



operations guide

Operations Guide

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Introduction

The operations program enables you to:

- Build and maintain the allocated flights and accommodation and related data
- Create new users, and control existing ones and their access to parts of the system
- Modify the behaviour of the software in various circumstances
- Set up print queue behaviour and dedicate tasks to queues
- Set up insurance and car hire prices
- Produce manifests and flight and accommodation reports

Naturally you will not want everyone to have access to the operations program. When the software is installed, one person will be nominated as the system supervisor. They will be given access to all parts of the system, and can set up other users as required.

This reference guide will start by assuming that you are setting up a new system. It will deal with things in the order of priority you are most likely to follow, like getting new users established, then dealing with print queues, and then understanding the various options available for changing the behaviour of the software. Lastly the building of flights and accommodation will be dealt with, and the choices available for pricing the packages and maintaining the bedbank.

In order to understand some of the accounts and general bookings concepts it is advisable to read the Accounts Guide first, and it is assumed that you will have already read the Basics Guide, which deals with fundamental computer usage and a general overview of what the system can do.

Setting up users

Before anyone can use the Tripper software, Tripper must be able to identify who they are and what access levels they have. These access levels are retrieved from disk and stay with the user all the time they are using any one Tripper program, such as accounts, reservations, operations, etc., *and are only re-loaded into memory and become active when the user exits a program and re-enters any one of the programs again.*

When a user logs into Tripper for the very first time, if Tripper does not already have the user on its list of people, it will add that user to its list. Because at this stage nothing else is known about the user, only the very minimum access level is granted to reservations. Once the user is on the list of Tripper users, the supervisor can change the access levels belonging to that user and enable or disable any given level. Remember that the supervisor can add a new user name at any time. The automatic name adding feature within Tripper is only included to save time when people want to use the software straight away.

A new user

To enter a new user, start the operations program. Remember, to have access to this program, the engineer who installed the software will have had to give you the appropriate access level.

Then choose the Supervisor: Usrs: Add to file option. This presents you with an Edit screen, or more simply a list of all the data fields associated with the task in front of you. Sometimes items will be described in yellow text rather than the standard white on blue: this indicates that by pressing F1 while the cursor is on that field you can choose some options from a pop up list.

In this case, pressing F1 over the **User name** field will bring up a list of all the registered Novell users on your network. Selecting any one of them would place that name in the field. Naturally, these users are all configured inside Novell and should be established as users by your hardware supplier. Without this first step, no users would be able to log onto the computer system to start with!

Retailer codes

The very first field you must enter is the retailer field. The retailer is a two letter code

Setting up users

which must first be established by the engineer installing your Tripper software. Each two letter code matches with a full name describing a retail identity. "LN" might mean "London office", for example. Retail entities can be different companies, different product types within one company, different branches, different sales teams, or any other large-scale subdivision you decide on. *Retailers can be separate parts of the same set of ledgers, or separated as if they are on different computers.* For simplicity it is assumed here that the retailers are simply different parts of the same set of ledgers.

Remember that retail entities can be treated as separate when it comes to accounts reporting. You should make sure that separating parts of your system into different financial entities will not tie you into a structure which could limit you later on.

Each user must *belong* to a certain retail entity when they log in, and the users file keeps track of which retailer they belong to. Some computer resources, such as printers, can optionally be dedicated to all retailers or only one retailer, which means users who are a part of that retailer will automatically have their print jobs sent to the appropriate printer. Res staff, when they make bookings, will normally make these bookings on behalf of the retailer they belong to, but may change this to be any other retailer by pressing F5 during a booking. Their retailer reverts back again when they quit the program. *This does not apply if the retailers are split across different parts of the disk (Utilities: Setup: Retailers), as in that case completely separate file systems are used.*

Once a booking is made under a certain retailer, it remains part of that retailer's accounts system. Money received, payments made, and all purchase entries are then added to the ledgers under the sub-category of that particular retailer. The two letter code can only be changed on a booking by authorised staff.

As discussed above, retailer codes can, if it is desired, separate your database into different parts of the disk. For example, if you would like all your retailer codes to be part of one giant set of files, and therefore only need one reporting procedure to cover all of them, all you need do is set up the retailers as different 2-letter codes (Using Utilities: Setup: Retailers). If, however, you want a certain retailer to have its own separate database (and can therefore use, for example, the same booking numbers as another retailer without conflicting), then fill in the disk area field with the drive letter and directory in which these files are to exist. The empty file structures will have to be set up by

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Dataworld in that new directory.

User name and team

The user's name is entered next, exactly as entered when logging in to Novell. Press F1 to select from a list of all users currently known to the Novell operating system. To add new users to Novell, you need to use a Novell program called SYSCON. For more information, consult your Novell documentation.

User Number

The User number is a very important element of the database system. It should be a unique number from 1 to 999, and is used for many internal processes such as the diary system and the commissions procedures. You can set the user number to be anything you like but remember that once a user number is changed, information that was formerly accessible to that user may become impossible for them to retrieve.

User Teams

Users may be assigned to a certain team which, if product codes are turned on (See Utilities: Setup: Custom: Product codes) and Detailed Products have been chosen (rather than simple products: see the same section in Utilities) will form the first characters (usually the first two) of the four letter product code. A product code can be attached to a booking to enable grouping later on during reports and accounts margins listings. If you are not using product codes you do not need to worry about assigning Teams at this stage.

Commission codes

There are several commission structures which are available to you by choosing from the list in Utilities: Setup: Custom: Commissions. Some of these are named after the companies who thought them up, and others are described as best as possible given the space provided.

The **Holiday Network** method relies on a booking being classified as one of four possi-

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ble types: F-flight only, H-package holiday, C-car hire, I-insurance. Each of these types will be stamped with the relevant code from the users file (codes 1,2,3 and 4) and the appropriate commission amount given per passenger as shown in Comm 1,2,3 and 4.

This shows the relevance of these fields to the users file.

If commission is to be **Based on Product Type**, the product code as entered by the reservations staff is looked up in a file containing all existing product codes. When the correct code is found, a separate tag on that record describes it as being a long haul or a short haul product. The commission software can then decide how much commission should be given, knowing the number of passengers and whether or not insurance has been booked, etc. by referring to the information kept in the users file under P/Pax L/ Haul Flt: etc.

The SUNCARS rate has been designed specifically for one agent and can be disregarded for the purposes of this section. The Ordinary Car Spl. field contains the commission which would be given to a member of staff for a car hire only booking, given that the Product Type commission structure is being used.

For the purpose of this section, the only other important commission style requiring an explanation is the **Fixed % over given threshold** method. The exact parameters for this method have to be set up in Utilities: Setup: Custom: Commissions and include three fields. The first is a two character code which identifies that particular percentage setup and applies it to bookings done by whichever staff have that **Commission Code (style 7)** entered against their user name. The second field is a number which excludes commission from that percent of the booking profit/turnover. So if a booking is £500 and this figure is 10, that means the first £50 of profit is ignored by this commission scheme. The third field is a number which represents the percent commission given on the remainder of the profit after the exclusion % is taken into account. If the profit on the £500 turnover booking was £75 and this last field was 5, then 5% of £25 would be given as commission on this particular booking.

There is also a screen explanation given in Utilities when this commission style is chosen.

Diary, Memoryfile, Password

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These are used for attaching various extra programs to a particular user, and will be dealt with in a separate section of this manual. To successfully run the software you do not need to adjust these parameters.

% Commission

In case the above commission schemes prove to be too much of a headache, just set one commission level for the staff member using this field.

Access Levels

One of the most important uses of the users file is to allow or disallow users from entering certain programs or performing certain tasks. All the remaining fields in the users file are dedicated to this function.

There are a total of 50 access levels in addition to the four primary access levels into Accounts, Reservations, Operations and Utilities. When a new user logs in for the first time, Tripper places them in the users file and automatically allows them access to the Res program, but no others. It is then up to the supervisor or manager to set the rest of the access levels.

In case a user attempts to enter a program or use a feature for which he does not have access, Tripper then finds all the users who do have the appropriate access, and offers a list of them. The staff member may then select any of the names on the list, and can select any user in order to buzz their terminal. The terminal which that selected user is currently using will receive a message advising them that the other staff member requires assistance.

Supervisor options

The Supervisor Options allow high-level changes to be made to the general setup of the Tripper system. Information can be entered pertaining to the following categories:

- Flt:** Adjust the displayed text used during Reservations: Sales (ad hoc flight list)
- Usr:** Set up and adjust users on the system (see earlier section in this manual)
- Idx:** Rebuild operations and reference file indexes
- Prd:** Set up product codes (see also Utilities: Setup: Custom: Product codes)
- Ins:** Set up insurance selling and buying prices
- Cars:** Set up buying and selling prices for carhire
- Prn:** Define printers and assign tasks to each
- Opt:** Release optional bookings or confirm them
- BkAuto:** Turn the automatic recalculation of gross into nett prices on or off
- EC:** Enable or disable the EEC guideline notes shown during a booking, and change the text of each one. Users must also have the access switch to get these messages displayed for them on screen during res (since some users, as in admin, may not require them). Set the user access permissions in Ops: Supervisor: Users
- TxStat:** Maintain your own file of ticket status codes and what they mean, and optionally add two lines of text which will be printed out on the invoice
- Rf:** *Client refusals: not in use at date of printing (01 Feb 1996)*
- Enq.Del:** Set the default enquiry deletion period.
- Rpr:** Enable or disable the rounding up of bedbank prices as displayed in res. Rounding up will take the price to the nearest 9.
- IPT:** Set the rate of IPT to be calculated on your insurance reports.
- Bkg:Car:** Disable or enable the automatic prompting for car hire sales during res.
- Sp:** Special offer discounts for new bookings
- Av:** Accommodation verification for ad hoc entries

Each of these is dealt with in this chapter if the menu item is in bold text. For other items, please check the table of contents at the start of this manual. Please note that it is not essential to understand all of these functions in order to start the software. Many of them deal with unusual or obscure requests which, in order to comply, has necessitated the changing of the *standard* way in which the program works. The system as installed on your network will be configured to run in a useful manner. Many of the above options will not be of any interest to you unless you decide to alter the standard

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behaviour of the software package.

Some sections will of course be of interest to everyone, for example the printing section, but even this can be set up as Tripper goes along, asking the users for information only when necessary as regards printing, with an option to set up at that time, should you not wish to get technically involved before starting to use the software.

Idx: Index rebuilding

Occasionally Tripper may be the victim of a power shortage, a rebooted fileserver, or a faulty disk sector, or some other hardware-related failure. In these cases index files are the most susceptible part of the system. The data files are usually secure, except in a very few cases in which the hard disk they reside on has a serious problem.

The purpose of an index file is to change the apparent order of data in the data files. Names can appear in alphabetical order, bookings in date order, and so on, even if they are not actually kept in that order on the disk, because the index file contains enough information about each record in the data file to know the relative order of each one. As data is changed in the data file, the corresponding position according to the index file is monitored and adjusted if need be. Because the index files are very often held in RAM while being updated, machine failure could, in the worst instance, cause them to lose track of segments of the file, making it appear as if the data has disappeared or been duplicated.

This Supervisor option causes all indexes related to operations files to be re-created at one time. When running this option you must ensure everyone is out of the system. The entire process will take anywhere from a few seconds to a quarter of an hour or so depending on the machine speed and the size of the files. The progress of each index creation will be shown on the screen.

Prd: Product codes

The product codes are a method for (1) tracking the type of booking made and (2) establishing the correct commission rate on certain kinds of bookings, in collaboration with information held on the users file. The product code itself can be any four characters, and each one can be tagged as a longhaul (or if not, then by default, a short haul) jour-

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ney, and optionally a no-commission item. Using the Accounts: Margins report, sales can be broken down by product code over various date ranges.

You can force product codes to be entered, by using the Utilities: Setup: Custom: Product Codes: on/off option. When this is set from **off** to **on**, you can choose to use detailed product listings, which is simply a more complex variation of the simple product codes described previously.

The detailed product listing file enables headings to be established, under which any number of items may be entered. Each item has a code which is up to 4 characters (probably 2 if used in conjunction with the Team codes: see previous section on setting up users for more information) which is transferred to the product field in the booking when the booking is confirmed, either on its own or in conjunction with the team codes, as described previously.

When the simple product code option is on, the user must enter or select a code when making a booking. The system allows them to add to the existing product code list if they enter a code which has not been seen by the system before.

Ins: Insurance details

The insurance details must be entered in this section before a booking can use them to confirm an insurance sale.

When first entering the insurance table, you can optionally turn the **Auto Sort** off. The sorting facility re-arranges the insurance information as soon as you have changed the relevant fields, such as group, type or dates. This can start to get visually confusing, as the surrounding records will appear to be moving back and forwards if their relation to the record you are adjusting changes. Turning this off does not affect the order of the insurance records, but prevents any changes resulting from your data entry from being shown to you while you are entering data.

Each record, or horizontal line, in the insurance table stands for a particular combination of options which must be unique, i.e. that exact combination should not exist in any other record in the table. The variable options which make each record unique include the broker's name, the geographical area covered, the insurance type, maximum days,

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age limitations, range of applicable dates (indicating *travelling* dates, not *selling* dates) and policy pricing (including adult, child, and family policy pricing).

Every client flies to some particular point on the globe represented by a 3-letter IATA code in the airports file (see Ops Desk). This point exists in a particular geographical or brochure *group*, such as EUROPE, WLWIDE, CANARY, etc. It is this group that is referred to in the insurance table field 'group'. When planning groups, please remember that the brochure groups affect holiday pricing as well, so the two should tie up. For example, if a client flies to Faro which is grouped as ALGARV, the only insurance policies which will be relevant to him must be labelled as being for group ALGARV. If the policies are labelled EUROPE instead, they will not appear as options for his journey to Faro. You can have as many groups as you like, without limit, but bear in mind that if you use more groups than you need while planning your accommodation, someone is going to have to maintain insurance records for each one of these groups as well.

You should consider the group as a "sales brochure" type of definition more than a strictly geographical one. For example, if you produce a USA brochure and a Caribbean brochure, in the printed price lists for these holidays you would probably have different insurance listings, if only because they are printed and distributed separately. Likewise, Tripper treats a group as a sales classification rather than as a geographically accurate definition.

The TYPE field is an important one, because it describes the kind of insurance policy on offer. Given that a client requires 7 day cover on July 15th in Europe, Tripper will only allow one of each type of policy to be offered for each broker. So if there is a SKI type, a LOW RISK type and a SPORTS type, all three will appear, given that the other criteria such as duration and start date are applicable to that holiday being insured. But, if there are three SKI types for broker ABC, (all of which are applicable to that holiday as regards duration, valid dates and group) only *one* will be offered. If there is a SKI type for broker ABC, and one for broker XYZ, then both will be offered. So leaving the TYPE field blank may limit the number of options given to the client if there is a large number of policy types available. The type field is also useful because it is carried over to the sales ledger and retained inside the booking once the booking has been completed.

It is also useful because it allows different "pads" of insurance to be identified and main-

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tained. A feature of Tripper is its ability to create new numbers for each insurance policy issued. Use the Accounts: Outgoing: Brokers option to set these up. One "pad" of insurance policies represents a certain group, type and broker. You can set these up to be for one or for all types for that broker, but the TYPE field in the insurance file gives you the flexibility to set up many different insurance numbering sequences, all of which will be fully automatic.

The validity dates for the policy are a start and end date for the day of travel. *A holiday may continue beyond the last day of validity as long as it starts within the validity range.* A holiday may not, however, start *before* the first day of validity and use any policies in the valid range (even if much of the duration exists within the validity range, as it might do if the holiday began on the 1st and insurance was valid from the 2nd).

IMPORTANT: all validity date ranges for a season should end in exactly the same date.

The age fields allow insurance to be narrowed down to certain age groups. You can leave these blank or fill them in, whichever you prefer. Remember that when running the insurance master file report, each of the clients booked under any one kind of policy will only be matched with the appropriate record in the insurance policies table being discussed here if their age either falls *within* the range given or if the age range here is blank.

The broker name is a 12-character short form for the insurance broker, and should tie up with a corresponding supplier in the supplier file (see also Accounts: Suppliers).

Pricing of course refers to the prices which apply to your agency's deal with the broker, however this is calculated. *The figures entered here are the ones that will be transferred to the bookings file and used to work out profitability.* The gross price can be modified by a variation field, but the nett field usually cannot (except by users with the Freelance option access level). Because these component prices are transferred to the sales and purchase ledgers for each booking, if clients are added later to an existing policy, the prices offered will be the prices at time of booking. In order to re-define the prices (if they have changed since the booking was made) you will need to use the F10 key from within the booking and select the new policy/price combination.

By blanking out a group field, that record can be removed from the file altogether. When

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you are finished, use the Check/Compress option **only if no-one else is using the insurance tables**. The file will be compressed and re-indexed in a few moments. You do not need to run this compression routine, as the system will ignore any records with blank or inappropriate group names, but it is useful to make the file more manageable and to clear away unwanted records.

Cars: Car hire information

Car hire data which can be called up by the reservations staff should be entered using this program. The system searches for car hire information by finding the car hire records which match the arrival airport for the client, and working out the gross and the nett costs for the duration given. Nett costs can only be seen by staff who have the correct access levels.

Car hire prices are entered as gross and nett rates for one week, two week, and per night. Tripper works out the prices as accurately as possible from this information, even if it is incomplete. If all of the fields have been completed, then a 17 night duration will be the two week price plus 3 times the nightly rate. If no nightly rate has been entered, this is first calculated as 1/5th of the weekly rate, or, if that has not been entered, then 1/10th of the two weekly rate.

The car group code is carried over into the sales ledger when a car is confirmed, and the purchase ledger is updated with the supplier name, a 12 character code which should tie up with an appropriate supplier in the accounts suppliers file. (See also Accounts: Suppliers).

Reservation staff can quote from the car hire database at any time from inside the reservations program using the F6 key and entering an airport, a collection date, and a duration.

Prn: Printer settings

The printers for Tripper should suffice for virtually any level of complexity or simplicity. Notice that the following information applies only to Novell networks. Single user systems can use only one printer at a time.

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The printers file in Tripper is a list of all the print queues that are available to Tripper from the existing Novell network. They may represent all of the print queues, or only some of them, or even only one of them. Each entry in the printers file holds the name of the queue, a description of the queue (in case the queue has been named something obscure such as "**OKI 290 S/N10026**" you could more helpfully label it "**Accounts dot matrix printer**"). Each record in this file also keeps a yes or no field for every conceivable kind of print application from within Tripper, such as printing invoices, reports, vouchers, tickets, labels and so on. Each record also can be devoted to one retail entity, or that field can be left blank to make the printer accessible to all retailers.

The printer setup program has five options:

1. **Current printer list**
2. **Test printing**
3. **Add a printer to the list**
4. **Novell queue set-up**
5. **Dedicate tasks to queues**

The first menu option allows you to view the current list of printing devices, or print queues, and optionally choose one and edit the fields of that one record. You can then turn any field on or off for any given print task. (There is a more convenient way to do this using the fifth option, **Dedicate tasks to queues**, using the INsert and DElete keys). You should complete the printer name field, and, towards the end of the field list, the printer queue field. Note that fields printed in a highlighted colour will have a help option available when the F1 key is pressed. The *server* and *lpt* port can usually be left blank, as the default settings of the current print server, and lpt port 1 can usually be safely assumed by the system.

The second menu option allows you to select any of the print queues from the list and check that they will print. Some test print text is sent to whichever queue you specify. If printing does not occur, check first the printer cables and status. The printer should be switched on, be **on-line** (a printer can be turned **off-line** in order to feed paper through or adjust the typeface, and if you forget to turn it back to **on-line** it will not print anything, even if it is plugged in and switched on, with paper in it ready to print) with paper ready to print, and be cabled up to the network. If the printer is cabled to a workstation, that workstation will probably need to be switched on and logged into the network for the

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printer to be accessible via the network.

The third option allows you to enter a new print queue to the list. Follow the directions above to complete the initial data for the queue and to test that it prints.

The fourth option enables you to focus on just the fields of that print queue which are relevant to Novell. Although all you will probably need to use are the Printer and the Queue fields, the complete list of choices and the effect of each are as follows:

Printer: The printer name, such as Accounts Dot Matrix.

Server: The print server. F1 for a list. Leave empty to use the current print server.

Local: The print port (LPT port) on the back of the terminal, usually 1.

Queue: The Novell print queue. Press F1 for a list of queues.

Form: Send a form feed after each print job. Tripper will usually do this anyway.

Copies: The number of copies of each print job: usually 1.

Timeout: Seconds of inactivity while printing (interpreted as the end of the print job).

Tabs: Not used.

Banner: If a large banner of asterisks is printed before job. Not recommended.

The fifth and last option, **Dedicate tasks to queues**, enables you to see and adjust the printing tasks within Tripper which are handled by each individual queue. Simply move the highlight bar from one print queue to another in the left hand box to see in the right hand box which print jobs are handled by that print queue.

If you want to change a setting for that print queue, press enter on that print queue. Control is passed to the right hand box, where INSert and DELete enable you to add or delete print jobs respectively. When you press INSert, the print jobs for which that print queue does not currently handle appear on the left, from which you can select the appropriate task.

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If you choose a print queue which has no print jobs configured, you will be given the left hand box of printing tasks to choose from first to start you off.

Retailer specific queues:

When deciding on whether or not to dedicate one print queue to a specific retailer, remember that as soon as you do this, that print queue will *not* be accessible to users who are part of another retailer. You should also remember that if more than one print queue exists for a specific task such as invoices, the user will have to decide which printer to use each time they print an invoice. It would be more practical in this case to dedicate one queue to each retailer for printing invoices, assuming that each retailer's invoice is to appear on a separate printer.

Using multiple printers for one task is most useful for tasks such as accounts, whereby accounts staff can run off a report to the printer nearest them at the time. Where printed stationery is used, such as invoices, vouchers, tickets, and especially cheques, you should take care to minimise any possibility of printing the document on the wrong printer and therefore the wrong stationery. *For this reason, it is strongly suggested that only one printer be used for cheques, for any retailer which has custom cheque stationery.*

Opt: Confirming or releasing optional bookings

When a booking is made, it can be confirmed as a definite booking or as an optional booking. A confirmed booking will be numbered as part of the current series of bookings, but an optional booking will be numbered with a lower number which is part of a special series which is intended not to conflict with the confirmed bookings.

Optional bookings can be displayed and viewed just as any other booking, but will not appear on many of the accounts reports. They will not be totalled in the margins program, nor will it be possible to write cheques on them. They will, however, be occupying allocated seats if booked on allocated flights, and allocated rooms if booked on allocated rooms. So, when they are no longer required, you must clear them off the system, at which time Tripper replaces seats and rooms accordingly.

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Alternatively, you can confirm them, also using this program, at which time the booking number in the files will be replaced by one from the current confirmed booking number series, and enable the booking to be visible by the various accounts programs. The original optional data *cannot now be retrieved by the original option number*. To find this booking you will need to use the current booking number, which will be given on screen when the booking is converted to a confirmed booking, or the client name and departure details as usual. Clearly it will be important for staff to be aware of the maximum optional booking number for your company.

Should you wish to change the maximum optional booking number, use the Utilities: Setup: Custom: Options program.

BK:Auto: Automatic booking recalculation

When staff are entering bookings, or when the prices of an existing booking are being changed using client: display, you will notice that the nett rates on the right hand side of the page sometimes change along with the changes made on the gross figures on the left hand side of the page.

This screen can behave in one of two ways across the whole system. If the Automatic Booking Recalculation feature is turned on, then any change in the gross figure will be reflected in the nett figure on the right. So if the commission you are getting from the supplier is 10%, changing the gross figure from £100 to £150 will change the nett figure from £90 to £135 without any user intervention. This method might suit ABTA groups or agencies who in general have to stick to a fairly rigid commission system. Any surcharges or discounts per person can be entered on the line below the ticket cost, where, as a separate figure, they will be shown separately on the client documentation.

For some agencies, they will need to be more flexible. For example, if you purchase a ticket at £100 less 10%, you naturally want the system to calculate that the nett cost is £90. But if you decide to sell the ticket at £150 to take advantage of market conditions, you still only want to pay your supplier £90. If the Automatic Booking Recalculation is turned off, this is possible. All you do is enter the first gross amount, at which time the nett figure will be calculated automatically. Any changes after that will not be reflected in the nett figure, which will stay the same unless it is over-written by a user with the ap-

Supervisor options

propriate access codes.

Please note that this setting is turned on or off across the entire system, and is not adjustable per retailer or per user.

EC: EEC notes or guidance notes for reservations staff

There is a possibility that the reservations staff will need to quote from company policy when making bookings. In fact, one of the EEC guidelines for agents was that certain things had to be said to clients to prevent falling foul of legal obligations to clients whose flights had changed, or who cancelled and found that they could not get a refund, and so on.

The notes appear at various points during a new booking process. The notes have to be turned on across the whole system first for them to work. Then, you can decide which of the several headings you require to be included in the messages given out to staff. Additionally, you can then decide which members of staff should be given access to read these messages. For example, if a member of staff in administration only enters bookings away from the client, there is no point cluttering up their screen with client based information. For other members of staff who are talking to clients on the phone, it may be essential that they read out the information to clients to avoid any legal wrangling later on.

You also can choose to make the notes appear across the full width of the screen if you wish. The system-wide switch to turn them on or off, and the screen width switch appear as questions after you have finished editing the notes.

As in all memo fields, press control and W together to save the text. Users with the appropriate access level can also edit the text while calling up the notes during reservations, should those staff not have access to operations for any reason.

TxStat: Ticket status information

While a booking is created, staff entering the information must assign a status code to the purchase ledger entry. This list of codes is maintained in this program. Each code has a one-character main field, followed by a brief description of the status, and two full

Supervisor options

rows of 50 character text which will appear when the invoice is printed out (Std or CT invoice types only).

A typical status code might be "T" for Ticket on Departure, with relevant standard information being printed on the invoice of each booking for which TOD applies.

Remember that if you change an existing code, existing bookings with that code already on it will not be able to find the correct text to print out on the confirmations.

Enq:Del: Enquiry deletion period

If you are using the enquiry system, this number of days will be the default period before which an enquiry is re-used by the system for new information. The duration of the enquiry deletion period is entirely up to you, but remember that once the enquiry passes the deletion date, it will not be visible to the retrieval programs inside the enquiry module.

Rpr: Reservations price round-up

When accommodation prices are presented in the reservations screens, you can choose to have them rounded up to the nearest 9, or left as they are, using this setting. The default setting is ON.

IPT: Insurance premium tax

The IPT figure is the tax which is calculated on the difference between the gross and the nett insurance figures when submitting insurance returns using the Accounts: Database: Outgoing: Ins (detail) program.

Bkg:Car: Bookings staff to offer car hire prices

During reservations, bookings staff can usually choose one option after another to complete their booking card. With this setting turned on, they cannot complete a booking card until they have gone through a screen which requests car hire information to be completed for the client, although it does not force them to book a car. With this setting turned off, they have the choice as to whether or not to offer car hire to the client.

Supervisor options

Sp: Special offers from tour operators (*non-standard feature*)

When turned on, this setting enables staff to select from a series of special offer codes, each of which indicates a certain discount given by the tour operator. The table of special offer codes is also maintained in this section. In order for this special offer code system to work, the sales ledger must have an additional field built into it. If this field is not present, Tripper will not allow this system to be used.

Should the special offer system be used, the special offer code will be visible in the client display section and be written after the booking number is shown on those pages, and be editable in the General data section. In margins, margins can be subdivided by the special offer codes over the standard date conditions already available in that program.

Av: Accommodation verification

An important feature of the Operations Desk is the ability to enter a number of different suppliers for one particular building. This means that provided the accommodation has been setup in the bedbank to begin with, via the Ops Desk, additional suppliers can be used if the building is to be purchased adhoc depending on the deal available at a given time.

This feature, when turned on, means that when res staff enter adhoc accommodation, when they come to the supplier field, they must enter a supplier who is known to have accommodation for the airport which they have just requested accommodation for. If they enter any supplier which doesn't exist, or have typed any character in order to prompt the list to appear, a list appears on the left which has one entry for all the suppliers known to have accommodation for that airport.

Pressing the right hand arrow key while on the list will give a list to the right of all the accommodation which that supplier handles. Pressing enter has the same effect but passes control to the list of buildings from which one can then be selected. The relevant information is passed to the adhoc accommodation notepad file which they are using during the entry of a booking, although that information will not become visible until they move the cursor to that field.

Please note that the behaviour of booking accommodation from the committed bedbank is not affected by this switch.

Operations desk

Functions available

The operations desk is a tool designed to manage the many components of your accommodation database. From this program you can:

- Add, delete and modify groups, airports, resorts, building types and specific buildings
- Create seasons of date bands which may have different pricing characteristics
- Create a bedbank of rooms for each building which are used by res to sell from
- Describe the buildings and the resorts in unlimited detail
- Maintain currency rates from which prices can be extrapolated automatically by the computer

The successful use of the operations desk relies only on some basic knowledge of how Tripper looks at your accommodation.

Concepts

Each *airport* on your system, whether at home or abroad, exists within one and only one geographical *group*. A group such as CANARY may have several airports, such as FUE, ACE, LPA etc. which will all fall within whatever settings have been made for that group. Each airport must be tied to a geographical group, and any group it is tied to must exist as a group within the operations desk.

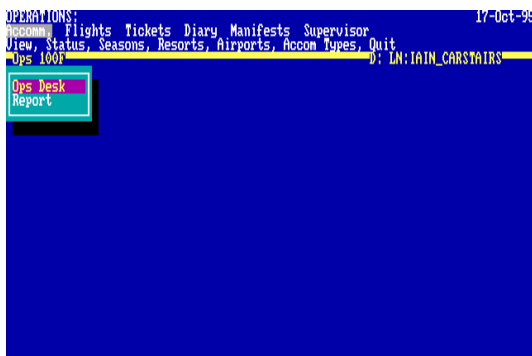
Each airport will be the point of contact for various *resorts*: e.g., ACE may have the resort Puerto del Carmen within its scope. The resorts, in turn, will each have a variety of *buildings* of different *types* and sizes, and all of these can be set up within the operations desk.

The type of a building is a three letter code that determines the physical characteristics of the rooms within that building. Each building can have only one type of room, but many entries can be made for that building in order to encompass the different numbers of different types of rooms. So the Falcon Apartments might exist as an allocation of 15 studios, 3 1-bed apartments, 5 2-bed apartments, and 7 single rooms, and so on.

All of these different characteristics should uniquely define each and every building on your system. Once seasons are set up, and pricing methods determined, the link to the

Operations desk

reservations programs is completed, and staff can sell these buildings as part of packages, by linking them to flights from various sources. The following set of screens will show what a completed accommodation database looks like and how the various keys can restrict the data shown on screen to only that set you are interested in.



The Operations desk is launched from with the Operations module. Remember that access to the overall Operations module can be granted or revoked inside the Supervisor: Users: Edit program

Group:	Airport:	Resort:	Type:	
Airports:		Resorts:		Deadline: Buildings:
ABQ	STATES	ACE CT	COSTA TEGUISE	0.00 1
ACA	STH US	ACE PB	PLAYA BLANCA	0.00 1
ACE	CANARY	ACE PC	PUERTO DEL CARMEN	0.00 7
ADL	WLAIDE	ACP FR	FUENCIROLA	0.00 ---
AGA	EUROPE	ACP TO	TORREMOLINOS	0.00 ---
ACP	EUROPE	ALC BN	BENIDORM	0.00 22 ↓
Building Types:		Area:	Type:	Buildings: Rms: Valid to:
1B2	1 BED APT	ACE CT	1B3 CT TUSCAN CLUB	10 12/12/99
1B3	1 BED APT	ACE PB	1B3 SU SUN PARK APAR..	12 12/12/99
1B4	1 BED APT	ACE PC		--- / /
1BR	1 BEDROOM	ACE PC	1B3 AT ATLANTIS APAR..	10 12/12/99
1CA	1 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 CU COSTA VULCAN..	10 12/12/99
2B3	2 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 SF SAN FERMIN AP..	-- 12/12/99
2B4	2 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 ZA ZAFIRO'S APART..	-- 12/12/99
2B5	2 BED APT	ACE PC	2B5 LS LAS OROUIDEAS..	-- 12/12/99
2B6	2 BED APT	ACE PC	ST2 SP SAN FRANCISCO..	10 12/12/99
2BR	2 BEDS, 1+	ALC BN	1B4 FB FLAMINGO BENI..	-- 12/12/99 ↓

The overall layout of the Operations desk shows all the major components of your accommodation database at one time. If certain items have been selected as data filters, they are shown along the top. Overall control is handled by a menu at the top right. Each option enables data to be used, limited or modified in some way.

Group:	Airport:	Resort:	Type:	
Airports:		Resorts:		Deadline: Buildings:
ABQ	STATES	ACE CT	COSTA TEGUISE	0.00 1
ACA	STH US	ACE PB	PLAYA BLANCA	0.00 1
ACE	CANARY	ACE PC	PUERTO DEL CARMEN	0.00 7
ADL	WLAIDE	ACP FR	FUENCIROLA	0.00 ---
AGA	EUROPE	ACP TO	TORREMOLINOS	0.00 ---
ACP	EUROPE	ALC BN	BENIDORM	0.00 22 ↓
Building Types:		Area:	Type:	Buildings: Rms: Valid to:
1B2	1 BED APT	ACE CT	1B3 CT TUSCAN CLUB	10 12/12/99
1B3	1 BED APT	ACE PB	1B3 SU SUN PARK APAR..	12 12/12/99
1B4	1 BED APT	ACE PC		--- / /
1BR	1 BEDROOM	ACE PC	1B3 AT ATLANTIS APAR..	10 12/12/99
1CA	1 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 CU COSTA VULCAN..	10 12/12/99
2B3	2 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 SF SAN FERMIN AP..	-- 12/12/99
2B4	2 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 ZA ZAFIRO'S APART..	-- 12/12/99
2B5	2 BED APT	ACE PC	2B5 LS LAS OROUIDEAS..	-- 12/12/99
2B6	2 BED APT	ACE PC	ST2 SP SAN FRANCISCO..	10 12/12/99
2BR	2 BEDS, 1+	ALC BN	1B4 FB FLAMINGO BENI..	-- 12/12/99 ↓

Selecting Groups provides access to the list of groups at lower right. Note that once you have a list to choose from, some help instructions appear in the lower right corner of the screen. To highlight any item on the list, press the TAB key. To add a new item to the list, press INSert, and to delete, press DELete. To edit the item itself, press ENTER.

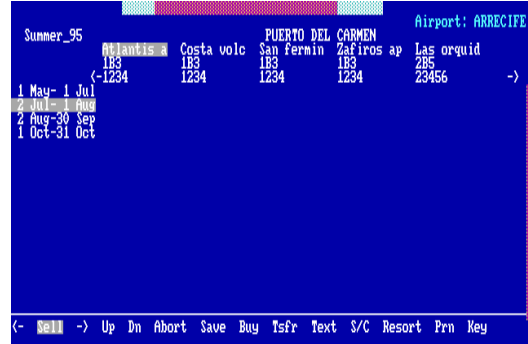
Group:	Airport:	Resort:	Type:	
Airports:		Resorts:		Deadline: Buildings:
ACE	CANARY	ACE CT	COSTA TEGUISE	0.00 1
FUE	CANARY	ACE PB	PLAYA BLANCA	0.00 1
LPA	CANARY	ACE PC	PUERTO DEL CARMEN	0.00 7
TF'S	CANARY			
Building Types:		Area:	Type:	Buildings: Rms: Valid to:
1B2	1 BED APT	ACE CT	1B3 CT TUSCAN CLUB	10 12/12/99
1B3	1 BED APT	ACE PB	1B3 SU SUN PARK APAR..	12 12/12/99
1B4	1 BED APT	ACE PC		--- / /
1BR	1 BEDROOM	ACE PC	1B3 AT ATLANTIS APAR..	10 12/12/99
1CA	1 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 CU COSTA VULCAN..	10 12/12/99
2B3	2 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 SF SAN FERMIN AP..	-- 12/12/99
2B4	2 BED APT	ACE PC	1B3 ZA ZAFIRO'S APART..	-- 12/12/99
2B5	2 BED APT	ACE PC	2B5 LS LAS OROUIDEAS..	-- 12/12/99
2B6	2 BED APT	ACE PC	ST2 SP SAN FRANCISCO..	10 12/12/99
2BR	2 BEDS, 1+	ALC BN	1B4 FB FLAMINGO BENI..	-- 12/12/99 ↓

Pressing TAB on the CANARY group has limited the airport window to those within that group. Having chosen Airports from the control menu, the user has pressed the TAB key on Arrecife. This cuts down the resorts to those within Arrecife, (also the buildings, lower right window). A short cut would be to choose either the building or the resort first: in this case groups and airports are derived from that resort or building.

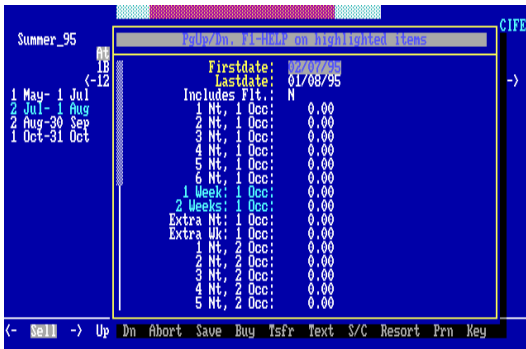
Operations desk



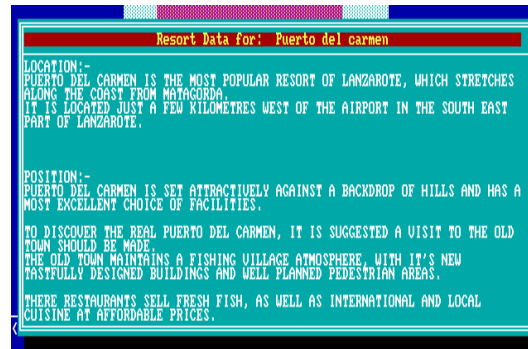
Seasons can also be created for Summer and Winter on any year. Each Season can be composed of an unlimited number of date bands, Nov-Apr or May-Oct.



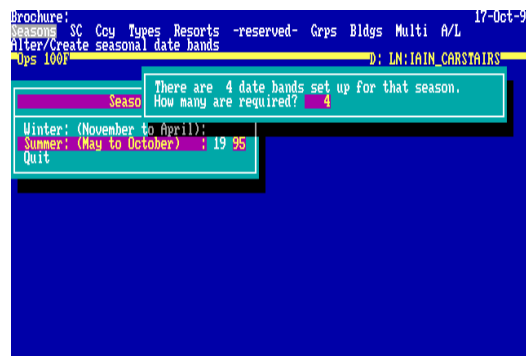
Selecting a resort enables entry to Pricing and Data. Here the pricing structures themselves are created, and descriptions entered, across a resort and its buildings.



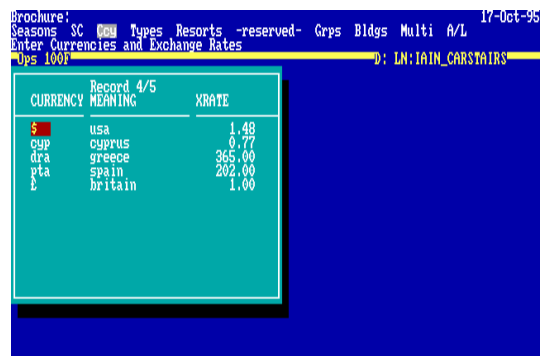
Here a building is priced to cater for all of its possible occupancies, for any conceivable duration, either with or without a flight price being assumed to be included.



Text data is entered here for the resort. This text is what the res staff will see when quoting holidays to clients.

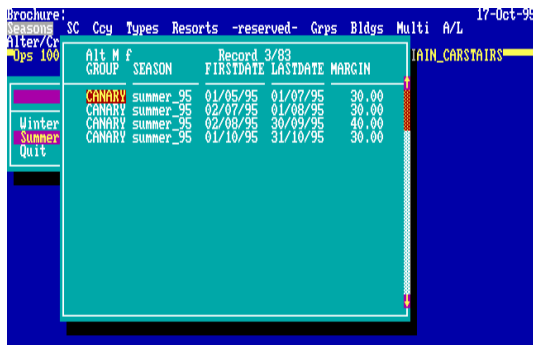


Exiting the Pricing and Data screen returns you to a general information menu which enables modification of various parameters, including currencies, seasons and unformatted listings of buildings, resorts, airlines, etc. It represents another way of looking at your accommodation database.



Currencies can be used if accommodation is to be marked automatically. The nett rates, the exchange rate and the required margins yield a client cost. This method is an alternative to fixing selling prices. Prices can even be configured to optionally round up as well.

Operations desk



Here season bands are being confirmed. Each has a from and to date, and a margin figure. This can represent either a % figure or a straight mark up.



The airline codes can also be maintained from the Operations desk. Each airline can have a different check in time which will be printed on documentation.



Currencies can also be maintained. The exchange rate will change from time to time and cause different selling prices to be calculated.



The data entry screen for a new building also allows other configuration parameters to be set, such as the turnaround days, release periods and so on. If new type codes or resort codes are entered in this screen, the system will add them automatically to the file, thus learning and setting up its reference files as it goes along.

The overall purpose of the Ops Desk should be clearer from the above set of screens. Some additional features are the possibility of adding extra suppliers to bedbank accommodation, to allow for adhoc purchases from various suppliers or handling agents of buildings which are already in the bedbank.

From the list of buildings, when highlighting any particular building, press the right hand cursor movement arrow to bring up a list of all the suppliers available for that building. The INSert and DELete keys can be used to add or remove suppliers from this list. See

Operations desk

also the section Supervisor: Av. You can also use the left hand cursor movement key while highlighting any building, to see and adjust the stop sale dates, which will be shown in red on the charts. These stop sale dates will not affect adhoc bookings in that building: only the committed, i.e. bedbank, bookings.

Accommodation Pricing

Probably the most complex area in assembling package holidays on Tripper is the pricing. It is very important to understand some basic concepts used, before delving into the complexities which have arisen because of agents' needs and requests for newer ideas and more flexibility.

Firstly, there are two basic ways to price accommodation, and as a result, package holidays. One is by marking up the nett costs of the accommodation, and the other is by setting gross prices which are then presented to the client.

Why mark up nett accommodation?

If you are engaged in selling holidays, and are able to avoid any sort of major commitments regarding flight and bedbank allocations, what you are concerned about is maintaining your profit margin, since there is no need to sell holidays at a loss. Naturally, if you have allocations of any size, you will sell at any price if need be to avoid losing money on unsold stock.

Where Tripper scores is in its ability to handle the needs of the travel agent who likes the no-risk area of being the middleman, but also can offer expertise in assembling package holidays, which naturally means being able to give significant value to clients looking for specialist advice. This agent may have some allocations of flights, and even some rooms, but typically can book flights as and when required, due to the peculiarities of market availability, and may hold rooms in foreign accommodation on release, that is, retain the rooms as if they were committed to buying them, but relinquish them if unsold, perhaps a specified number of days prior to any given date on which the rooms are available.

This means that for a certain period of time during which flights are accessible and rooms have not been relinquished, they act for all intents and purposes as a tour operator, with exclusive use of the components comprising that holiday.

Operations desk

So, for this particular agent, the factors affecting profitability include the current rate of exchange for the currency used for the overseas accommodation, the nett costs of the flight (which may vary considerably) and the changing nett cost of the accommodation according to the contract agreed upon. It will be advantageous to sell only when the margins are right, and therefore Tripper allows the margin to be set for each date band, for each geographical group.

It is clear then that the selling prices are not stored anywhere on the system in this case. Instead, they are calculated in the following way for each building offered to the client:

1. The return nett cost of the flight, whether from Airscan, allocation, or a sales list
2. The nett cost of the accommodation, priced per night to allow for any changes in nett rates over the course of the holiday
3. The margin set for that date band covering the arrival date (the margin figure is set inside the seasons using the Ops desk and can represent either a % figure or a fixed sterling amount, depending on the geographical group's switch)
4. The current exchange rate

Changing the exchange rate will therefore change all quoted prices for appropriate accommodation, as will selecting a flight with a different nett cost.

Nett prices are entered using the Prices/Data option in the Ops Desk once the resort has been selected.

Why have fixed prices?

Fixed prices will be preferable if a price list has been published in advance or if there is a need to have uniform prices which do not fluctuate depending on exchange rates and flight availability. In fact, Tripper will search first for gross prices, and if they have not been entered, will mark up nett rates. So, you can have some buildings with fixed prices and some with floating prices depending on requirements.

Even if you decide to use fixed selling prices, you can still choose the simple or complex way of pricing, among other options. When you choose Sell from the pricing options, you are then asked if you want to enter 1-10 passenger costs.

Operations desk

If you answer no, you are given a small grid to enter the 7 nt, 14 nt, 1wk and 1 day prices. These are per person selling costs. The 1 wk and 1 day prices are used to calculate odd durations, or extra weeks or extra days, and if the 7 and 14 night prices are not present, will be used to create these two prices when quoting holidays. And if only a 1 day price is entered, it will create the rest from that price when quoting holidays.

If you answer yes, you must complete a table of prices for every date band shown to the left of the resort pricing/data screen.

The initial field is a tag which allows you to include or exclude the flight price in the accommodation price. Presumably this should be the same all the way through the date bands, but this does not have to be the case.

The remaining fields allow you to enter any price for 1-6 nights, 1 week, 2 week, and extra night and extra week durations, for any combination of passengers occupying a unit of accommodation in this building, from 1 to 10 passengers. Clearly, this is the most elaborate of pricing structures and will require some maintenance, but will ensure that prices are 100% controlled from the operations section and not subject to the vagaries of the travel or currency markets.

Note that only passenger combinations valid for that kind of building are made available to you on the screen. A building suitable for only 2 passengers would therefore only have one set of fields for 2 pax combinations. The 1 week and 2 week fields are highlighted for clarity only.

When accommodation doesn't appear on res screens

In the complexities of setting up accommodation it often happens that certain buildings may not appear and it can be frustrating to not know why. The following check list will show on what basis the buildings are included or excluded from accommodation searches on the bedbank. If every one of the conditions is satisfied, then the building will appear. If one is not, then the building will not appear.

1. Valid dates

Each building has a validity range. If the start of a holiday is before that range, or the last day is after that range, the building will not appear. Remember to include the resort arrival

Operations desk

deadline in any reckoning of what exact day the holiday starts, based on the flight arrival time to that holiday airport.

2. Turnaround dates

To prevent blocks of unsellable dates, you may want to set a turnaround day or days on which entry to the building is allowed, given the resort deadline. If the building has no turnaround day set, then any day can be an entry day. If the building is set for entry only on day 1 (Monday) it will not appear on any searches in conjunction with flights arriving on any other day.

3. Stop sale

The stop sale periods (up to four of them) can be seen from the charts, where they are shown in red across the screen, or by using the left hand arrow key when running over the list of buildings. If any part of a holiday is in a stop sale period, the building will not appear.

4. Occupancy

If a search has been done on buildings suitable for a group of 4 people, then buildings whose building type only allows 1,2 or 3 people will not appear.

5. Release dates

If the release periods are entered into for any part of the holiday, the building will not appear. If on a building the release period of 1st -31st December has a release day setting of 14 days, then a booking which is being made on the 24th of November will cause that building not to be shown, as the 14 day period is already underway in which the rooms for the 1st to the 7th of December cannot be guaranteed, having been returned to the agent or supplier.

Constructing seasons

A season is simply a group of Winter or Summer dates running always from 1st November of year 1 to 30th April of year 2 in the case of Winter for year 1, or from the 1st of May to the 31st October for the Summer of that year.

It is very important, when creating any given season, that a season be completed for all of

Operations desk

these dates, even if it contains only one date band (a combination of two dates). For example, 1/11/97-30/04/98 is one date band and is valid season, but 1/11/97 to 31/11/98 is not: in the second case the dates may overlap a Summer season, causing one or the other prices to be ignored. Nor is a season which runs from 1/11/97 to 31/3/98 valid, because passengers arriving in April 98 will not have prices available.

When Tripper is first given a date for a holiday, it finds the season in which that date is by applying the rules set out above. 30/02/98 produces a season of '**Winter 97**'. To speed up the searches, Tripper can go straight to that block of data and find the margins if applicable, and the relevant prices either gross or nett depending on what has been entered. If no prices are available either gross or nett, the accommodation will still be displayed but no price will be shown along with it.

Room counting in accommodation displays

When Tripper steps through the bedbank, it counts up the rooms available for the holiday parameters given by the res staff. If there are more than 10 rooms available for the given date and duration, in the interests of saving time, it counts up to 10 rooms and then moves on to the next building. So a number less than 10 means only that number of rooms is available (but no more), while 10 indicates that at least 10 rooms are available.

Bedbank charts

Within the Operations desk is the facility to enter into the chart of any one building in your accommodation database.

The chart system enables you to:

Add rooms to a building, or reduce the number of existing rooms

Enter into any given booking which has been displayed as occupying the chart

Enter into any other booking to add it to the chart on display

Block off rooms over any duration to prevent their being accessed by reservations

Create stop-sale periods over the entire chart

Modify the data on that particular building

The chart for that particular building enables you to see at a glance the availability of rooms over a given period of time. The standard period of time represented is 82 days, but the chart itself can be enlarged to show more client detail and accordingly show a reduced period of time. This is achieved using the Chart: Magnify option from the Charts main menu along the top of the screen.

When a booking is created in reservations, the room is blocked off and will appear as a series of "R" characters indicating its reserved status. You can zoom in on the chart using the magnify option in order to see more detail on these bookings, such as the booking number, the client name, and even the arrival flight number.

Once bookings are visible on screen, you can choose the Bkg option from the Charts main menu and select any visible booking. You are then placed into the Invoice screen which is normally found in Clients: Display: Invoice in accounts and reservations programs. From this Invoice page you have all the rights and access levels, and features of the Invoice page, that you would normally have. You can therefore delete passengers, accommodation, change pricing, and so on, and then return to the chart screen to see the effect your modifications have had.

Setting up a building

When a building has been created in the Operations desk using Buildings: Insert, it will be initiated with a size of zero rooms. To add units, the Chart program has an option called **rooms** which can create the number of rooms you require. At this point it would be useful to describe the way in which Tripper looks at accommodation and how the

Bedbank charts

setup of rooms and room types will affect other parts of the bedbank system.

A building in the system represents only one kind of occupancy, but this does not need to limit the way in which more complex real life buildings are handled. If a hotel has, say, four kinds of rooms, these can all be set up as different buildings in the system, and labelled accordingly. As an example:

<u>Airport</u>	<u>Resort</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Building name</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
ACE	PC	STU	AA	Atlanta Apts: Studios	10
ACE	PC	1B2	AA	Atlanta Apts: 1 Bed Apts	15
ACE	PC	2B3	AA	Atlanta Apts: 2 Bed Apts	5
ACE	PC	SR1	AA	Atlanta Apts: Single Rooms	5

You can see that although each entry in the system is as a separate building, in actual fact they all combine to form one structure in the resort, with a number of separate room types. The advantage is that allocations of rooms, their availability and their pricing can all be handled separately.

The Type code represents the kind of unit which is on offer. This code relates back to the building types file which contains more detail about that kind of accommodation, including the number of people which can be accommodated by it. For example:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Occ</u>	<u>Prices based</u>	<u>Min_occ</u>	<u>Max_occ</u>
STU	Studio rooms	12	2	1	2
1B2	1 Bedroom apt	123	2	1	3
1B3	2 Bedroom apt	234	3	2	4
SR1	Single room	1	1	1	1

This file contains entries which enable Tripper to select the appropriate rooms and quote the correct prices for each. You can access this table using the **Types** option from the Ops desk main menu. Once in the list of building types you can press INSert and DELete in the usual way to maintain the reference list.

Note that each record contains the limitations of occupancy, and the occupancy on which the prices kept on file refer to. If prices are per room, then the price is divided by the number of occupants. If prices are per person, then the information is used only to limit the occupancy of that accommodation.