

Easy TimeBill & Trust Accounting V3.0

Quick Start Guide & Frequently Asked Questions

(Last updated: February 26, 2009, Easy Soft)

Ensuring your version is up to date

1. How do I know my program is up to date?
 - ⇒ In the top row, last button, click on “Help” and select “About”.
 - ⇒ Current version of the program is 3.0.8.
 - ⇒ If this is not your version, we recommend you update your program. Please note, if you have multiple computer licenses, you will need to perform this update on all machines.
 - ⇒ To update, close your program and click on: <http://www.easysoft-usa.com/ETB300update>
 - ⇒ Click on “Run or Open” when prompted (Firefox users will need to save the file and double click on that).
 - ⇒ Follow the update instructions. Once complete, open the program and check your version number again. In some rare cases, this step might need to be performed twice.

Quick Start Guide - Billing

This section outlines steps required to be taken before you can start using the program for billing.

1. Install the software by downloading from website or from the installation CD.
2. Launch the program and click on “Open Sample”. This is a trial database for your “learning & practice” the program. Feel free to make any change in this sample database.
3. Once you are done reviewing sample, database, you are ready to start your own work. Close the program and reopen.
4. Click on “Create new firm” on the first screen after you launch the program. Ensure to save the firm data file at location which is being shared. If you have a multi-user license, this firm data file must be created only one time and kept at a shared network location. Other users will simply open this firm from their machines instead of creating new firm. This is critical as for multiple users to work on the same company, they must be pointing to same data file and not separate data files.
 - a. If multiple users would be working simultaneously, ensure to keep “Login in Multi-User Mode” checkbox ON at the time of initial firm selection screen.
5. If you have purchased the program and received Product ID, activate the program. Otherwise program will run in demo mode. Demo program only allows creation of upto five matters.
6. “Escrow Agent” Tab: Click on New and create Escrow Agents in your firm who will be assigned as responsible escrow agents for different matters. If you do not receive retainers in trust accounts, you may ignore this step.
7. “TimeKeeper” Tab: Click on New Create various TimeKeepers whose time will be tracked and billed along with their default rate. If TimeKeepers charge different rates for different types of work, you can set their multiple rates but only one can be set as default.
8. “Bank” Tab: Click on New to create a Bank Account. **Ensure to select bank type (operating or trust) carefully as they follow very different rules in the system.**
 - a. If your business and trust accounts are at the same bank, you may want to distinguish bank names, e.g. “XYZ Bank – Operating” and “XYZ Bank – Trust”.
9. “Tools” Menu -> “Billing Setting”. Important settings you can customize. There are five tabs on this screen.
 - a. Financial Settings: Set your billing preferences. Pay special attention to “Incremental Timer Unit” which defaults to 6minute. If you do not want rounding of the billable time recorded, set this to 1.
 - b. Firm Settings: This information will be printed on the letters, invoice headers and various system reports.
 - c. Default Settings: Various defaults for banking and check printing purposes.
 - d. Invoice Templates: Choose cover page and invoice formats to be used. You can preview/edit various available formats and select one you will like to use for each invoice type. On the preview screen, click on Help to see customization guidelines.
 - e. Letter Templates: Choose various letter templates to be used. You can preview/edit various available formats and select one you will like to use for each letter type. On the preview screen, click on Help to see customization guidelines.

10. "Billing Matter" Tab: Start creating new matters. Each client for whom you are handing a distinct job is considered a matter. Example, client John Smith provides you two types of legal work, one for closing the house and another for slip-fall litigation. These would be considered as two separate matters.
 - a. If the matter will have trust transactions, ensure to specify escrow bank and escrow agent.
 - b. Select Rate source. Normally, default rate of TimeKeeper is used.
 - c. Select Billing Method. Normally, hourly rates are used. Flat rate billing option is also available.
11. Understand Matter Balances Displayed: Once Matter's are created, you are ready to receive retainers (or advances), record billable time, generate invoices and receive payments (or apply retainers) to invoices. All financially critical balances of the matter are shown in the left panel and on many reports and its important to understand what they mean and how they are computed:
 - a. Unbilled Balance: This is the total \$ value of Time and Expense Cards recorded but not yet billed against the matter. This provides you with valuable information as you want to ensure you are billing clients in a timely manner. As you record new time, this balance will increase and as you bill clients, this balance will decrease.
 - b. Unpaid Balance: This is the total amount which has been billed to the client and is yet to be paid. This provides you with valuable information as you want to ensure your clients are paying past bills. As you bill clients, this balance will increase and as you receive invoice payments, this balance will decrease.
 - c. Operating Retainer Balance: These are remaining balance of client funds which you have received in advanced and deposited to your operating accounts. If your firm works on retainer basis, this provides you with valuable information as you want to ensure sufficient retainer balances at all times and remind clients once balances fall low. As you receive new retainer funds in operating accounts, this balance will increase and as you use this balance against invoices, this balance will decrease.
 - d. Trust Retainer Balance: These are remaining balance of client funds which you have received in advanced and deposited to client trust accounts. As you generate future invoices and apply these retainers to those invoices, this balance will reduce. If your firm works on retainer basis, this provides you with valuable information as you want to ensure sufficient retainer balances at all times and remind clients once balances fall low. As you use trust funds, ensure to transfer the applied funds from your bank trust accounts to your bank operating account with a check. Program allows automatic debit of trust account and will prepare a trust check which can be printed and deposited to your operating account. As you receive new retainer funds in trust accounts, this balance will increase and as you use this payment against invoices (which transfer funds from trust bank to operating bank), this balance will decrease.
12. Receive Retainers (or advances): It's critical that retainer funds are recorded correctly.
 - a. If advanced client fee was received and is being deposited to trust account, click on "Receive Retainer – Trust". Matter's Trust Retainer Balance will be updated.
 - b. If advanced client fee was received and is being deposited to operating account, click on "Receive Retainer – Operating". Matter's Operating Retainer Balance will be updated.
13. Start Recording Time Entries of various TimeKeepers.
 - a. New Time Card creates one time entry at a time. Time can be entered as fraction of hour or hour:minute format. Billed time will be rounded based on Incremental Timer Unit value set in billing settings.
 - b. New Time Sheet can be used to record entire week's of time entries of a TimeKeeper across multiple matters.
 - c. As you record time entries, Matter's Unpaid balance will be updated.
14. Generate Invoice: Select available time/expense cards to bill (based on till date shown), apply any discounts/fees and click on Generate Invoices. You can bill individual matters or select ALL clients.
 - a. As you generate invoices, Matter's billing balances on the left side will be updated as Unbilled balance will move to Unpaid balance.
15. Receive Invoice Payments: Click on "Receive Invoice Payments". Invoices can be paid in many different ways.
 - a. New funds received from client: Select the bank, enter the amount and apply it to available invoices. A bank deposit will be made, invoice will be marked Paid and Matter's Unpaid balance will be updated.
 - b. Existing Operating Retainer is to be applied: Leave the amount box blank. Since these funds were already received in operating account, retainer balance in operating account is basically available client's credit with you. Use Apply Credit button along with each invoice and use amounts from available credits to pay off invoices. Invoice will be marked Paid, and Matter's Operating retainer

balance (and hence future available credit) will be updated. No new bank deposit will be made as these funds were already deposited earlier as operating retainers.

- c. Existing Trust Retainer is to be applied: If trust retainer is to be used, you can use "Debit Trust Funds" button. This function will prepare a withdrawal check in linked trust account, and apply debited funds to invoice. A check will be prepared in trust account, invoice will be marked paid and a deposit will be made in operating account. Matter's Unpaid balance and Trust retainer balances will be updated. Ensure to print trust check and make physical deposit to your operating account.

16. Bank Tab:

- a. You can record operating bank transactions such as paying for rent, payroll etc. These are not matter related transactions.
- b. You can print checks, make deposit slips.
- c. Perform bank reconciliation.

17. If you have licensed Easy Trust modules, you can manage complete trust bookkeeping as part of this program. If you do have trust account activities, it is highly recommended to keep it integrated with billing to eliminate double bookkeeping and prevent common trust bookkeeping mistakes. Easy Trust module will provide a new Trust Matter tab functionality along with many additional reports.

18. Reports: Comprehensive set of reports related to banking, billing etc are available.

19. Supplies available from Easy Soft for your program:

- a. Laser Checks: To print computerized billing or trust checks. Laser checks come in 2 different formats: 1 check per page (check/stub/stub) or 3 checks per page. 1 check per page is the most popular format, as it provides you with 2 detailed stubs to be kept for internal files.
- b. Check envelope: Designed to fit system generated laser checks.
- c. Invoice/Letter Reminder Envelopes: Windowed envelopes, designed to fit your invoices or reminder letters from the system.
- d. Perforated sheets & return envelopes: To provide a payment voucher and fitting envelope to your clients.
- e. Computerized or manual pre-printed deposit slips.

Quick Start Guide - Trust

This section outlines steps required to be taken before you can start using the program for trust accounting.

1. Install the software by downloading from website or from the installation CD.
2. Launch the program and click on "Open Sample". This is a trial database for your "learning & practice" the program. Feel free to make any change in this sample database.
3. Once you are done reviewing sample, database, you are ready to start your own work. Close the program and reopen.
4. Click on "Create new firm" on the first screen after you launch the program. Ensure to save the firm data file at location which is being shared. If you have a multi-user license, this firm data file must be created only one time and kept at a shared network location. Other users will simply open this firm from their machines instead of creating new firm. This is critical as for multiple users to work on the same company, they must be pointing to same data file and not separate data files.
5. If you have purchased the program and received Product ID, activate the program. Otherwise program will run in demo mode. Demo program only allows creation of upto five matters.
6. "Escrow Agent" Tab: Click on New and create Escrow Agents in your firm who will be assigned as responsible escrow agents for different matters.
7. "Bank" Tab: Click on New to create a Bank Account. **Ensure to select bank type (operating or trust) carefully as they follow very different rules in the system.**
8. "Tools" Menu -> "Trust Setting". Important settings you can customize. There are five tabs on this screen.
 - a. Firm Settings: This information will be printed on various system reports.
 - b. Default Settings: Various defaults for banking and check printing purposes.
9. "Trust Matter" Tab: Start creating new matters. Each client for whom you are handing a distinct job is considered a matter. Example, client John Smith provides you two types of legal work, one for closing the house and another for slip-fall litigation. These would be considered as two separate matters.
 - a. Ensure to specify associate escrow bank and escrow agent with the matter.
10. Understand Matter Balances Displayed: As you perform various matter transactions, trust funds balance will be continuously updated in the left panel of the matter tab.

11. Matter Transactions: On the matter tab, select the matter in the left panel and click on “Add Transactions” in the middle of right panel. You can add deposits/checks/wire-in/wire-out/adjustments and interest type transactions.
12. Bank Tab:
 - a. You can record operating bank transactions such as paying for rent, payroll etc. These are not matter related transactions.
 - b. You can print checks, make deposit slips.
 - c. Perform bank reconciliation.
13. If you have licensed Easy TimeBill module, you can manage complete legal time tracking and billing as part of this program. It is important to keep billing and trust activities under one system as many activities such as handling client advances (“retainers”) are inter-related and affects both billing and trust systems.
14. Reports: Comprehensive set of reports related to banking, client ledgers etc are available.
15. Supplies available from Easy Soft for your program:
 - a. Laser Checks: To print computerized billing or trust checks. Laser checks come in 2 different formats: 1 check per page (check/stub/stub) or 3 checks per page. 1 check per page is the most popular format, as it provides you with 2 detailed stubs to be kept for internal files.
 - b. Computerized or manual pre-printed deposit slips.

FAQ – Billing

Customization

1. How can I customize tasks and their descriptions:
 - ⇒ Almost all types used in Easy TimeBill can be customized. Under Tools Menu, look for appropriate type to edit/customize.
2. I need a letter/invoice format which can be inserted into envelopes?
 - ⇒ Go to Tools->Billing Settings. Select default formats for invoices and letters appropriately. Easy Soft can supply you with envelopes guaranteed to hold these letters/templates/return vouchers.
3. Default voucher format cover page specifies credit card options. We (a) do not accept credit cards or (b) do not accept certain type of cards.
 - ⇒ You can customize cover page template and carefully remove “text” you do not want to be printed or you can remove entire credit card section.
4. We customized many templates and invoice formats. How would other users see those modified formats?
 - ⇒ Customized Template Folder location must be set to be same for all users. Follow these steps: (a) Create a shared folder on the network. (b) Copy customized files from your folder (look in Tools->Billing Settings -> Invoice Templates) to this new folder. (c) ALL users must then have this new folder as location set for “Default Edit Template Location” available under Tools->Billing Settings -> Invoice Templates.
5. We do not like our customized templates and will like to start using original templates of Easy TimeBill.
 - ⇒ Go to Tools->Billing Settings. Under Invoice Templates and/or Letter Templates, you can click on “Restore” option. Your edited templates will be discarded and replaced with system supplied templates. You can again start to make customization.

Client Funds

1. When I received client advances (retainers), how do I determine to deposit in operating account or trust account?
 - ⇒ Precise answer to this question is beyond the scope of this article. In general, client funds such as settlements or escrow money gets deposited into trust accounts, separate from your operating bank accounts. However, retainers (advances) might be considered differently depending on the nature of your work, engagement contract and state rules. Be sure to always follow the rules of your state regarding the professional and ethical conduct for handling client funds. Failure to abide by those rules and practices could result in administrative, civil, or criminal sanctions.
2. When I click on “Receive Retainer – Trust”, I get a message “Matter is not linked to Escrow Bank”.
 - ⇒ Click on “Edit” and specify linked escrow bank and escrow agent. One matter can be linked only with one escrow bank account.

Billing

1. What is the difference between Time Card and Time Sheet?
⇒ Time card is recording of one time entry at a time of a TimeKeeper. Time Sheet allows you to record entire week's billable work hours of a TimeKeeper, spread across multiple matters.
2. I will like my invoices to print time in Hours:Minutes format (e.g. 1:30) rather than fractional hour format (e.g. 1.5).
⇒ In Tools-> Billing Settings -> Invoice Template, select appropriate option.
3. I do not want cover letters to be printed along with the invoice.
⇒ In Tools-> Billing Settings -> Invoice Template, select appropriate option.
4. I want my invoice due dates to say: Due Upon Receipt
⇒ There are 2 ways to achieve this. You can edit invoice template and add appropriate text in the invoice due date field. However, ALL future invoices would reflect this new text. Other option is to in tools->billing settings->financial settings, change "Invoice is due NET" box to 0 days. Since invoice date and due date will now be same, invoice templates will automatically print "Due upon receipt" instead of a date. This second option provides you more flexibility as you can change it from invoice to invoice rather than editing the base template.
5. How can generate batch invoice reminders?
⇒ On the Client Tab, click on Invoice Reminders. This function allows you to print overdue invoices along with the cover letters.
6. How can generate retainer replenishment letters?
⇒ On the Client Tab, click on "Low Retainer Reminders". This function allows you to print retainer replenishment letters.
7. Can I apply late fee or finance charges to multiple invoices at once?
⇒ No. You must edit each invoice to apply these charges.

Accounting

1. From our prior billing system, how do we transfer receivables as well as advances?
⇒ To transfer account receivables, first ensure you have total outstanding amounts for each matter. Then, in the Easy TimeBill, you can click on "Create Invoice" for that matter and enter that amount in the "Late Fees". Enter appropriate description. Our purpose is only to create starting balances instead of entering all prior time/expense cards and payments all over again.
⇒ For advances in operating account, you can click on "Receiver Retainer – Operating" and enter the starting balance of the client.
⇒ For advances in trust account, you need to be very careful. Trust account books are required to be reconciled monthly and you want to ensure this program gets a clean start. We have written a [separate article](#) specifically on this topic which might provide more detailed information.
2. If I use QuickBooks for firm's accounting, how can I transfer receivable and payment received information?
⇒ <Answer section is not yet available>

Miscellaneous

1. I have a large number of matters created. How can I quickly search a matter rather than using scroll bar?
⇒ There are 2 options. (a) You can sort in the column by first select the column e.g. client or matter and then typing first character of the name you are looking for. (b) You can use explicit search functionality available at the top of left panel grid. You can search for any character(s) in client/matter or matter file #. "Find" icon is used to display searched results, and "Clear" icon is to clear out searched entries and display all matters.
2. I created time/expense cards and invoices of a matter. I do not see those in the right panel on my Billing Matter Tab.
⇒ Look under "Status" filter in the right panel. Only entries matching with the selected status (i.e. unbilled, billed, paid etc.) are shown.

Frequently Asked Questions – Trust

Ledger Transactions

1. I received a deposit which needs to be allocated to multiple different client matters. How do I do that?

- ⇒ On Trust matter tab, look for button "Credit Allocation". Launch the screen and read the help section carefully.
- 2. I need to debit multiple client matters and issue a single check. How do I do that?
- ⇒ On Trust matter tab, look for button "Debit Allocation". Launch the screen and read the help section carefully.
- 3. Can I move one matter's transactions to another matter automatically?
- ⇒ No. In general, you are required to keep each matter's transactions separate even if those belong to the same client. To account for any mistakes/discrepancies, you might create an "adjustment" transaction with negative value (debit) on one and positive value (credit) on another to achieve this function. Ensure to write proper notes in memo why such transaction is being created.
- 4. How can I import a real estate closing ledger from my Easy HUD program?
- ⇒ On the file menu, click on import data and follow the instructions. Both purchase or refinance closing transactions of Easy HUD file can be imported into Easy Trust.

Accounting

1. My state requires generation of a three-way reconciliation report. What is it and how do I product one?
- ⇒ Three-way reconciliation report is a very important trust report and is required by almost all the state attorney ethics departments. This report basically ties in bank reconciled balances with book balances considering few book checks/deposits might not have cleared the bank, with individual ledger card balances. All three must match. Easy Trust has a separate three-way reconciliation statement report under trust reports section. You must first reconciled bank statement before a three-way report is generated.