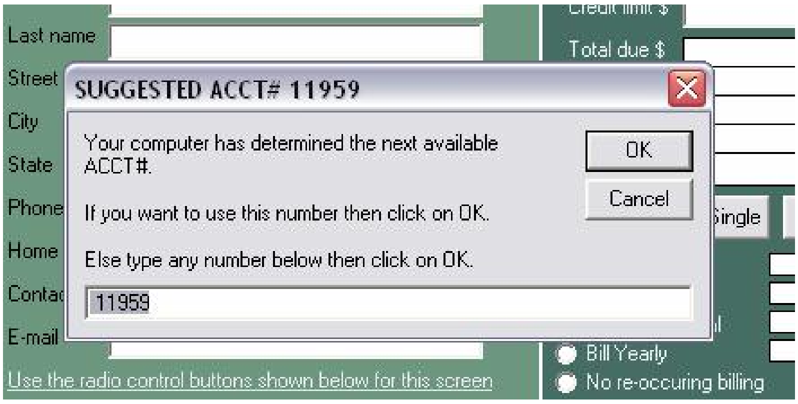
INSERTING NEW CLIENTS IN LESS THAN TEN STEPS

When using I-Sell or I-Rent you must first establish a database of clients. You don't have to record all your clients you can even add clients into your database on the fly. If you have not already recorded a client who might be standing at the counter then You are able to access this database modular directly and instantaneously from your invoice screen. Insert the new client and return directly back and continue on from where you left Your database will be updated and current. At the same time, in the back office, the accounts receivable folder for this new client could be updated with the credit limit established. Everything completes in real time.

Note: You cannot make a work order, rental contract or invoice until you have a proper account receivable folder in place. (See Account Receivable section) for more information.

Procedures and thoughts for inserting new clients: If you have reviewed the powerful search capabilities of your client database then you probably have already started to consider what information you wish to record about each client. The information can be retrieved and assimilated into a meaningful report later.

As you insert your first client then please follow along with these Instructions as we provide you with hints and considerations.



1st: You must establish an account number for each client. You start inserting a new client by clicking with your mouse button on the radio control button titled "New".

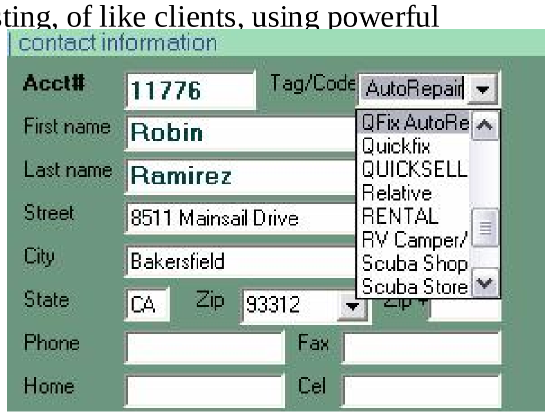
Your client database will suggest a number, if you accept the suggested number, it will automatically increase the next client account number by one.

WE STRONGLY SUGGEST YOU LET THE COMPUTER NUMBER YOUR ACCOUNTS AUTOMATICALLY! NOTICE: CLIENT #001 TELLS YOUR PROGRAM THAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH A CASH CLIENT. YOU SHOULD SET AN ACCOUNT AS A CASH CLIENT ALSO.

If you decide to insert your own client account number then realize that Under no circumstances should you Use other than letters or numbers **NO, SYMBOLS** such as quotes commas, etc. because they will cause your program to crash!

2nd Fill in the" Tag Field " for this client.
Let's take a few moments and consider this field. It can be a very powerful search Tool or completely worthless depending upon what you do with it.

The tag field is designed so that you can " tag " the client as fitting, in a particular category, so you can come back later and quickly identify the client without having to read their notepad or generate a listing, of like clients, using powerful search capabilities of your client database module.



Here are some examples which other users, of the client database, have used in the past.

If you want to identify the client as a very good client you might give them a rating

If you deal with building contractors or sub contractors you might want to categorize clients by their vocation. Example; GC, PAINTER, CONC, Elect, etc. allowing to create mailings to all your clients who fit into a particular mold and would be interested in something you want to promote. At the same time you could save postage by not mass mailing to all clients.

If it is in your interest to track and mail birthday or anniversary greetings then you might want to place the dates in the “Tag” field. Example; B06 A11 would indicate a birthday in June and an anniversary in November. If you create a mailing list of all clients who have a birthday in June (by listing B06) any other clients you enter in the same fashion, would be on the list.

i-Rent and I-Sell is provided to you with a sample list which you can modify as you wish. To modify the list click on the “Tag/Code” control button and use the pop-up Client tag database window. (fig 5)

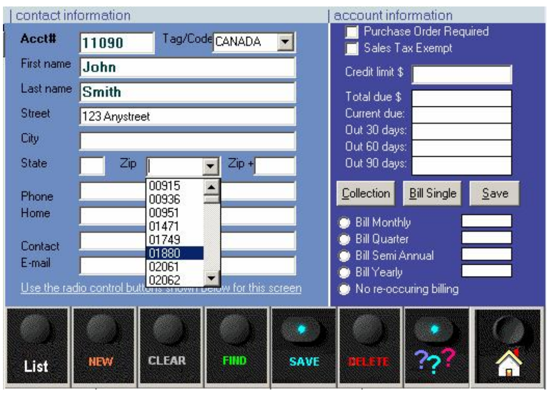
3rd (First and Last Names) In the First and Last name you should list both parts of your clients name. Since the way you type in the information is the exact way envelopes, mailing and shipping labels will be addressed, you should be careful with the spelling and capitalization. Done properly you would type “ John Smith “ not “JOHN SMITH “
If you are recording a business name such as SMITH APPLIANCES then simply list Smith as the first name and Appliances as the second. You will be able to Record the manager or other name in the contact field later.

Tag data– Fig 5

4th (Street Address) fill in the street address as you would the client’s name.

5th (Zip codes/City-State) If you use your “Tab” key to move between fields – as designed -- then you client database modular will skip over the city and state, and go directly to the zip code.

You then either manually type in the zip code of the client you are inserting or you can click and activate the drop down list of recorded zip codes and by clicking on any one of them make your choice.



Note: Your client database has a unique form of learning about your clients. By skipping directly to the zip code it will check a special database of zip codes and if it finds a match for the zip code you entered it will automatically fill in the city and state, saving you time.

If the client module cannot match the zip you typed in, then it will ask you for the city and state; which matches this new zip code. Next it will ask if you want to file it away for future reference. If you do (and you should) then be careful about what you type in and only when sure of your spelling, etc. FILE IT! By answering OK to the prompt, asking if you want to save this new entry.

The next time you insert a new client it will then find the matching city and state and insert the information for you. Obviously if you get sloppy and spelled the city incorrectly, then every time you input the zip the program will insert the city with the Wrong spelling, just as you told it to do. (Think!)

6th. Take time to complete the four telephone numbers if possible. We would point out that instead of typing a phone number as (800) 926-2892 you will accomplish the same by typing 1.828.926.2892 and it is much easier once you do it a few times. You can copy to your telephone dialer from within the Client Database.

7th. The contact field is where you can list a persons name and position within a company, a wife or husband of the client or just make a short extraneous notes about the client. Be aware that if you print an envelope etc. this will show.

8th. Today just about everyone has an email address. Place your clients Internet mail address here for future reference.

9th Once satisfied with the information about the client you have provided then just click with your left mouse button on the radio control titled "Save" and the information will be stored on your computer and ready for you to access again anytime you want. On the latest versions your program will also ask you if the client already owes you any money. If so, and you input the information into the popup window the program will then add it into your clients AR information. The program will also automatically set up a default A/R folder and save you grief down the line. You can also set your PO requirements, credit limit and Tax exempt status before you save the general information with the black "save" radio control button.

DELETING CLIENTS FROM DATABASE:

You can delete a client from your database anytime you wish. All you have to do is search and find the client and verify the information shown on your computer screen. Once you are sure the client on your screen is the one you wish to remove then using your left mouse button lick on the radio control button marked "Delete".

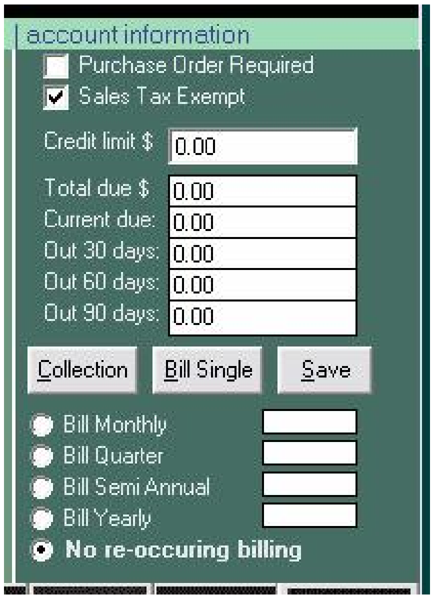
USING YOUR CLIENT DATABASE TO SEND OUT MAIL:
Your client database allows you to address envelopes, print mailing and shipping Labels and address postcards to your clients. (using continuous forms only)

Addressing for an individual client:
You can address an envelope from your main client screen once you have the clients information visible. By clicking on the "Address Envelope " choice on the top center of your page the name and address will be sent to your printer and the envelope printed immediately. If you wish to address just one shipping label using the name and address of the client visible on your screen you can click on "Create Shipping Label " shown on the top of your page and a shipping label will be printed immediately.

Addressing for a selected group of clients:
You can address envelopes, shipping labels, mailing labels and postcards for all or a Group of clients directly from your clients home page. See sorting a list and printing from the list previously explained. This is a powerful feature of I-Rent and I-Sell and you can reduce the list to match any field of information in the contact information portion of the page.

USING THE CLIENTS INDIVIDUAL A/R FOLDER:

Each client must have an accounts Receivable folder if you want to run your program without crashes.



Client A/R folder – Fig 7

Even if you do not want to provide in house charges to your clients, Concern your business with PO requirements or sales tax exemptions for your clients then you should still take the time to set up the A/R

SETTING UP A CLIENTS A/R FOLDER:

The A/R database is attached to the client database and interacts with other applicable data in the background. You have primary access through two portholes when running your core program the client database and the billing module.

Each client has a home page and must have an established A/R folder. The below screen snapshot represents a clients home page. (fig 7-1-1)

Although your screen will appear as if all the information is included together it is not. The information presented on the page is derived from four separate database and should be considered separate but related.

Note: Each part of the clients home page has it's own set of control buttons which only apply to that portion of the page. The two separate portions are differentiated by a change in the background color/shade.

You must establish an A/R folder for each and every client you place in the database even if they are not allowed to charge to their account. However you do not need -- nor should you, establish a client folder for all customers, but only those who you expect to be frequent in their dealings with you.

Note: Although you can establish as many clients and A/R folders as your hard disk will hold, the quantity affects the amount of time to do your daily backup and you can increase the time for printed and other type reports. Your monthly aging report will also become more time consuming and confusing if you insert clients who are **not** frequent.

SETTING UP AN A/R FOLDER:
From each clients home page you must set up an A/R folder. This should be done when you save their client folder. Once established you can review running totals, receive payment on their account and print an ending or "single bill" (statement). If you do not want to grant them an open account then set the credit limit to zero. Notice will be given during the creation and closing of the invoice that their open balances will not cover a sale.

PO (Purchase Order) requirements: If your client requires a PO then check the field by clicking with your mouse. You will be notified during the initial creation and closing of any invoices, rental contracts or work orders of this requirement and space will be provided to record it.

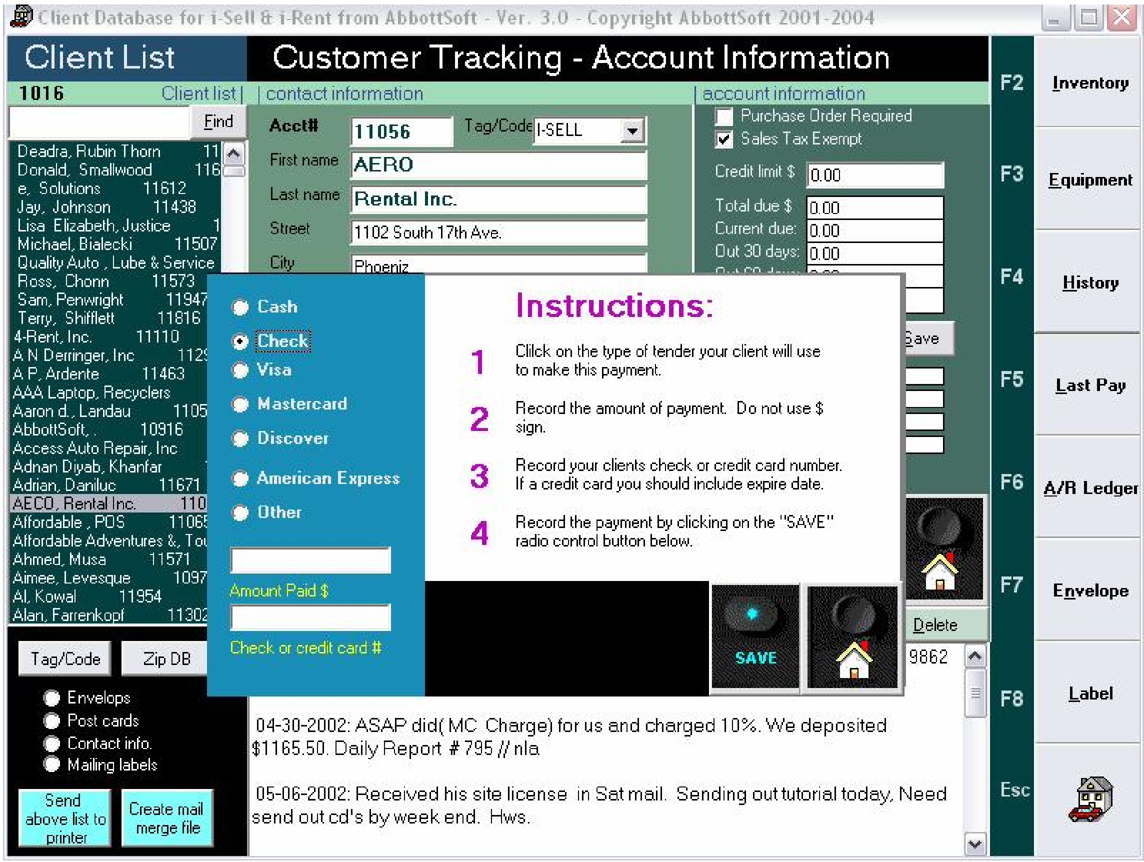
Tax Exempt? If the client has a certificate from the state or another reason why they are not required to pay sales tax in your area then activate by clicking with your mouse and you will see a check mark appear. Invoices created under this client while using i-Sell will have sales tax added but you will be asked if you want to remove the tax when you close the invoice.

Credit Limit: Is the amount of available credit you define for each client you insert into your client database. It can be any amount including zero. I-Sell will verify and report the amount of available credit during the creation and closing of invoices. The information will be shown on the screen and if the available credit is less than the amount of the sale when closing a invoice then I-Sell will notify you with a special warning notice which must be responded to before proceeding. You can pass by all these warnings and notices -- and charge to their account if you wish.

Other information: Information fields such as Total due, Current, Out 30, Month, Year etc. are automated fields and will be filled in automatically by I-RENT AND I-SELL .

SAVING YOUR CLIENTS FOLDER: Once you have completed the clients A/R folder to your satisfaction just press the "Save" button shown in fig 7-2-1 and the information will be placed in their folder immediately. If you want to verify the information just use the "Clear" radio control button, find the client again, and take a look at their A/R folder.

Receiving a payment on a clients account is simple. Just go to the clients folder using the client database click on the "Collections" button on their A/R screen and then read the four step instructions.

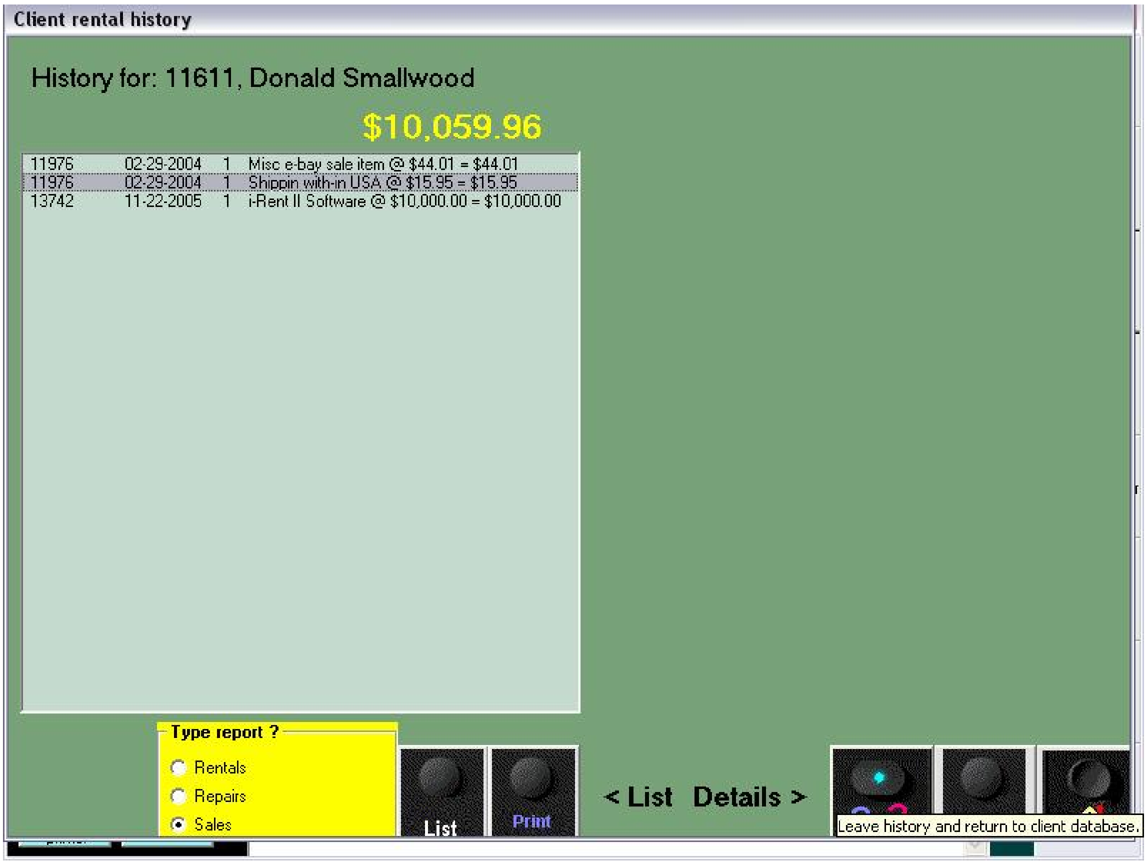


Once you have completed the four steps of posting a payment into your clients folder you can print a receipt and if needed an ending single bill for verification.

Printing an Ending - Single Bill can be done anytime and as many times as needed. Under normal circumstances you should not reset the account (and some models will not allow you to reset). This is best done from within the batch billing module. (See the chapter on accounts receivable for more information) - PS>.. If you printer fails go to the AR folder and set your printer for printing statements.

History on Client purchases, rentals and repairs are always available at a click of your button.

On the far right side of your screen is a menu choice called "History" if you click on it then the history reporting screen will appear.



Beneath the list box is a list of choices, Rentals, Repairs or Sales… First you click on the type of report you want and then click on the "list" radio control button beside it. .The list box above will be populated with any transactions to show the invoice number and each inventory item purchased. (See inventory database manual for more sales reporting)

If you are reporting work orders and then if when the list box is populated you can click on any work order and get more information shown on the right side of the screen… You can then print if you want.

Notice there is a help screen radio control button for this window as well.

If you run a store account on a client then their charges and payments will be shown each month. By clicking on the A/R Ledger menu button on the right side of your screen you will pop a ledger card up for your review.

Here is a sample: Please note that it is real time. Charges and payments are posted immediately after being recorded, not at the end of the day.

Reoccurring charges. If you have a need to set monthly or other time span charges which you want to reoccur on demand, and they will always be the same then you can select the time span and amount on the bottom of the clients A/R folder information. (See Fig 7)

For instructions on how to automatically invoice these charges and how to send out invoices and statements please see Reports manual (Chapter 6)