



## **TMS Tech Bulletin - Stand Alone Automation Ticket Printers**

**Toronto, February 5, 2008** – As you may already know, most electronic presets have the ability to operate in stand alone mode (no automation software in place) There are different terms used to describe this operation. Toptech refers to it as REMOTE PROCESSING, FMC refers to it as HOST CONTROL and Daniels calls it MANUAL OPERATING MODE. When operating an electronic preset with no automation software, you are still required to have a BOL (Bill of Lading.) Most electronic presets have the ability to print a ticket directly from the register with no computer or software.

There are some limitations that you need to be aware of.

#1 - The printer communication on the electronic preset is serial (RS232 / RS485). You need to use a serial printer (or you can use a serial to parallel converter). Commonly used printers are Okidata or Epson (full size). Some presets will support small Epson printers as well.

#2 - The electronic preset will have \*limited\* security. Some electronic presets such as Toptech & FMC offer an internal database for card, ID or PIN. Toptech offers 300 entries. Most presets offer additional prompts but there is no data verification. Some data may or may not be available for printing on the ticket.

#3 – There is limited information that can be printed from the preset. The presets are configured to print text only. And only certain information is available to print.

#4 - Most presets have a “dump only” feature for printing. The preset will not verify/confirm that the ticket was printed successfully. The preset will not attempt to retry if there was a print fault. The preset will transmit the serial data and hopefully, the printer is online and ready to print. Most presets offer a reprint feature but it is not an easy thing to access through the keypad.

#5 – The reporting feature is minimal if non existent. Most preset don't offer ability to print reports. So if you loose your BOL, you're in trouble.

We have used manual mode in the past as a backup feature to the TMS6000. But knock on wood; we've only had to use it once or twice in case of emergency. The cost associated in having a backup printer for manual mode is not justified. It is better to have two computers running simultaneously for backup.

We've had a few customers who started using manual mode and have then upgraded to full automation. We are currently working on a project where the customer is currently using an electronic preset in stand alone mode and looking at upgrading to full TMS6000 to provide additional security and reporting.

Total Meter Services, Inc (TMS) was founded in Toronto, Canada in 1983 to meet the needs of clients whose businesses depend on quality flow measurement and control technologies. TMS provides services to include design, fabrication and installation of high pressure pipe assembly, design and installation of electronic automation and control systems and a complete line of meter proving and repair services.

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