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Training-Aide for Branch Asset Checking

This is a training aide and as such does not replace any Operational Instructions.
It is issued to provide awareness of some of the reports available on the Horizon-Online system ONLY, Horizon-Online Help should be the first reference point if you are looking for support.

Post Office Ltd use a computer system referred to as Horizon On-Line (abbreviated to **HOL**). This simple training-aide is to assist Operator's or SubPostmasters, to make basic checks of the Post Office assets being held at their branch.
This aide and the HOL paths are correct at 24th April 2014, but they may change as the HOL system evolves.

This aide will assist you in navigating the HOL system to perform the following actions:

Basic Areas

- How to log on to the HOL system.
- How to attach yourself to a counter stock.
- How to obtain an office snapshot & which bits concern you.
- How to check the number of stocks in the office.
- How to check that the transfers between stocks have been accepted.
- How to check the Suspense Account.
- How to check Spoilt Postage Labels.
- The Short Route.
- How to ask for help.

Appendix A – Illustrations
Appendix B – Cash Sheet
Appendix C - Other Areas

- Detailed Cash Declaration Summary
- Existing Reversals
- Reversal Refunds
- Stock Adjustments

To log on to HOL, you should enter your User ID and Password.

User ID: _ _ _ _ _ _ & Password

Never Write down or Reveal YOUR Password to anyone else as you are responsible for all actions undertaken on HOL with your User ID.

If you are having difficulty logging on to the system, call the IT Helpdesk on GRO.

You will be asked for your seven digit branch code: _ _ _ _ _ _ _

And branch name: _____

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To Log on:-

- Switch the HOL screen ON.
- Touch the screen once.
- Read the statement and Press **Enter** to confirm your understanding.
- Enter your **User ID**
- Press **TAB**
- Enter your **Password**
- Press **Enter**

You are now logged on to HOL but you will need to attach your user ID to a "Stock" so you can access the reports.

Follow these instructions in order to,
Attach your User ID to a Stock unit:-

F14 Back Office
F2 Admin
23 Attach User
Pick your User ID from the list (highlight yellow)
Press **Enter**
Pick the stock you want to attach to (eg: AA)
Press **Enter**

The system will confirm that you are attached to that stock unit:
Press **Enter**

If you check the line along the bottom of the HOL screen it should show you User ID, and the Stock you are attached to (Appendix A, Fig 4).
You are now in a possition to check the various reports.

What you are checking:

- Cash held at the Branch is equal to the Office Snapshot.
- *Checking Cheques listed on the snapshot are present.
- Stock holdings are not excessive.
- No outstanding Transfers between stocks (if more than 1 stock unit).
- Suspense Account doesn't contain large values for long periods.
- Spoilt Postage Labels are present & not excessive.

*NOTE – cheques should be despatched daily so the date on any cheque held by the branch should not be more than one day old; always take in to account that some people fill their cheques out before attending the branch, but in those cases there should be recent evidence of the transaction the cheque was used for.

An Office Snapshot

An Office Snapshot gives a complete overview of the Post Office assets held at a branch. The top portion gives information on the level of:

- Cash
- Cheques
- Foreign Currency
- Postage stamps (1p to maximum current loose stamp value)

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The bottom of this report shows the volume amounts of other stock held by the branch (e.g. 1st & 2nd Class stamps / stamp books & MVL licence discs etc).
This report can be quite long (several feet on some cases) but you only need to check the top 6 inches (App. A Fig 1); and the bottom 6 inches (App. A Fig 2); along with a small area for "RM SPOILT LABELS" in the "Payments" section near the stock volumes portion of the report (App. A Fig 3).

F14 Back Office
F4 Office Balancing
26 Office Snapshot
32 Print
This report will print on the counter printer.

You need to check how many stock units your branch has in order to confirm all transfers between stocks have been accepted & where the cash is being held for checking purposes.

F14 Back Office
F2 Admin
24 View Stock Units
Make a note of the stocks in the office on a piece of paper.

Transfer Reconciliation

If your branch is only showing 1 stock unit continue to the next section on the Suspense Account.
If your branch has more than 1 stock unit, you will need to confirm that all the transfers between stocks have been accepted:

F14 Back Office
F1 Reports
F3 Office Weekly
56 Transfer Reconciliation
32 Print
This will print on the Back Office Printer – occasionally this can be 10+ pages long.

Now you have this report, all you are checking is that all the totals are equal to zero (Appendix A, Fig 5). If any are not zero, this signifies that transfers need to be accepted.
Attach yourself to that stock and accept the transfer.

Accept all transfers between stock units and then **REPRINT** the Office Snapshot.

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The Suspense Account

The Local Suspense Account is where local losses & gains are stored during the Branch Trading Periods. It is also where Remittance shortages & gains are held until they are settled with a Transaction Correction (TC) or cleared locally after a Branch Trading Statement.

The Suspense Account will normally be clear (zero value in the right hand column).
Occasionally there may be items listed, in this case the value column on the right hand side only shows the value of the items still present in the branch:
e.g. a Rem pouch awaiting collection will show as a value in the right hand column (Appendix A. Fig 6).
e.g. a Rem pouch that has been collected may still be showing until cleared by the system - but the value in the right hand column will be zero (Appendix A. Fig 7).

Items that are not zero should have an explanation why they are there.
Any issues around this or just for more information, call the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) on GRO.

F14 Back Office
F1 Reports
F3 Office Weekly
54 Suspense Account
32 Print
This will print on the Back Office Printer and should only be 1 page.

Using the Office Snapshot:

If you have followed all the instructions so far, you should now have the Office Snapshot and at the top of it, you should see a cash figure*; if you count all the Post Office cash in the branch, this should be the total you should be hoping to match. As good practice, use the cash sheet in Appendix B to check the cash.

Again referring to the Office Snapshot, you should also check the volumes of stock on the lower part of the snapshot to confirm that they are not too high (6 weeks of sales) and if there are large figures present, check the items physically to confirm they are held at the branch.

*If the branch has a Post Office cash filled ATM, it is important to include the “dispensed figure” as cash when checking the cash contained in the ATM - even though it is not present: this is because the ATM is dealt with daily at 16.30 and the cash reduces as withdrawals are made, but they are not accounted for by POL/ BOI until after 16.30 each day. This is the only exception where we count a cash figure that is not physically present.

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Last Cash Declaration (ONCH – Overnight Cash Holding)

This is good place to start if the cash you have counted doesn't equal the figure on the Office Snapshot. It is easy to count a bag of coin at the wrong value so check your figures against the last declaration and see if there is a difference in any particular denomination. You need to physically recount the cash (move coin bags even when they are stacked) to ensure an error is being carried over or compounded. Use **Appendix B** to list the branch cash.

Position of Cash Dec button shown in Appendix A Fig 4

F14 Back Office
42 Cash Declaration
Highlight the last cash declaration
Enter
Enter
32 Print: This will print the last cash declaration on the counter printer.

Note: if the stock is shown as "**Shared**" in the line along the bottom of the screen, there is a "Variance" button on the same screen as "print"- this will show the difference between the cash value of the system and the physically declared total.

choice whether to open & check them or not (best practice is to open all pouches):

- If you choose not to open the pouches then you need to make sure that you are present when they are collected by CiT and that all the bags are handed to the CiT collection officer.
- If the next collection is on a different day, you need to return to the branch to ensure that the pouches are despatched. You will need to take a note of the sealed bag numbers, as they are one-trip pouches and can't be resealed (it is the long number under the barcode) to ensure that the pouches you saw previously, are the ones that are despatched.
- If you decide to open the pouches they will need to be reversed out of the Horizon Online System as a new pouch and remittance will need to be prepared once you have verified the contents. Follow the instructions below.

Reversal of Pouches

F14 Back Office
F5 Rems & Transfers
42 Reverse
* Now follow the screen instructions and at some point you will be asked to "scan" the barcodes of the bag/bags. Settle & finish the reversal.

Reversing pouches will increase the cash/ stock holding of the office and it is advisable to start the whole checking process again, starting with a new Office Snapshot.

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Spoilt Postage Labels

Spoiling postage labels is a common everyday occurrence, but if they are not accounted for correctly (or stored for the correct amount of time) amounts appearing on the Office Snapshot can be discounted at an audit and the liability falls to the branch to make good that amount.

Spoilt postage labels are labels that HOL has been told have printed correctly. The cost has been added to the sales stack but the postage label has not been used. The branch needs a refund for the value of this postage label and it can only be removed from the transaction stack by finishing the transaction (as if the postage label has been paid for). The correct process should be followed to claim back the cost of spoilt postage labels so they don't become a loss against the branch.

F14 Back Office
F1 Reports
F3 Office Weekly
46 Postage Labels
32 Print
This report prints off the back office printer and should be done weekly or/and at every Trading Period Balance.

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The Short Route

Ask the Officer in Charge of the branch to print:

- Last nights Cash Declaration
- Office Snapshot
- *Transfer Reconciliation
- Suspense Account
- Spoilt Postage Label reconciliation

*only if more than 1 stock-
Ask to be shown via “view”, the office stock unit list from the “Admin” screen.

Following the instructions relating to each of the reports above, count all the cash held at the branch using the sheet contained in Appendix B and compare it to the cash figure held on the Office Snapshot.

This is probably best done before the branch opens or just before it closes.

If you are confused or feel there may be issues or have any concerns, at any point:-

Call the
Network Business Support Centre
on
GRO

Ask for help around branch accounting explaining who you are, the level of your knowledge and all your concerns.

Make a note of the reference number the NBSC gives you.

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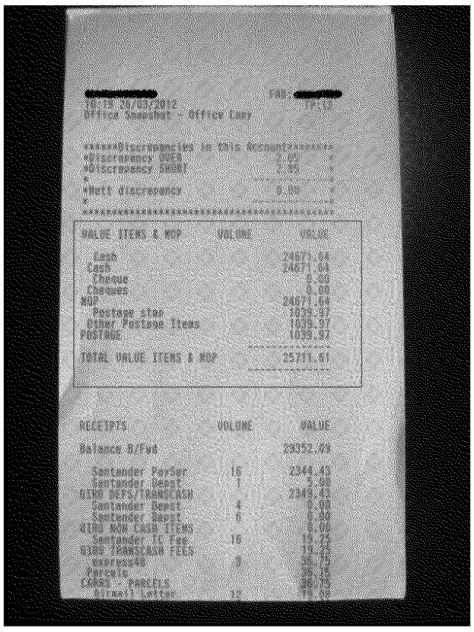
Appendix A

Fig 1 Office Snapshot.

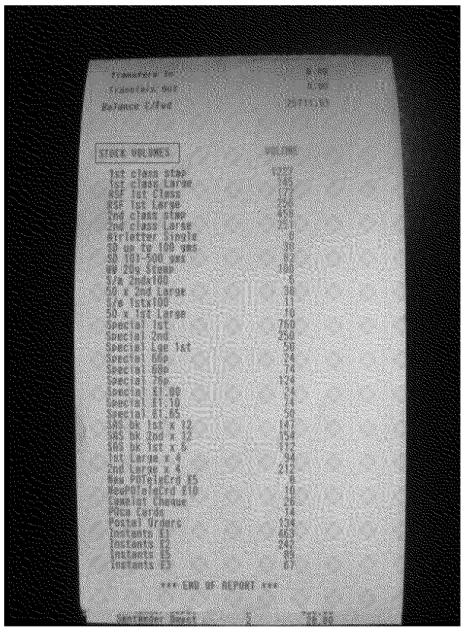


Office Snapshot - Office Copy

VALUE ITEMS & MOP	VOLUME	VALUE
Cash		24671.64
Cash		24671.64
Cheque		0.00
Cheques		0.00
MOP		24671.64
Postage stmp		1039.97
Other Postage Items		1039.97
POSTAGE		1039.97
TOTAL VALUE ITEMS & MOP		25711.61

RECEIPTS	VOLUME	VALUE
Balance B/Fwd		23352.09
Santander PaySer	16	2344.43
Santander Deost	1	5.00
GIRO DEPS/TRANSCASH		2349.43
Santander Deost	4	0.00
Santander Deost	6	0.00
GIRO NON CASH ITEMS		0.00
Santander TC Fee	16	19.75
GIRO TRANSCASH FEES		19.75
Express48	3	56.75
Parcels		56.75
CASH - PARCELS		56.75
Airmail Letter	12	[illegible]

Fig 2



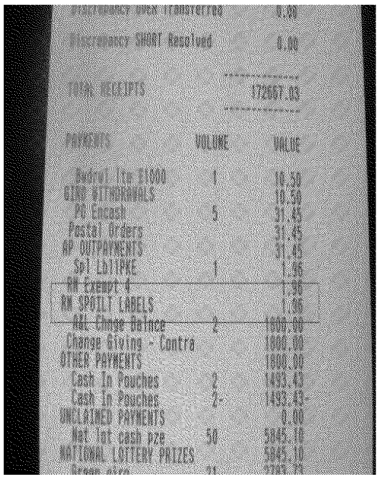
Transfers In 0.00
Transfers Out 0.00
Balance C/Fwd 25711.61

STOCK VOLUMES	VOLUME
1st class stmp	1227
1st class Large	145
85P 1st Class	177
85P 1st Large	25
2nd class stmp	450
2nd class Large	351
81letter Single	0
50 up to 100 gms	30
50 101-500 gms	32
99 20g Stamp	190
S/W 2ndx100	6
50 x 2nd Large	38
S/W 1stx100	11
50 x 1st Large	10
Special 1st	750
Special 2nd	250
Special Lge 1st	50
Special 60p	74
Special 88p	74
Special 76p	124
Special £1.00	24
Special £1.12	74
Special £1.65	50
SAS bk 1st x 12	147
SAS bk 2nd x 12	154
SAS bk 1st x 6	172
1st Large x 4	94
2nd Large x 4	212
New PoTeleCrd £5	8
NewPoTeleCrd £10	10
Lowplus Cheque	26
PO1a Cards	14
Postal Orders	134
Instants £1	463
Instants £2	247
Instants £5	49
Instants £3	67

*** END OF REPORT ***

Santander Deost 2 28.00

Fig 3



Discrepancy SHORT Resolved 0.00

TOTAL RECEIPTS 172667.03

PAYMENTS	VOLUME	VALUE
Bwdrwl ltn £1000	1	10.50
GIRO WITHDRAWALS		10.50
PO Encash	5	31.45
Postal Orders		31.45
AP OUTPAYMENTS		31.45
Spl LbllPKE	1	1.96
RM Exempt 4		1.96
RM SPOILT LABELS		1.96
ABL Change Balnce	2	1800.00
Change Giving - Contra		1800.00
OTHER PAYMENTS		1800.00
Cash In Pouches	2	1493.43
Cash In Pouches	2-	1493.43-
UNCLAIMED PAYMENTS		0.00
Net tot cash pze	50	5845.10
NATIONAL LOTTERY PRIZES		5845.10

Fig 4 – Back Office View

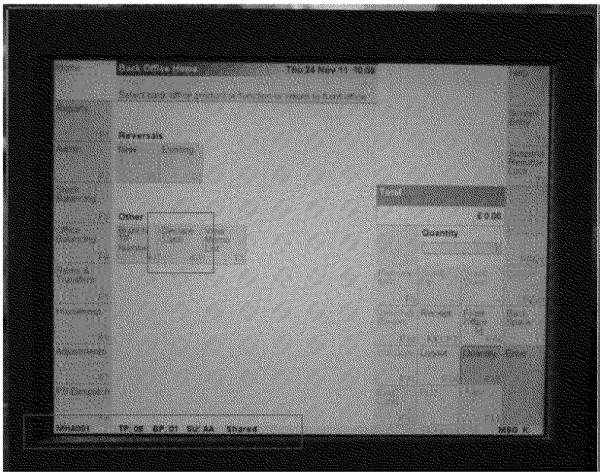


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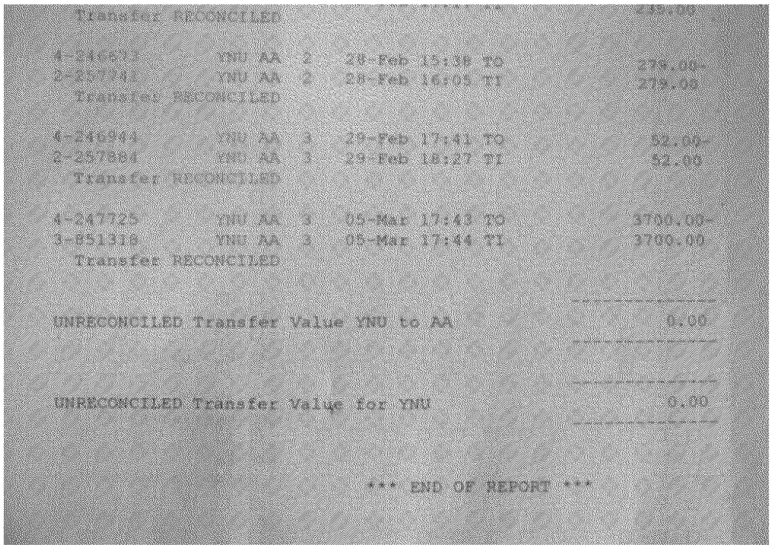
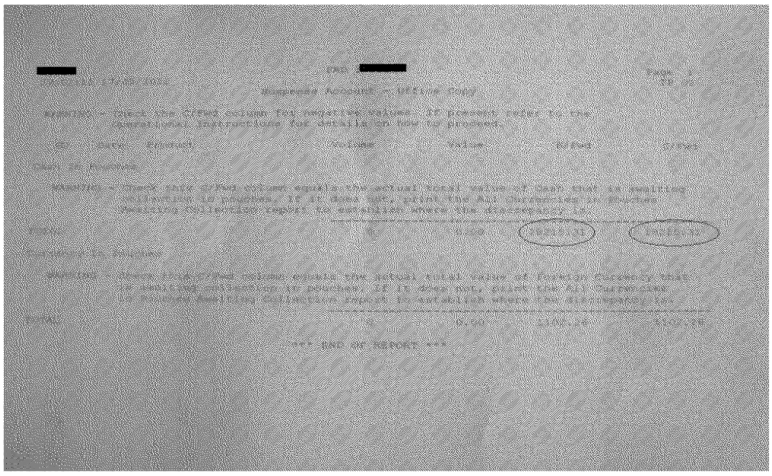
Fig 5



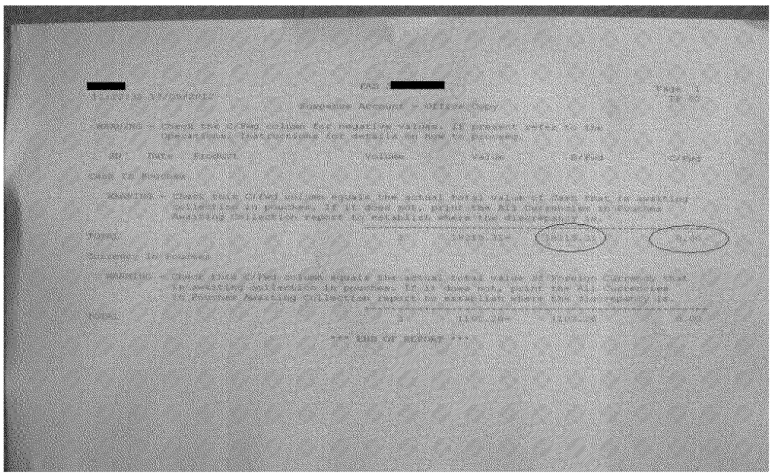
```
  Transfer RECONCILED                                                  279.00

4-246833        YNU AA  2   28-Feb 15:38 TO                          279.00-
2-257741        YNU AA  2   28-Feb 16:05 TI                          279.00
  Transfer RECONCILED

4-246944        YNU AA  3   29-Feb 17:41 TO                           52.00-
2-257884        YNU AA  3   29-Feb 18:27 TI                           52.00
  Transfer RECONCILED

4-247725        YNU AA  3   05-Mar 17:43 TO                         3700.00-
3-851318        YNU AA  3   05-Mar 17:44 TI                         3700.00
  Transfer RECONCILED

                                                              ---------------
UNRECONCILED Transfer Value YNU to AA                                   0.00
                                                              ---------------

                                                              ---------------
UNRECONCILED Transfer Value for YNU                                     0.00
                                                              ---------------

                          *** END OF REPORT ***
```

Fig 6



```
[redacted]                          [redacted]                                  Page 1
Monday 19/05/2003                                                               TP 06
                          Suspense Account - Office Copy

WARNING - Check the O/Fwd column for negative values. If present refer to the
          Operational Instructions for details on how to proceed.

  ID    Date    Product                Volume          Value          O/Fwd          C/Fwd

Cash To Account

  WARNING - Check this O/Fwd column equals the actual total value of Cash that is awaiting
            collection to vouchers. If it does not, print the All Currencies
            Awaiting Collection report to establish where the discrepancy is.
                                                   ---------------------------------------
TOTAL                                   0.00          19215.31        19215.31

Currency To Vouchers

  WARNING - Check this O/Fwd column equals the actual total value of Foreign Currency that
            is awaiting collection to vouchers. If it does not, print the All Currencies
            To Vouchers Awaiting Collection report to establish where the discrepancy is.
                                                   ---------------------------------------
TOTAL                                   0.00           1102.26         1102.26

                          *** END OF REPORT ***
```

Fig 7



```
[redacted]                          [redacted]                                  Page 1
Tuesday 13/04/2004                                                              TP 06
                          Suspense Account - Office Copy

WARNING - Check the O/Fwd column for negative values. If present refer to the
          Operational Instructions for details on how to proceed.

  ID    Date    Product                Volume          Value          O/Fwd          C/Fwd

Cash To Account

  WARNING - Check this O/Fwd column equals the actual total value of Cash that is awaiting
            collection to vouchers. If it does not, print the All Currencies To Vouchers
            Awaiting Collection report to establish where the discrepancy is.
                                                   ---------------------------------------
TOTAL                                   0.00          [illegible]        [illegible]

Currency To Vouchers

  WARNING - Check this O/Fwd column equals the actual total value of Foreign Currency that
            is awaiting collection to vouchers. If it does not, print the All Currencies
            To Vouchers Awaiting Collection report to establish where the discrepancy is.
                                                   ---------------------------------------
TOTAL                                   0.00           1102.26         1102.26            0.00

                          *** END OF REPORT ***
```

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Appendix B

Cash Check Sheet.

DATE: **STOCK UNIT (S):**

£100	£50	£20	£10	£5	£2 coin	£1 coin

50p		20p		10p		5p		2p		1p		Unusable		Lottery	

ATM Dispensed Total

Add this total as if the cash is present.

CASH DISCREPANCIES

Cheques on hand		Service		Stock Unit	Cash on balance snapshot		Cash counted		Difference (+ or -)	

Appendix C –

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Other Areas….

We are now going to briefly explore some further areas where reports may give clues that you need some further assistance. These reports can be checked and may make the picture clearer BUT they must be looked at in an impartial manner, unless you are sure that you understand what you are reading.

We are going to briefly look at 4 reports:

- Detailed Cash Declaration Summary
- Existing Reversals
- Reversal/ Refund
- Stock Adjustments

The same rule applies when viewing these reports as it does to all the reports so far; if you are confused by figures on the reports you are to ask the staff members for an explanation or call the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) on GRO (as detailed on Page 1 and Page 8 of this guide); or both options.

Detailed Cash Declaration Summary

Each time a cash declaration is made on the HOL system, the system records the value of cash entered and the difference between what the HOL system calculates it should have and what has been declared as physically present within the branch.
To access this report follow the path below – it is recommended that the range starting date should be around 7 to 10 days previous as this can be a lengthy report (depending on how many stocks the office has and how many declarations have been made).

F14 Back Office
F1 Reports
F5 Event Log
73 Balancing
Date From & Date To
42 Print
This will print on the Counter Printer.

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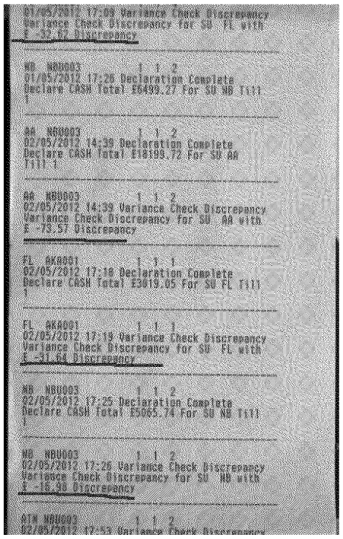
01/05/2012 17:09 Variance Check Discrepancy
Variance Check Discrepancy for SU FL with
£ -32.62 Discrepancy

NB NBU003 1 1 2
01/05/2012 17:26 Declaration Complete
Declare CASH Total £6499.27 For SU NB Till
1

AA NBU003 1 1 2
02/05/2012 14:39 Declaration Complete
Declare CASH Total £18199.72 For SU AA
Till 1

AA NBU003 1 1 2
02/05/2012 14:39 Variance Check Discrepancy
Variance Check Discrepancy for SU AA with
£ -75.57 Discrepancy

FL AKA001 1 1 1
02/05/2012 17:18 Declaration Complete
Declare CASH Total £3019.05 For SU FL Till
1

FL AKA001 1 1 1
02/05/2012 17:19 Variance Check Discrepancy
Variance Check Discrepancy for SU FL with
£ -31.64 Discrepancy

NB NBU003 1 2
02/05/2012 17:25 Declaration Complete
Declare CASH Total £5065.74 For SU NB Till
1

NB NBU003 1 1 2
02/05/2012 17:26 Variance Check Discrepancy
Variance Check Discrepancy for SU NB with
£ -16.98 Discrepancy

ATM NBU003 1 1 2
02/05/2012 17:53 Variance Check Discrepancy

As you can see from the picture, there are 9 HOL entries shown and 7 of them are for the same day (02/05/2012).
Some of the entries show a variance between what the system should have and the actual cash declared as present – this is because the branch has it's stock units set up as "shared" (multi user rather than "individual") – with shared units any variance is only calculated if you press the button in the declaration screen to check the variation – it is at that point the system records the variation.

Large variations can just be a simple counting error (e.g. someone counts a bundle of £10,000 of £20 notes as £5000 – this is easily done OR there are 7 bags of 500 of £1 coins +£3500 but only 6 have been seen and counter).

If you have counted the cash as detailed earlier in this aide, you should have a clear picture of how much cash is within your branch; if there is a difference, the question is does a figure close to that difference appear on this report? Regardless of the answer to that question, if the cash you have counter does not match the HOL system, you are responsible.

If you feel that you need help or if you are confused by figures on the reports you are to ask the staff members for an explanation or call the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) on GRO (as detailed on Page 1 and Page 8 of this guide); or both options.

The next 3 reports:

- Existing Reversals
- Reversal/ Refund
- Stock Adjustments

can be printed at the same time as once you have entered the path for the first one and it has finished printed, it is a case of using the "back" button, entering "Mode" again and highlighting the next report you want to print (Then - Enter, Enter, Print).

F14 Back Office
F1 Reports
52 Transaction Log
54 Mode
41 ER *or /then* Type R for: **RV (31)** *or/then* **SA (41)**
Highlight, then **ENTER**

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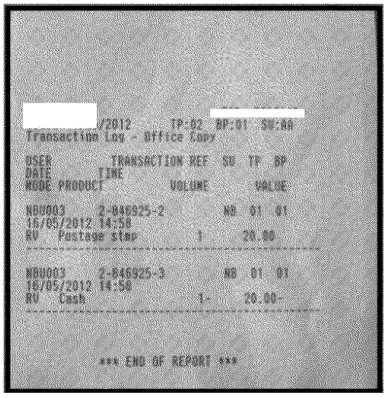
Reversal Refunds


[redacted]/2012 TP:02 BP:01 SW:AA
Transaction Log - Office Copy

USER TRANSACTION REF SU TP BP
DATE TIME
MODE PRODUCT VOLUME VALUE

NBU003 2-846925-2 NB 01 01
16/05/2012 14:58
RV Postage stmp 1 20.00

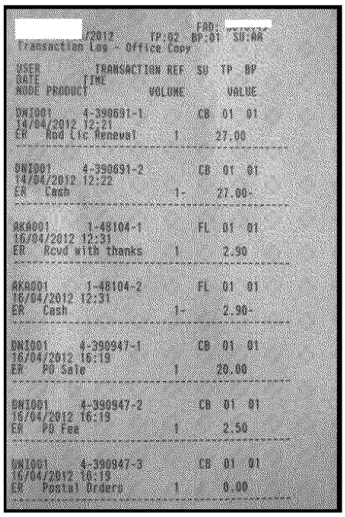
NBU003 2-846925-3 NB 01 01
16/05/2012 14:58
RV Cash 1- 20.00-

*** END OF REPORT ***

This is a simple report that shows reversals in the current branch balance period (BP). It can be any length so again a recommended date-range is 7 to 10 days.
Each entry should have 2 parts –

- the reversal (*the in* – returned to the system)
- the refund (*the out* shown by "-")

Existing Reversals


[redacted] FAD: [redacted]
[redacted]/2012 TP:02 BP:01 SU:AA
Transaction Log - Office Copy

USER TRANSACTION REF SU TP BP
DATE TIME
MODE PRODUCT VOLUME VALUE

DNI001 4-390691-1 CB 01 01
14/04/2012 12:21
ER Rod Lic Renewal 1 27.00

DNI001 4-390691-2 CB 01 01
14/04/2012 12:22
ER Cash 1- 27.00-

AKA001 1-48104-1 FL 01 01
16/04/2012 12:31
ER Rcvd with thanks 1 2.90

AKA001 1-48104-2 FL 01 01
16/04/2012 12:31
ER Cash 1- 2.90-

DNI001 4-390947-1 CB 01 01
16/04/2012 16:19
ER PO Sale 1 20.00

DNI001 4-390947-2 CB 01 01
16/04/2012 16:19
ER PO Fee 1 2.50

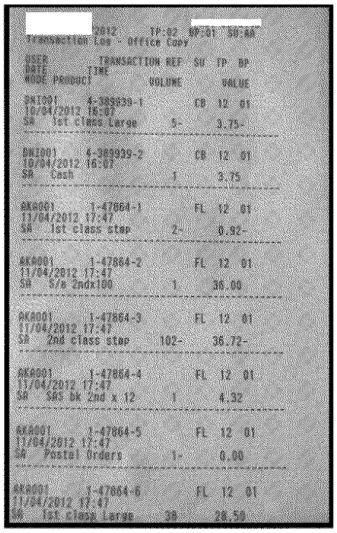
DNI001 4-390947-3 CB 01 01
16/04/2012 16:19
ER Postal Orders 1 0.00

During every day working, it is easy to make mistakes, be it a settle to fast-cash instead of cheque or selling a large first class stamp on the screen when you meant to push standard first class – nobody is perfect.
This report just shows you those reversals in a similar fashion to the previous report.

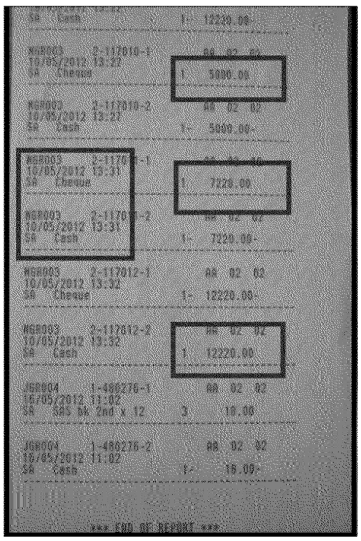
POL00087716

Training-Aide for Branch Asset Checking

Stock Adjustments



This report shows if any "Stock Adjustments" have been made. For instance, when you are balancing and you realise that you have sold second class stamps through HOL but at the time you recorded the sale as loose stamps, as opposed to a self adhesive sheet of stamps – when you count your stamps, you are 100 loose second class more than the system says but you are 1 sheet of 100 second class self adhesive less than the system says….. you will need to adjust the stock accordingly so that what is actually present is recorded correctly. This can be described as a "corresponding error" as there is no loss or gain once corrected.



Don't Panic!
I have added this example to demonstrate that some errors can look very big when if fact they are easily explained.
In this instance, Post Office Financial service had been settled incorrectly. The correction was made and the branch balanced.
Seeing large amounts doesn't always mean there is a problem and asking for an explanation and seeking out the other parts of the transaction may help you see things in a different light.

Again though, I stress that if you feel that you need help or if you are confused by figures on the reports you are to ask the staff members for an explanation or call the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) on GRO (as detailed on Page 1 and Page 8 of this guide); or both options.

This is a training aide designed to support more understanding of the reports that can be printed by HOL; it is not a definitive guide & does not replace any official material.