

# **What Vehicle History?**

Service History Tracking, Reporting, and Billing  
of vehicles & other mechanical devices  
for MS-DOS computers

**Shareware Edition User's Guide**

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This agreement shall be governed by the State of Colorado and shall inure to the benefit of Angel Babudro and any successors, administrators, heirs and assigns. Any action or proceeding brought by either party against the other arising out of or related to this agreement shall be brought only in a State or Federal Court of competent jurisdiction located in Delta County, Colorado. The parties hereby consent to in personam jurisdiction of said courts.

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WVH is owned and copyright (c) 1991-1995 by Angel Babudro, all rights reserved. You may only use and/or distribute WVH under the License terms below.

## **LICENSE**

The following terms and conditions apply to the use and/or distribution of *What Vehicle History?*:

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this period requires registration.

2. You may keep as many back-up copies of WVH as you wish. The Registered Edition is limited to simultaneous use on the number of computers indicated on the Use License. The Unregistered Edition may be used on any number of computers for the purpose of evaluation as specified in paragraph (1).

3. All files originally distributed as part of the package (including this notice) must be included without modification. The complete list of files can be found in the PACKING.LST file which is part of this package. The Registered Edition CONFIG.WVH file is NOT to be distributed.

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6. You must obtain written permission prior to distribution in conjunction with any other product or service (e.g., placing on new computer systems, providing in conjunction with a seminar, etc.).

7. If the software is packaged for retail sale the packaging must explain that the software is Shareware, that the purchaser is receiving a trial version, and that use beyond the trial period requires registration with the author.

8. You must immediately stop selling/distributing copies of this software upon notice from the author.

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## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT (HOW TO REACH ME)**

If you have questions or need help, just send a note to me through the mail or a BBS listed below. Registered users, those intending to register within 30 days, vendors, and sysops may contact me via telephone as well. Sysops and shareware vendors please see VENDOR.DOC for distribution information.

Mail                  Angel Babudro, "Organic Computer Wizardry",  
PO Box 132, Paonia, CO 81428 USA  
Phone                (970) 527-6756 Tue-Fri 10am-6pm Mountain Time  
                         ("970" is a new area code for Colorado; if it doesn't  
                         work try "303" instead)

I am normally available by phone during the hours stated above. If you get the answering machine please leave a message. Unregistered users: please try again later - I am happy to answer your questions but I cannot afford to pay for the call.

## **Official Distribution Bulletin Boards**

My software packages are "**free**" downloads on the BBSs listed below - you need not subscribe to download my shareware (although other files or functions may require subscription). I use the first name "Angelo" on BBSs since it avoids gender confusion (I'm used to both names anyway). Scan for the file name **WVH\*.\*** to locate the latest version.

West Coast            Expanding Horizons (CO) 14.4k V.32 (970) 241-2847  
                         This is my local BBS so it is the one I most often update  
                         and check for messages. The first time on you will have to fill  
                         out the registration form.  
                         From the main menu:  
                         \* Enter "**OCW**" to join the Organic Computer Wizardry  
conference where all the latest files are stored.  
                         \* Enter "**F**" to view the list of available files  
                         \* Enter "**E Angelo Babudro**" to post messages for me

Midwest               Rusty 'n Edie's (OH) USR HST 16.8 (216) 726-1804  
    USR V.Everything 28.8 (216) 726-3628  
    Hayes 28.8 (216) 726-3619  
    ZyXel 19.2k v.32/v.32bis (216) 726-3620  
    2400/v.32/v.32bis (216) 726-2620

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CompuCom SpeedModem (216) 726-3584

You will have to subscribe in order to download updates from Rusy 'n Edie's, although I believe they give a trial subscription the first time you log on.

East CoastExcalibur (Central NY) USR Dual (315) 736-3792

FREQ (File REQuest) from this board via RBBS address A:954/401, FIDO address 1:26501, or I.C. Net address 91:315/101.

WhiTech BBS (NC)ZyXEL 14.4 V32b/V42b (910) 944-1165  
File Request (FREQ) via Fido address 1:3636/2.

Software Creations (Mass.)

2400/9600/14.4 USR HST Dual Standard (508) 368-7036

2400/9600/14.4/28.8 USR V.Everything (508) 365-6604

This BBS offers about 130 phone lines and tons of Shareware. They call it "Home of the Authors." It's also home of Night Owl CD-ROM. I believe you will need to subscribe in order to download my Shareware from this BBS.

### **ORDERING METHODS AND REGISTRATION FEES**

WVH has been under constant development since 1991 in the hopes that many people will be willing to pay for a small part of the development. If you use this software past the 60-day trial period I ask that you pay the registration fee. There are many benefits to registering WVH, as explained in the following section.

#### **Benefits of Registration**

The Shareware (unregistered) version of WVH is fully functional so that you may try all of its features and know exactly for what you are paying. Past the 60-day evaluation period WVH will display reminders to register your copy or discontinue use of the software, but it will always continue to be fully functional.

When you register you have the following benefits:

- You get the latest version with the latest features and enhancements direct from the author.

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- You get thorough manual, including an introductory course in using computers with sections on hardware, software, and DOS, in addition to WVH.
- Telephone support - you can talk to the software author who can help you right away and is committed to making the software work well for you.
- Updates are free or very low cost - get them from a local BBS or Shareware vendor, or direct from the author for just \$4 plus shipping. As new features are added, WVH's price is sometimes adjusted to reflect the dramatic increase in its value to users. By registering now, you pay the current (low) price and are entitled to the higher-priced features.
- You can subscribe to receive updates & upgrades as soon as they are released so you will always have the latest features & enhancements.
- The Shareware License display and Unregistered Edition delay go away.
- It rewards the author for thousands of hours of software development done without pay and from which you are deriving benefit. It's the right thing to do and will surely come back to you in blessings & good karma.

### **How To Order**

Send cash, check, or money order in U.S. funds (Canadians may send Canadian funds). Payment must accompany Purchase Orders. Since you are (and have been) using the Unregistered Edition, please consider it the case that you are paying for already-delivered merchandise.

If you prefer to use a credit card, you can order WVH from Public (software) Library with your MC, Visa, AmEx, or Discover card by calling 800-242-4PsL (from overseas: 713-524-6394) or by FAX to 713-524-6398 or by CompuServe to 71355,470. THESE NUMBERS ARE FOR ORDERING ONLY. I CANNOT be reached at those numbers. To contact me for information about dealer pricing, volume discounts, site licensing, the status of shipment of the product, the latest version number, or for technical information, call 970-527-6756 or write me at PO Box 132, Paonia, CO USA 81428. The idea behind Shareware is that you try it before buying and, therefore, product returns are not allowed.

When ordering from PsL ask for **product #11518**.

### **Pricing**

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**Use License with Disk, Manual, and Computer Course** — \$99. License to use WVH on one computer along with the latest Registered Edition on disk with automated installation, the latest version of this documentation on disk, notification of major updates, a printed 3-ring-bound manual, and life-time technical support. The manual contains an introductory course in computers plus a complete guide to using WVH. The course contains introductory-level material covering computer components (hardware), DOS & software basics, using BBSs, etc. Manuals are printed on recycled or tree-free (hemp & cereal straw) paper.

**Wholesale & OEM** — If you want to resell WVH or bundle it with your product or service please write me with your idea.

**Site License** — If your firm has multiple computers or network stations on which WVH will be used you may purchase a Use License for the first copy (explained above) plus a Site License. With a site license you get a discount based on the number of computers you are licensing, for which you received a disk for each computer and up to 10 printed manuals (additional printed manuals may be purchased as well). Discounts range from 30% to 80%. Use WVH's Site License option on the Help menu to print the Site License order form.

**Free Updates** — When you register I will send you a "key" which will allow future releases to work as Registered Editions. You can download from a BBS or otherwise obtain an updated copy and it will recognize your registration key.<sup>1</sup>

**Updates Through The Mail** — An update disk with the latest versions of all my shareware costs \$4 plus shipping charge.

**Update Subscription** — I will send important updates as they are released. In return you will be expected to send \$4 plus shipping to me within 30 days or return the disk to cancel this service. There is no time commitment and this subscription can be cancelled by either party at any time with written notice.

Prices and specifications are subject to change without notice.

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<sup>1</sup>When you share copies with BBSs and others be sure to delete your CONFIG.\* file from those copies. Not only does it contain all the settings on your system and certain pieces of your data, but it also contains your registration key and your name.

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Vendors and sysops see VENDOR.DOC and SYSOP.DOC.

**Register the Shareware you use.**

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## INVOICE & REGISTRATION

Credit card orders see "How To Order" above

### REMIT TO:

Angel Babudro  
"Organic Computer Wizardry"  
PO Box 132  
Paonia, CO 81428  
USA

### FROM:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Use License

Registration, disk, & manual \$99

### Shipping & Handling

Continental U.S. - add \$5

Canada, AK, HI, VI, PR - add \$7

Outside U.S.A. & Canada - add \$22 \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\* TOTAL = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Update Subscription

## ***What Vehicle History?***

Send WVH updates 4 to 8 times per year. In return I will pay \$4 plus shipping within 30 days or return the disk to cancel the subscription.

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YES

NO

Disk size  5¼"  3½"  
Drive density  Low (DD) required  High (HD) okay  
FDFORMAT/FDREAD  FDFORMAT extended densities okay  
Do you have a CDROM?  Yes  No

Printer make(s) & model(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Which version are you using now? \_\_\_\_\_

I got it from \_\_BBS \_\_Vendor \_\_Other Name \_\_\_\_\_

I saw a review in \_\_\_\_\_

Upon receipt of this paid invoice the latest Registered Edition disk and any options ordered above will be sent. Mail with your cash, check, or money order in U.S. funds (Canadians may send U.S. equivalent in Cdn\$). Put comments on back. Allow 1-4 weeks for delivery. Thank you for registering!

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## **WHAT DOES THIS SOFTWARE DO?**

*What Vehicle History?* (WVH) was originally designed in October 1991 to track maintenance records for construction equipment. Over the years it has been expanded to track the maintenance history of just about any ground-based mechanical devices - cars, trucks, tractors, motorcycles, big rigs, power generators, or anything else that is tracked by miles or hours. (An aviation version is being researched - please write if you are interested in this.) Each "vehicle" has an owner, division, or department identified with it, which makes WVH perfect for companies who own many vehicles or shops who maintain other people's vehicles.

WVH will track parts, labour, and comments pertaining to each service incident for a vehicle. In addition, you may enter your parts inventory and WVH will track stock levels and sales history (including profit margin) on parts.

## **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS & LIMITS**

### **Computer Hardware Requirements**

In order to use WVH here is what you will need:

- \* An 8088/80x86 computer<sup>2</sup>
- \* At least one disk drive with at least 720k of free storage<sup>3</sup>
- \* MS/PC-DOS 3.1 or higher, DR-DOS 6 or higher, OS/2 2.1<sup>4</sup>
- \* At least 400k free RAM<sup>5</sup>
- \* A printer if you wish to print reports

Here is what you **don't** need (i.e., these things don't make any difference in how quickly WVH operates):

---

<sup>2</sup>An 80286 or newer computer will operate much more quickly than an 8088 or 8086.

<sup>3</sup>Although WVH can be run on floppy disk, for adequate speed a hard disk will most likely be needed.

<sup>4</sup>Recommended DOS versions are: PC-DOS 3.3, 5.0, or 6.1 or higher; MS-DOS 3.3, 5.0, or 6.2 or higher; DR-DOS/Novell DOS 7; OS/2 version 2.1 or higher.

<sup>5</sup>This is the amount of free **conventional** (or "lower") memory required. Your computer may also have High/UMB, EMS, and/or XMS (or "upper") memory. If you have about 500kb of free upper memory, WVH will use it to operate more quickly.

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- \* A numeric co-processor
- \* More than 500kb of EMS memory

## **Storage Requirements**

Although the system is capable of handling 5.5 millions entries per file, you would need a super-computer or a lot of time to manage it. Here are some practical guidelines for your computer system:

PC/XT (8088 or 8086) - perhaps 10 vehicles  
80286 - 10 to 20 vehicles  
80386 - 20 to 100 vehicles  
80486 - Over 100 vehicles

These are just recommendations, though. You can track a thousand vehicles on a PC/XT if you want to, but it will operate slowly due to the slow speed of the hard disk and processor.

## **Using on a Network**

WVH does not yet use record locking so it is not suitable for use on a network. If only one person will use WVH at any one time then it will work fine on a network.

WVH allows shared access to the programme files, which means that you can have more than one user running WVH as long as each user is using a different set of data files. You create new data files by creating a new directory, changing to that directory, and then starting WVH. For example, if you have two departments which repair and track the records for their own vehicles you can install the WVH programme in the network drive F:\WVH. Next you could create two directories called F:\WVH\DEPT-1 and F:\WVH\DEPT-2. To begin using WVH with Department-1's data files you would "CD \WVH\DEPT-1" and then "..\WVH" (or "\WVH\WVH") to run the programme.

Record locking can be set up by request. If you want to run WVH on a network, having multiple stations access the same data base of vehicles, please write. The registration fee for a network version is contained in the Site License Form which can be printed from WVH's Help menu.

## **Using with MS Windows**

WVH can be run as a DOS application under Windows 3.1 although it



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is not a Windows application (in other words, it runs the same in DOS or Windows). If you don't use Windows or use it only occasionally (as I do), then use WVH from DOS since it will work faster without Windows' overhead. If you normally have Windows loaded, however, then go ahead and set up an icon for WVH. To do this, highlight or create a group, then use File/New to create a program item and define it as C:\WVH\WVH.EXE (or whatever directory you are using) and set the data directory to C:\WVH or some other, as you desire.

## **Using with 4DOS**

WVH has been tested on 4DOS versions 4.0 through 5.5. No special considerations or procedures are necessary.

## **Operating Limits**

WVH has certain operational limits of which you may want to be aware.

- \* Except as otherwise noted, the maximum number of records in any file is 5.5 million
- \* The maintenance (service) incidences may not exceed 300 for nay one vehicle.
- \* Each maintenance incident may contain up to 99 parts.

## **RUNNING What Vehicle History? FOR THE FIRST TIME**

### **Quick Start**

To get started in a hurry just type "WVH" from the DOS prompt and set each of the Preferences screens. Use a mouse or keyboard commands to move around. To get help while on any data entry screen: position the cursor (using keyboard arrows or move mouse cursor then click the left button) on the item you want more information about, then press the F1 key.

\_\_\_\_ Enter your customers first, then mechanics (or service providers), vehicles, and service categories.

\_\_\_\_ If you don't care about tracking maintenance by service category (e.g., Brakes, Transmission, etc.) then just enter one category called, "General" or something like that.

\_\_\_\_ Likewise, if you don't want to track mechanics or service

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providers then enter a single service provider (e.g., code "1", name "General") and leave the hourly rate set to zero (you can enter the hourly rate as you enter each maintenance record.

\_\_\_\_\_ Set "Allow labor amount to be entered on maintenance screen" to "Yes" on the Sales Tax Preferences screen or you won't be able to change the dollar amount.

### **Installation**

Before you can use WVH you will have to install it on your hard disk or create a working floppy disk. Since almost no business uses dual floppy disk systems anymore I won't bother to explain the procedure here. If you have a lap-top computer with dual floppy disks simply place the necessary files (as listed above) on one disk and use the other one for data files. The full Printed Manual contains details on this. Contact me if you need help with this in order to evaluate WVH before registering.

If you received your copy of WVH on floppy disk it came with an INSTALL programme. If INSTALL.EXE or any other of the files which make up the software are **not** on your disk please contact me so I can make the distributor aware of the problem.

To use the automated installation programme, go to the DOS prompt (usually "C:\>" or something similar), and type "d:INSTALL" where "d:" is the letter of the floppy disk drive with the WVH disk (e.g., "A:INSTALL" to install from floppy A:). You will be asked to supply the destination drive and directory. If you have an existing version of the software on disk you will be informed that it will be updated with the new disk.

After INSTALL is finished you will see some helpful information for setting up your computer well, and directions on how to run WVH. A batch file called WVH.BAT is created in your root directory if you so permit, and your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files are not touched at all, not one little bit — I wouldn't invade your system that way.

While in the root directory you just type "WVH" to start the programme. WVH is a batch file which merely changes to the proper drive & directory then runs WVH. You can delete this file if you are using a menu or would rather type the commands yourself.

### **Using the Menus**

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WVH uses the familiar pull-down menus which are common to QuickBASIC, Windows, and Macintosh applications. Basically, there is a horizontal menu of choices -- File, Data Entry, etc. Under each of the horizontal choices is a menu of functions pertaining to that item -- it is a two-dimensional menu, in other words.

There are two ways to select an item from the main menu:

1. Press the letter which is highlighted in the option description
2. Use the Up/Down/Right/Left arrows to highlight the option you want then press ENTER (a.k.a. RETURN or CR).

Some menus have no highlighted options. On these you must use the arrow keys to highlight your choice then press ENTER.

If you want to cancel an operation you selected, just press the Esc ("Escape") key.

## **Using Information Windows**

Whenever you press the F1 (help) key, use WVH's Help Index, and at many times in the programme's execution, you will see a window of information "pop up" on the screen. These information windows follow these guidelines of operation:

- \* To close the window or to cancel whatever operation was being attempted, press the Esc (escape) key or click with the mouse on the symbol in the upper left corner of the window.

- \* If there are only affirmative and negative buttons (e.g., Yes/No, Continue/Stop, etc.) then the ENTER (or RETURN) key chooses the affirmative response (Yes, Continue, etc.) and the Esc key chooses the negative response (No, Stop, etc.).

- \* To use one of the functions indicated by the buttons at the bottom of the window you may press the highlighted letter of the button (for example, the "Index" button shows the letter "I" in bright white) or you may press the Tab or BackTab keys to highlight the button you want followed by pressing the ENTER key.

## **MANAGING FILES**

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The choices under the File menu have to do with your system set-up, file management, and ending the programme.

## **Copying Files**

To copy a particular file between computers (say, a lap-top and desk-top) you will need to copy more than just the data file for proper operation. A complete set of data consists of:

1. The data file (ending in WVH)
2. The index files (ending in IX\*)

You can re-create the index files if you do not copy them, but it is usually faster to copy them. If the GROUPS files are missing you will not be able to select records by group nor will you be able to change or view the group settings.

The easiest way to be sure you have it all is to copy all of your data files using the Copy Files option under the File menu. Alternately, you can use the DOS copy command to copy the files outlined above.

### Using DOS Commands

The Copy Files function is described in the next section. Here is an example using DOS: Let's say you have several mailing list files and you only want to put one of them on a 3.5" floppy to use on your lap-top. Let's call the list MYLIST and assume that your 3.5" disk drive is B:

1. Go to your WML directory on the hard disk (e.g., **CD \WML**)
2. **COPY MYLIST.\* B:** to copy the data & index files
3. **COPY GROUPS.\* B:** to copy the group definitions

### Using the Back-up option

Your computer is a machine and one day it will probably break down. **File/Back-up** protects your information by making a copy of it on another disk. To determine when it is time to make a back-up copy of your information consider a hard disk failure. Feeling suicidal? It's time to make a back-up copy.

When using floppy disks remember that a disk must be formatted

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before use. You can use the same back-up disk or directory over and over again - each new copy will over-write the old one - but it is a good idea to alternate at least three back-up copies just in case there is a problem (such as a power outage) while you are creating a copy. In this case if the computer "crashed" and the back-up was incomplete you would still have two other back-up copies on which to rely.

Once you select the Back-up option you will see a menu of up to four choices of methods to use when backing-up and restoring: DOS COPY, ARJ, LHARC, or PKZIP. The options for ARJ, LHARC, and PKZIP will only appear if WVH is able to locate them using your search path and if there is enough free memory to use them. I recommend LHARC since it uses a fairly small amount of memory, it's reliable, and it's Freeware (the others are Shareware so they should be registered).

Using compression software packs more information in less space (so you can use fewer floppy disks) but requires more memory (RAM). The compression software WML is programmed to use and their memory requirements are as follows:

ARJ 2.41 needs at least 300k free  
LHARC 2.13 needs at least 189k free  
PKZip 2.04g needs at least 157k free

After you select **File/Back-up** a summary window pops open and a menu of methods will be presented, starting with "DOS Copy" and including each compression technique which is found on your computer (using your DOS PATH setting) and for which you have enough free memory. Once you choose a method you are asked to enter the back-up destination (which is typically a floppy disk drive, such as A:, but you may decide to back-up to another hard disk, a network drive, etc.). All WML data files will then be backed-up to the destination disk and directory using the method shown in the window.

### Restoring files from a back-up copy

If you ever need to recover data files from a floppy disk you made using the File/Back-up command (above), just place the floppy disk in its drive and select **File/Restore**. The first thing you will be asked is to specify the disk drive from which to restore files. Once you highlight a drive and press ENTER the list of files on that disk will be shown -

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individual data files as well as any compressed archives.

Highlight each file you wish to restore and press the SpaceBar key; you will see an arrow appear next to each file as it is selected. If you change your mind, just press the SpaceBar again and the arrow will go away, indicating that the file will not be restored. Alternately, you may use the mouse and click the left button instead of using the arrow keys and SpaceBar.

Once you have selected all the files you wish to restore press the ENTER key or click on the "Ok" button with a mouse. Each file will be copied into the current data directory.<sup>6</sup> Any compressed archives being restored will automatically be expanded.

### **Formatting Floppy Disks**

This option is for those times when you have decided to make a back-up copy of your data but don't have a formatted disk handy. **File/Format Floppies** lets you format a floppy disk to your computer's standard density without exiting WVH. If you have a high density drive you can only format high density disks (in other words, WVH doesn't pass any parameters to DOS FORMAT).

If you have What Floppy Format? (WFF.EXE) available somewhere in your search path WVH will automatically access it for formatting floppy disks (so you can do whatever you want). You will receive a complimentary copy of the latest version of WFF with your WVH registration.

### **Re-Indexing Files**

If you ever notice that information is missing or appears in any way wrong, it is probably because something has damaged an index file. WVH will automatically catch and fix most index problems (like if power goes out in the middle of the programme), but there are times when only you will know that the file indices need to be re-built.

One common example would be if you restored files from a back-up disk. When you make a back-up (using WVH's File/Back-up option) you are

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<sup>6</sup>The directory from which WVH is started is considered the data directory - it is where the data files are stored. For example, if you are in the C:\WVH\DATA directory and you run WVH from there, then files will be created in, backed-up from, and restored to this directory.

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only storing the data files. This saves space on your back-up disk. However, it means that if you restore from a back-up the index files may be mismatched to the files. So you would use the **File/Re-Index** option.

If you have large files (thousands of records) re-indexing can take a minute or more, depending on your computer's speed. Aside from that, though, it is harmless to re-index as often as you like.

## **Packing Files**

Whenever you delete information from the files WVH marks the "slot" (**record**) in the files as being "available" so that the next new piece of information will use that slot. If you delete a lot of information (for example, if you delete a vehicle that had a lot of service history & parts information) there may be a lot of disk space being used to store old information. This is where pack comes in handy.

Packing makes a new copy of all of your files which does not include deleted records. For every deleted record between 128 and 512 bytes of disk space will be freed.

## **DATA ENTRY**

This menu of *What Vehicle History?* lets you enter vehicles, mechanics and other information into the data base. The Data Entry menu is split into three sections:

1. Regular (on-going) data entry for vehicle service information
2. One-time data entry for vehicles, mechanics, departments, and service codes
3. Rarely needed data entry (schedule next maintenance) -- this function is run automatically after you enter service for a vehicle, so you would normally not need to access the function directly.  
The Maintenance Scheduling portion of WVH is not yet completed.

All data entry screens use the same method of asking you to choose a code (vehicle, service type, etc.). There are two windows on the screen: the left-hand one showing the codes and the right-hand one showing the details.

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As you move through the codes in the left-hand window, WVH shows you the details for the code which is highlighted. You move with the arrow keys, PgUp and PgDn keys, or by pressing the letter or number of a code. For example, if you press the "G" key WVH will jump to codes beginning with the letter "G". If there are no codes that begin with "G" the next code after "G" will be highlighted.

You can back-up one step (cancel an operation) by pressing the **Esc** key. Otherwise, just press ENTER to select the code which is highlighted and continue with an operation.

### **Service Information**

This will likely be the function you use the most in WVH. After you have set up your vehicles, owners, etc., this is where you enter the actual service information.

Once you select this option you will see the menu of vehicle choices. To quit just press the **Esc** (Escape) key, otherwise highlight a vehicle and press ENTER.

Next you will see the menu of service types. Choose a service type which describes the information you are going to enter and press the ENTER key.

If there is already some service information for that vehicle then you will see a menu of dates. The first item in the menu is "New date." Highlight your choice and press ENTER.

Finally you are on the service entry screen. There are three windows here: One for parts, one for comments, and one for everything else. You can jump between the windows using the **F6** (Jump) key. Within a window use the arrow keys to move around. When you are finished entering information press the **F7** key to save it.

When you exit the service screen you are back at the vehicle menu (as above) and the cycle starts over. Just press the **Esc** key to stop entering service information.

### **Customers/Departments, Mechanics, Service Types, and Vehicles**



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These data entry windows all work similarly. You will see two windows: One on the left which has codes, and one on the right which has the details about the highlighted code.

Highlight a code and press ENTER to edit it's information (in the right-hand window). To enter a new code press the **Ins** (insert) key. To delete (erase) a code press the **Del** (delete) key.

The codes you define can contain up to five letters, numbers, or symbols. Only upper-case letters are used. "AG-5" and "AG05" are both valid codes, though "AG05" has room for 100 variations while "AG-5" has room for 10 variations. It's a good idea to give some thought to your coding system before entering all of your data!

WVH sorts codes in typical ASCII fashion. One character at a time is compared, going left to right. For example, here is a list of codes in ASCII order:

1A	
A001	It is best to pad your numbers
A002	with zeroes (like these three examples)
A015	so they come out in order.
A1	
A100	
A1000	
A2	
B001	

Service Types examples: Use whatever works for you. If you have an existing system, just use those same numbers or letters. Perhaps you have abbreviations you use on invoices. You can use "BR" for "Brakes", or you might just have service type "1" for all types of service if you don't care to separate the service history by service types. Avoid getting too detailed because you will have to enter a separate service record for each type of service you want to track. This might mean splitting one service into two entries - perhaps you replaced a radiator and replaced brake pads at the same time. If you want to print a report in the future which shows just the brake work (or whatever), then make a service type for it.

## **Inventory**

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This screen lets you enter your parts inventory into WVH. Once you set up inventory items you may enter an item number when entering vehicle service information (in the parts window) rather than entering the part descriptions and selling prices manually. This not only makes entering parts data more convenient, but it also helps avoid typing errors.

The inventory window works much like the other data entry screens except that a list of inventory codes is not always visible on the screen. Instead WVH waits for you to enter a part code and, once you do, it checks to see if it is already on file. If the code is on file, WVH displays the information for that part and you may edit it. If you enter a new part code, WVH lets you fill in the information for it.

You may look up an inventory code by pressing the F2 (Find) key. This pops open a window which shows the inventory codes on file; you can move through this list to find the desired code then press ENTER to choose it.

While the cursor is position on any of the fields you can press the F1 key to get information about the purpose and use of the field.

### **Inventory Receipts & Depletions**

The purpose of this window is to let you enter changes to your inventory and have those changes automatically calculated in your inventory's figures & history. For example, if you are tracking your inventory using the Average Cost method then moving items in or out of inventory means that a new average cost must be calculated. Rather than doing this yourself and entering the new cost figure, you can use the Receipts & Depletions function to transfer items and WVH will do the calculating for you.

To use this screen just enter a valid inventory code (or use the F2 key to look-up an inventory code) and WVH will display the current quantity on-hand and quantity on order. You may then enter a positive or negative change to the quantity figures and you may also enter the value (cost or selling price) at which the inventory was sold or acquired.

When you are finished entering figures for an inventory item press the F7 key to save the changes. WVH will then present a blank form for you to enter another inventory code. When you are finished with this window press the Esc key to return to the top menu.

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## **REPORTS**

Highlight the report you want and follow the instructions on the screen. For reports which ask for dates - enter the date in month-day-year order, entering just the numbers and using a 4-digit year.

You can choose to print a report on the screen, on your printer, or to a disk file. If your print to a disk file you will be asked for a file name (which may include the drive and path, if necessary) and the file will be created **without** any printer control codes.

## **PREFERENCES**

The Preferences menu contains options which help you customize the operation of WVH and set necessary parameters, such as the type of printer you have. All of these screens work like any of the data entry screens: Use the arrows to move around or click with a mouse, press F1 to get help on any item, and watch the bottom of the screen for command keys.

Check each Preferences screen before making use of WVH, otherwise something might seem wrong with the software whereas it is due to the set of conditions under which WVH is operating.

## **Inventory**

This screen controls how your parts inventory will be handled. The first item, "Print invoice after entering maintenance" is set to "Yes" or "No" to tell WVH whether you want an invoice printed after you enter service information. If you do not print invoices then you can use the Billing options (on the reports menu) to print statements. If you choose to print invoices then the next line becomes active, on which you may enter the next invoice number WVH is to use.

Next is an option for movement tracking. You can track your parts inventory by averaging cost figures or by tracking the last four costs and using the parts on a First-In-First-Out basis (FIFO, the most common, oldest parts are used first) or a Last-In-First-Out basis (LIFO, newest parts are used first).

Next you can enter the default minimum and maximum inventory levels. If the majority of parts you will be entering are not in stock (such as if

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you were entering a parts distributor's entire catalogue into WVH), you will want to set the default Min and Max to zero, since that is what you'll want most of the time. If most (or all) of the parts you'll enter into WVH are in stock then you'll probably want to default minimum to be one (or two or whatever is normal for you).

The Default Selling Price determines which price will be assumed when you enter new customers into WVH. If you leave this set to "Standard" then every new customer will be set to use the "Standard" price for parts unless you change it. Within a corporate environment you will probably use "Cost + Overhead" and set the overhead to 0% if you do not mark up the parts at all.

The "Warn if out of stock?" option, when set to "Yes", will pop open a window telling you that an item is out of stock when you try and enter it in a maintenance record. If you go to the computer first (before checking stock), then set this to "Yes"; if you pull the part from stock first and enter the data in the computer after the work is finished, then you might want to set this to "No." You can change this setting whenever you want, so experiment to see which works better for you.

The last four fields are G/L account numbers for printing on reports. This is just to place the account numbers on reports so that the bookkeeper has them handy.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### Country setting

This setting is used only to determine the spelling of "labour" versus "labor" and the date format (mm/dd/yyyy or dd-mm-yyyy or yyyy.mm.dd).

#### License State/Province

This is the State or Province abbreviation which is will be placed in each vehicle's record (you can change it if necessary). If most or all of the vehicles you work on are licensed in one State or Province, set this to the two-letter code. If the license plates are from many places or the equipment you work on have no license plates, then leave this field blank.

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## Alert Tone

When some type of error or warning message is displayed on the screen, you reach the end of a field, press a wrong letter in a menu, etc., WVH can alert you with one of three sounds or you may select "No sound" for silent operation.

## Other ID Titles

The last nine fields have room for you to enter a title for each of the nine extra serial number/ID fields for each vehicle. For example, you may want to keep track of the Engine Frame serial number, so you could set the title for the first one to "Engine Frame."

## **Printer**

WVH lets you use a laser or dot matrix printer, but you must first define it and the fonts you want to use for printing. Until you define your printer and fonts there will be a flashing message at the bottom of the screen and you will not be able to print anything.

The Preferences/Printer window shows the current settings. Use the arrow keys to move around, and press the **F3** key to change anything. For example, to set your Title Font move the cursor to that line then press **F3** and a menu of choices will appear. Highlight a font to use and press **<Enter>**. When you are finished, highlight the "Ok" button and press **<Enter>**. Alternately, you can use a mouse (click on "Ok") or press **F7** to save the screen and exit.

## Laser printer soft fonts

You will need portrait (SFP) fonts for reports. Once you define your font choices on this screen WVH will automatically use them for all reports.

Example: Highlight the "Titles Font" line and press the **<F3>** key - a window of font choices will appear.<sup>7</sup> You may choose any of the built-in fonts or a soft font. If you choose "Select a soft font," a window will pop open in which you may enter a drive and/or path which contains the soft font files (whatever you enter here becomes the default response for next time). Next you will be shown a list of

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<sup>7</sup>You must define the printer before you can set any fonts.

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the soft font files (\*.SFP) in that directory. Use the arrow keys and PgUp/PgDn keys to move around, highlight the one you want, and press **<Enter>**. The soft font file name will now be shown on the screen.

### Scalable fonts

A scalable font is a single font (e.g., CG Times, Univers, etc.) which can be printed in practically any size. PCL 5 printers like the H-P LaserJet III and IV have scalable fonts built in. This means you can pick a font and print in practically any size you want.

When you select a scalable font WVH will prompt you for the pitch (dpi) or the point size, depending on whether it is a fixed-pitch or proportionally-spaced font. In general numbers between 8 and 14 work best. My favourite font for both my laser and dot matrix is a Helvetica-Univers-Swiss- etc. (sans serif) font at 12dpi or 12 points.

### Lines per page

Enter the number of lines which may be printed on a page in your printer. Most of the time you will be working with 66 lines total (11-inches of paper printed at 6 lines per inch). On laser printers the total number of lines is often 60 due to half-inch top & bottom margins.

I recommend that you set this to 55 lines, which is a common setting leaving an inch margin at the top & bottom of each page.

### Left margin

This setting is the same as it would be for a typewriter - it is the distance from the left margin, in inches, at which printing will begin. If you would like to leave space at the left edge (e.g., to 3-hole punch the pages) then set this as you wish. If you use a 10 dpi font (or 12 points for lasers) there will be no room for a left margin on most reports. However, a 12 dpi (or 10 point) font, such as Prestige Elite, will give you room to set a one-inch margin or so. Experiment to find what works best for you.

## **Sales Tax Rate and Labour Rate Entry**

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This window lets you set two important items: The sales tax rate for your area and whether or not you want to enter the labour hourly rate on the Maintenance Data Entry screen.

If you do not need to track sales tax, just enter zero for this. Otherwise, enter your sales tax rate as a percentage (i.e., 7.50 for 7.5%).

When you are entering service information for a vehicle you are asked to indicate the mechanic or place of service which, in turn, indicates the hourly rate for labour. If you wish you can enter the labour rate on the service data entry screen, which allows you to over-ride the rate set for the mechanic or place of service. This can be handy if you don't want to track mechanics, only the service done. In this case you could set up a single mechanic and enter the hourly rate as it pertains to each incident of service.

### **HELP**

The Help menu contains information screens and print-outs. This menu is divided into three sections:

1. The on-line manual (Index)
2. Information about how WVH is running on your computer
3. Registration, site license, and update order forms

Choosing the **Index** option will bring up the table of contents for WVH's help system. You may then use the arrow keys or a mouse to highlight a choice and press ENTER (or click the mouse button) to view the information on the screen. The help index contains mostly the same information which is displayed when you press the F1 (Help) key on data entry screens, plus there is additional information which is only available from this menu.

The **About** option gives you the current version number, copyright information, and my address & phone number.

The **Files & Memory** option tells you how about your computer's free memory (RAM and disk space) and shows statistics about the opened mail list file (if any), group file, abbreviation file, and zip/postal code file.

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The lower three options print various order forms. **Order Form** prints an order form for registering WVH. **Site License** prints a site license form which shows discounted pricing if you wish to use more than one copy of WVH at a single location. **Update/Sampler Form** prints a form to use when you want to order an update disk to the latest version of WVH - you need **not** be registered to order an update disk. If you have a version of WVH which is several months old please feel free to order the latest version for evaluation.

## **ERROR MESSAGES**

WVH tries to handle most problems without any attention from you, however, there are times when an error happens which WVH is unable to handle. There are three types of errors which you may experience:

1. Condition error - this is a problem due to an operating condition. Examples of this type of error are if a printer is off-line when you try to print or a file is locked by another user on a network. If the condition is detectable, WVH will report it in a window and, once you press ENTER or click the "Ok" button, WVH will continue operating.

2. File error - these problems cause an error screen to appear which suggests a possible solution to the problem and, if you can't fix it, my address and phone number is shown so you can contact me. Common reasons for this type of error are that an index file contains a bad entry (perhaps due to a power outage) or the disk in use contains an error. The most common solution to these problems is to re-index your files (**File/re-Index**). If that doesn't work, see the section below on disk problems.

3. Programme error - this is a mistake of mine and will cause the programme to abruptly end with a one-line error message and a message like "Press any key to return to system." Report these errors to me right away, please. Just like other large software packages, WML contains hundreds of thousands of instructions and the bigger it gets the more likely it is that a "bug" will creep in there somewhere. These errors get top priority and are usually fixed and a new version released within a day.

All large software packages have "bugs" which are errors in the programming logic. For example, many Windows users experience "General Protection Fault" messages which are caused by bugs in Windows and/or other software which was running. As WML goes through its evolution, bugs are removed; as new features are added new bugs sometimes find their way



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into the software. It is very helpful when someone informs me of a problem they found.

The following sections describe some common errors and procedures to correct them.

### **EMS Memory Error**

I have discovered a problem on a Packard Bell computer which results in WML refusing to run, giving the error message, "Not enough EMS to load overlays." This error is generated by the programming language, not by WML itself, which has left me unable to determine its cause. I saw the error happen with 250kb of free EMS memory and 0kb free XMS memory.

My best guess is that since there is **some** free EMS memory the overlay manager tries to load portions of WML into EMS, but since there is not enough memory it fails and is unable to revert back to operating without EMS memory.

There are three ways around this problem:

1. Remove the EMM386 line in your CONFIG.SYS file or change the "RAM" key word to "NOEMS". Either of these actions will remove EMS memory support from your computer. If there is other software in your computer which requires EMS to run this will not be a practical solution for you.

2. Change the EMM386 line to have either more or less memory, re-boot your computer, and try to run WML again. Experiment to find the memory setting which works for WML and also allows your other software to operate properly.

3. Change the memory settings for software which uses EMS, such as SMARTDRV, so that there is either more or less EMS memory available.

### **Text overlaps on reports**

This problem is caused by choosing a font which is too large for the report layout - WVH has no way to detect this situation. To resolve the problem go to the Preferences/Printers screen and change the font to a smaller (lower) point size or a more dense (higher) character pitch.

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## **Information is Missing - Correcting Disk Problems**

I place great emphasis on keeping data safe and know of no case where WML has lost data, however, problems with DOS or computer equipment may cause data to be lost in rare circumstances.

If any of your data seems to be missing exit to DOS and type "CHKDSK C: /F" (without the quotation marks; replace "C:" with another drive, if appropriate).

**MS-DOS 6.2 users:** Use the command "SCANDISK C:" since it performs a more thorough test.

Either CHKDSK or SCANDISK will check that the recorded location of each file is valid. The SCANDISK utility can also perform a surface scan which tests the entire disk to be sure all areas of it are usable.

If CHKDSK or SCANDISK find any errors they will be reported to you and you will be asked for input on correcting the errors. CHKDSK only knows how to clear any errors and turn "orphan" data into new files. By "orphan" data I mean data which is on your hard disk but for which DOS has lost the information about the file to which it belongs. Normally this data is not usable or requires tremendous effort to make it usable again. I suggest you do **not** create files from this data unless you have lost a tremendous amount of data which would be very difficult to re-enter or the data is irreplaceable. Beyond this point you will require the help of someone who knows how to recover damaged files. Contact me if you cannot find a local consultant to perform this service for you.

SCANDISK is able to identify bad sections of your disk and attempt to move data to safe areas. If the area is badly damaged the attempt to move data may not be entirely successful. If SCANDISK tells you it has found problems on your disk I suggest you let it fix them. If your data is irreplaceable or would take a tremendous amount of effort to re-enter, then I recommend that you get the help of a consultant. At the very least make a complete back-up copy of your data files (or the entire hard disk) so that you can attempt to restore information in case files are so badly damaged that information becomes lost.

In most cases you will find that no data is missing and all you need to do is re-index your files for the "missing" entries to re-appear. To re-build the index files just select the Re-index option on the File menu.

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## **FILES WHICH MAKE UP THE PACKAGE**

The unregistered Shareware Edition of *What Vehicle History?* is made up of the following files:

FILE_ID.DIZ	* Description file for BBSs
DESC.SDI	* Description file for BBSs
WVH.EXE	What Vehicle History? programme
WVH.HLP	Help file
WVH.MSG	Screen message file
WML.MIX	Screen message file index
WML.HX0 & HX1	Help file indices
WVH.SCN	Screen field definitions file
WVH.TXT	* Documentation in ASCII - TYPE WVH.TXT > PRN to print it
WVH.WP	* Documentation in WordPerfect 5 format
FKEY.LST	Function key definitions file
PRINTER.DAT	Printer definitions file
ORDER.FRM	Order form for WVH and other software
VENDOR.DOC	* Information concerning the distribution of this software
SYSOP.DOC	* Information for bulletin board sysops
READ.ME	* Latest information

If you distribute evaluation copies to friends and bulletin boards please be sure to include all of these files (additional files will be created by WVH which contain your data and should **not** be distributed unless you intend to share your data files). Files marked with an asterisk (\*) are not required to run WVH so they may be erased if disk space is a premium (such as if you are using WVH on a floppy disk system).

The **Registered Edition** contains a registration key which is contained in the file CONFIG.WVH. If you share WVH with friends and BBSs, please **ERASE** this file from the copies you share:

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