

Tabs3 Quick Start Guide



Tabs3 Billing



PracticeMaster



Trust Accounting



Accounts Payable



General Ledger

Tabs3 Quick Start Guide

Copyright © 2017-2025


Software Technology, LLC

1621 Cushman Drive

Lincoln, NE 68512

(402) 423-1440

Tabs3.com

Tabs3, PracticeMaster, Tabs3Pay, and the “pinwheel” symbol () are registered trademarks of Software Technology, LLC.

Version 2025 (Friday, March 7, 2025)

Tabs3 Billing Getting Started Guide

Congratulations! You've made the decision to work with Tabs3 Billing. Now, let us show you how to get started and where to go when you need more information.

Table of Contents

Before You Start	3
Installation	3
Starting Tabs3 Billing	3
Setting Up Tabs3 Software	4
Step 1 – Configure Tabs3 Billing	4
Step 2 – Add Timekeepers & Rates	5
Using Tabs3 Billing	6
Step 3 – Add Clients	6
Step 4 – Add Fees & Costs	7
Step 5 – Run Statements	9
Step 6 – Update Statements	11
Step 7 – Print Accounts Receivable Report	12
Step 8 – Enter Payments	12
Step 9 – Matter Manager	13
Resources	13

Before You Start

Before you can get started, you need to install Tabs3 Billing.

Installation

If you have not yet installed Tabs3 Billing, it's easy to do. Follow the instructions provided in the Pre-Install Guide and Post-Install Guide. These installation guides can be accessed at [Tabs3.com/docs](https://www.tabs3.com/docs).

Tip: During the installation of the software, you will be asked if you want to install the Starter Data. We recommend installing Starter Data for a faster start. Starter data includes transaction codes, statement templates, categories, and more.

More Info – Installation

Training Video

- [Tabs3 Billing Basics](https://www.tabs3.com/docs)

Tabs3 Software Pre-Install Guide

Tabs3 Software Post-Install Guide

- [Tabs3.com/docs](https://www.tabs3.com/docs)

Starting Tabs3 Billing

1. From the Windows desktop, double-click the **Tabs3** icon.
2. The Getting Started wizard will be displayed, allowing you to configure the Tabs3 Software.

Setting Up Tabs3 Software

The Guided Setup will walk you through configuring the Tabs3 Software after first installing the Tabs3 Software or when adding licenses of new programs.

When first installing the Tabs3 Software, you will be prompted to enter details about the firm and your user information, which will be used to configure your login account. Depending on the software being installed, you will also be prompted to determine the Decimal Places for your Key Type (by how many matters you have for your clients), configure bank information, and create a timekeeper.

After completing the Guided Setup, you will automatically be logged in using the information you provided, and the Tabs3 Software will be ready to use.

You can set up users in System Configuration, additional timekeepers in Tabs3 Billing, and customize your configuration options after the Guided Setup is complete.

Step 1 – Configure Tabs3 Billing

After initial configuration, the defaults for Tabs3 Billing Customization are configured. However, additional settings can be specified. The Customization window consists of several tabs.

► Configuring the Tabs3 Billing Customization Window

1. From the Quick Launch, search for and select “Customization.”
2. On the **Main** tab:
 - a. Note that the **Key Type** is set to Numeric and the **Decimal Places** are configured based on your choice during the Guided Setup wizard. For additional information and steps for adjusting these options, see Knowledge Base article [R11049](#), “Changing the Key Type or Decimal Places.”
 - b. Specify the **First Month of Reporting Year** field. Most firms use January, but some firms’ fiscal year starts with a different month. *(Note: This month is different than the current reporting month.)*
3. On the **Options** tab:
 - a. Specify whether you want statements numbered at the firm or client level in the **Statement Numbering** field. *(Note: We recommend numbering at the firm level so you can easily search by statement number when entering payments.)*
4. On the **Rates** tab:
 - a. If your state requires you to charge sales tax on services, expenses, or advances, select the corresponding check box and enter the tax rate in the **Rate 1** field.
 - b. If you want to charge finance charge on past due balances, select the corresponding check boxes and enter the annual rate in the **Rate 1** field (e.g., enter 12.00 if you charge an annual finance charge of 12% per year).

More Info - Customization

Help Topics


- **Press F1 in the Customization window**
- **Click the Index tab and type “Client ID”**

Training Video

- [Tabs3 Billing Customization Settings](#)

The Tabs3 Software Administrator Guide


- [Tabs3.com/docs](#)

5. On the **Client Defaults** tab:
 - a. Specify the defaults that will be used when adding a new client.
 - b. If assessing sales tax, in the **Sales Tax** section, select the default sales tax rate.
 - c. If assessing finance charge, select the **Assess Finance Charge** check box, the **Rate**, and the number of **Days** past due before the finance charge will be assessed.
6. Click  to save the changes, and then close Customization.

Note: If the Customization window was previously saved, the window will not be opened automatically. Once Customization is saved, the **Key Type** and **Decimal Places** fields will be dimmed and must be changed using the **Change Key Type** program.

Entering Firm Information for Statements & Reporting Purposes

Use System Configuration to enter your firm's name for reporting purposes. System Configuration includes configuration for Tabs3 Billing, PracticeMaster, and Tabs3 Financials. Your firm's name and address information can also be used for statements.

1. Start Tabs3 Billing.
2. From the Application Toolbar, click the **System Configuration** toolbar button as shown in the image on the right.
3. The System Configuration window will be opened. From the **File** menu, point to **Open** and select **Firm**.
4. Enter your Firm's name and other information.
5. Click  to save the changes.
6. Close the System Configuration window.



Tip: System Configuration is also used to create user accounts and define privileges for individual users who will be using the software.

Tip: Refer to the Statement Formatting Guide for more information on customizing statements.

More Info - Firm Information

Help Topics - Press F1 in the Firm Information window


The Tabs3 Software Administrator Guide

- Tabs3.com/docs

Step 2 – Add Timekeepers & Rates

Next, you need to set up timekeepers. Timekeepers are the individuals in your office whose time is billed to clients.

► To add timekeepers

1. In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Timekeeper Information."
2. On the **Timekeeper** tab:
 - a. Press *Ctrl+N* to add a new timekeeper number.
Tip: Most firms use "1" for the senior partner.
 - b. Select the **User** who will be tracking time.
 - If the user has not yet been created, click the **Add User** link.
 - Once specified, the contact name and initials are shown.
 - c. Click the drop-down arrow in the **Level** field to select the timekeeper level.
Tip: Additional levels can be defined via the **Misc Desc** tab.
3. In the Rates section:
 - a. Enter the timekeeper's default hourly billing rate in the **Rate 1** field.
 - b. You can use **Rate 2** for a premium rate, discounted rate, court rate, etc. However, it is best to use **Rate 2** consistently for all timekeepers. For example, if **Rate 2** is the court rate, make sure Rate 2 is the court rate for all timekeepers. Enter any additional rates as desired.
4. Click  to save the changes.
5. Add additional timekeepers as needed by repeating steps 2 through 4.

More Info – Timekeepers & Rates

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Timekeeper window

Training Videos

- [Working with Timekeepers](#)
- [How Rates Work](#)

Billing Methods Guide – Hourly Billing

- [Tabs3.com/docs](https://www.tabs3.com/docs)

Tip: Custom billing rates can be set up at the client level. See the Billing Methods Guide for more information.

Note: The Administrator Guide and Client & Contacts Guide contain additional information about creating users, timekeepers, and contacts.



Using Tabs3 Billing

Once you've set up your timekeepers and rates, you're ready to add clients, fees, and costs, and then run statements.

Step 3 – Add Clients

Clients are added to Tabs3 Billing using the Client program. When you add a client, a contact record is created for the individual or organization. Contact records can also be used by other clients and matters.

► To add clients

1. From the Quick Launch, search for and select "Client Information."
2. On the **Address** tab:
 - a. Press *Ctrl+N* to add a new client.
 - i. The New Client Record window will be displayed. Select the desired option for the Client ID you want to use to identify the client.
 - ii. Click **OK**.
 - b. Enter the **Client Name** (e.g., Jones/Mary T. or United Insurance Company).
 - c. A Contact Information window will be displayed, allowing you to enter the address and phone information for the contact. Enter the desired information and click  to save the changes.
 - d. After saving the contact information, you are returned to the **Address** tab of the client file with the contact information already filled in.
3. On the **Setup** tab, specify the desired **Billing Category** and **Primary Timekeeper**.
4. On the **Billing Preferences** tab, under **Statement Delivery Options**, double-click the first record in the table. This is where you designate whether the client will receive a printed statement and/or an email statement.
5. Click **OK** to close the Bill To Record window and then click  to save the changes.

Tip: When entering information for a potential client, enter the information in a Contact record. Then, when the contact becomes a client, use the contact record to populate the client record. You can access the Contact file by clicking the **People** group on the **All Actions** tab group of the **Home** page and then clicking the **Contact Information** icon, or by entering "Contact" in the **Search Actions** field of the **Quick Launch** pane.

Step 4 – Add Fees & Costs

Fees and costs are entered using the Fee and Cost programs.

► To add fees

1. From the Quick Launch, search for and select "Fee Entry."
2. By default, the last accessed Client ID is used for the default. Select the desired client by doing one of the following:
 - Press *Enter* to accept the selected Client ID.
 - Enter a different Client ID.
 - Click the drop-down button to select a different client from the Client Lookup window.
3. Press *Enter* or *Tab* in the **Reference** field to add a new fee.
4. Select the desired **Timekeeper**.

More Info - Clients & Contacts

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Client or Contact window

Training Video

- [Getting Started with Clients](#)

Clients & Contacts Guide


- [Tabs3.com/docs](https://www.tabs3.com/docs)

More Info – Fees

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Fee window

Training Video

- [Working with Fees](#)

5. Enter the desired **Date**.
6. Click the drop-down button in the **Tcode** field to select the desired transaction code. Transaction codes represent a type of service or activity.
Tip: Tcodes are optional. If desired, use tcode 1 and enter your own description.
Tip: Right-click the **Tcode** field and select **Edit Transaction Code** to add or edit transaction codes.
7. Enter the **Hours Worked**. For example, 15 minutes would be entered as .25 hours.
8. After selecting the desired transaction code, the default description for that transaction code will be used in the **Description** field. Edit this field as desired.
Tip: Use transaction codes or text macros to create commonly used phrases or paragraphs to aid in faster data entry.
9. Click  to save the changes.



Detail vs. Rapid Entry Mode

The Fee Entry program has a detail mode and a rapid mode. The steps above use the fields in Rapid mode. Let's take a look at Detail mode.

- While in the Fee window, click the **Detail/Rapid**  button.

When in Detail mode, additional fields are shown above the **Description** including the **Hours to Bill**, **Rate**, and **Amount** fields. Furthermore, additional fields are shown below the **Description** field including **Category**, **Bill Code**, **Rate Code**, **Status**, **Sales Tax**, **User ID**, and **Date Entered**. When you are in Rapid mode, the text **Rapid Fee** is shown in the title bar.

Fee Entry List

You can see a list of fee transactions by using the **Toggle List**  button (or *Alt+G*). Notice that the transaction you saved is shown in the list. If you want to edit the transaction, simply double-click the entry to retrieve it in the data entry form. After making any changes, click  to save the changes.

Recap of Hours


The Recap of Hours window shows the cumulative billable and non-billable hours and amounts for the specified timekeeper on any given day. This makes it easy for timekeepers to see whether any time entries are missing.


More Info – Recap of Hours

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Recap of Hours window

Training Video

- [Using the Recap of Hours](#)

- In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Recap of Hours;" or
- While in the Fee program, click the **Recap of Hours**  button.

The first time you open the Recap of Hours window, you will be prompted to select the Timekeeper whose hours you want to view. You can select a different timekeeper by clicking the  icon.

Tip: In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Recap of Hours Report" to generated a printable report for any time period. This report shows a calendar with the number of billable and non-billable hours for each day by timekeeper.

Verification Lists


When you close the Fee program, you will be provided the opportunity to print a Verification List. Verification Lists are optional and include a list of the transactions that were entered, changed, or deleted during the session. Verification Lists are also available for the Cost and Payment data entry programs.

Working with Costs

In Tabs3 Billing, costs are classified as expenses or advances. Expenses are “soft” or “indirect” costs, whereas advances are “hard” or “direct” costs. Costs are classified differently for accounting and tax purposes. Examples of expenses include photocopy expenses, long distance, postage, etc. Examples of advances include filing fees, witness fees, medical costs, etc.

Tip: You can show expenses and advances separately on a statement, or you can combine them.

► To add costs



1. From the Quick Launch, search for and select “Cost Entry.”
2. Enter the desired Client ID.
3. Press *Enter* or *Tab* in the **Reference** field to add a new cost.
4. Enter the desired **Date**.
5. Click the drop-down button in the **Tcode** field.
 - a. Notice that the list of transaction codes is different for costs. This is because each transaction code is assigned a Fee, Expense, or Advance attribute when it is defined. Notice the **Type** column in the Tcode Lookup window shows E or A, thus indicating whether the tcode is an expense or advance.
 - b. Select the desired tcode.
6. Notice the **Units** and **Rate** fields are available. These fields can be used for mileage or photocopies, for example.
7. Enter the **Amount**.
8. Enter the **Description**.
9. Click  to save the changes.

More Info – Costs

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Cost window

Training Video

- [Working with Costs](#)

Like the Fee Entry program, you can use the **Detail/Rapid**  button to toggle between Detail and Rapid Mode. You can use the **Toggle List**  button to hide or display a list of costs at the bottom of the window. When you exit the Cost Entry program, you will be given the option to print a Cost Entry Verification List.

Step 5 – Run Statements

Once all fees and costs have been entered, you can run a statement for the client.

► To run a statement

1. In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Generate Statements."
2. On the **Client** tab, specify the desired clients for the beginning and ending **Client ID**, or leave these fields blank to print statements for all clients.
3. On the **Transactions** tab, you can specify a cut-off date for fees and costs if desired.
4. On the **Options** tab, select **Draft**. We want to run a draft statement for review purposes.
Tip: Select the **Print Reference Numbers** check box to include reference numbers on statements to assist with selecting individual transactions for editing purposes.
5. Click **OK**.
6. You can either print or preview the statement. Click **Preview** to review the statement before printing.

When reviewing the statement in the Preview window, you can easily modify any transaction by moving your mouse over the transaction description, then clicking it when it turns yellow. After saving any changes to the transaction, you will be returned to the statement. Click the **Refresh** button at the bottom of the Preview window to refresh the statement with your changes.

Changing the Statement Format

Statement format is controlled by statement templates. Each client is assigned a statement template for draft statements and one for final statements. Tabs3 Billing also includes a Statement Designer that provides the ability to create customized page layouts for your statements. Once designed, page layouts can be applied to one or more statement templates.

More Info – Statements

Help Topics

- Enter "Statements" on the Index tab and select **Overview**
- Press F1 in the **Generate Statements**, **Statement Designer**, and **Statement Templates** windows

Training Videos

- [Statement Generation Basics](#)
- [Utilizing Statement Templates](#)

Tabs3 Billing Statements Guide

Tabs3 Billing Statement Formatting Guide

- Tabs3.com/docs

Knowledge Base Article R11338 – Emailing Tabs3 Statements

- support.Tabs3.com/main/R11338.htm

Let's say after reviewing the statement, you want to change the format of the fees so it shows hours and rates. The statement format can be changed via the Client file. However, if you still have the statement displayed in the Preview window, you can open the Client file by moving the mouse over the **Account No.** at the top of the statement and clicking it when it turns yellow.

► To change the statement format

1. Open the Client File by doing one of the following:
 - When previewing a statement, mouse over the Account No. at the top of the statement and click it when it turns yellow.
...or...
 - From the Quick Launch, search for and select "Client Information."
2. On the **Statement Options** tab, right-click in the **Draft Template** field (or **Final Template** field) and select **Edit Statement Templates**.

3. On the **Fee Format** tab, in the **Include** section that is to the right of the **Fee Format** section:
 - a. Select the **Rate** check box.
 - b. In the **Hours** drop-down list, select **Detail**.
4. After making all changes to the statement template:
 - a. Press **Ctrl+S** to save the changes.
 - b. Close the Statement Template window.
 - c. Close the Client window.
5. Rerun the statement. If you are still in the Preview window, simply click the **Refresh** button to rerun the draft statement.

Tip: Keep in mind that changing the statement template affects **all clients** that use that template.

Generate a Final Statement

Once you approve the draft statement, you must run a final statement. This can be accomplished by changing the **Statement Type** from **Draft** to **Final** on the **Options** tab. Or, it can be run using the Pre-Bill Tracking window.

► Generating a Final Statement via Pre-Bill Tracking

1. In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Pre-Bill Tracking."
2. Highlight the desired Client ID.
3. Click the **Reviewed** button at the bottom of the window to indicate the statement was reviewed.
4. Click the **Final Statements** button to generate a final statement.
5. Click **OK**.

Pre-Bill Tracking

The Pre-Bill Tracking window makes it easy to track the status of statements. When draft statements are run, a statement record for that batch of statements is added to the Pre-Bill Tracking window. As draft statements are reviewed, you can mark them as reviewed or on hold. You can then easily run final

statements directly from the Pre-Bill Tracking window for all statements that have been reviewed. The Pre-Bill Tracking window provides a centralized location that shows the status of all pending statements.

Tip: Some firms prefer to use Detail Work-In-Process Reports (**Reports | Work-In-Process | Detail Work-in-Process Report**) instead of draft statements to review information before billing. Running Detail Work-In-Process Reports also adds statement records to the Pre-Bill Tracking window.

More Info – Pre-Bill Tracking

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Pre-Bill Tracking window

Tabs3 Billing Statements Guide – Tracking Statements

- [Tabs3.com/docs](https://www.tabs3.com/docs)

Step 6 – Update Statements

Now that the final statement has been generated, you must update the statement using the Update Statements program. This process finalizes the statement and sends the information to accounts receivable and other productivity reports.

► To update a statement

1. In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Update Statements."
2. If prompted to make a backup, click **Yes**.
3. After the backup completes, the Update Statements window will be displayed. Specify the desired Client IDs you want to update, or leave the fields blank to update all final statements for all clients.
4. Click **OK**.

Step 7 – Print Accounts Receivable Report

When statements are updated, the information is also updated in accounts receivable and other reports. Let's look at an accounts receivable report.

► To print a Summary Accounts Receivable Report

1. In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Summary A/R Report."
2. On the **Client** tab, specify the desired client (*or leave the Client ID fields blank to select all clients*).
3. On the **Options** tab, select any desired options.
4. On the **Format** tab, select any desired options.
5. Click **OK**.
6. Click **Preview** when the Print Summary Accounts Receivable Report window displays.
7. After you've finished viewing the report, click the **Close** button at the bottom of the Preview window. You will be returned to the report window allowing you to run another report if desired.

More Info – Reports

Help Topics – Press F1 in the Accounts Receivable Report window

Training Video


- [Working with Reports](#)

Tabs3 Billing Report Pack

- [Tabs3.com/docs](https://www.tabs3.com/docs)

Tip: There are additional accounts receivable reports available via the **All Actions | Reports | A/R Reports** group on the Home page.

Tip: After opening any report window, press *F1* while in the criteria selection window for the report. In the

heading bar of the help topic, click the  icon. This icon opens the Tabs3 Billing Report Pack, which shows an example of the report and provides detailed information for every item on the report.

Step 8 – Enter Payments

Upon receipt of a client's payment, you need to enter a payment transaction.

► To add payments

1. From the Quick Launch, search for and select "Payment Entry."

More Info - Payments

Help Topics - Press F1 in the Payment window

Training Video

- [Working with Payments](#)

2. Enter the desired Client ID.

Tip: Notice that the client's accounts receivable balance is shown at the bottom of the window after specifying the Client ID.


3. Press *Enter* or *Tab* in the **Reference** field to add a new payment.

4. Enter the desired **Date**.

5. Click the drop-down button in the **Tcode** field and select the desired tcode.

6. Enter the **Amount**.

7. Enter the **Description**.

8. Click  to save the changes.


Once the payment is entered, the accounts receivable automatically reflects the payment. However, in order to process the payment, a final statement must be generated and updated that includes the payment. This typically occurs when the next statement for the client is generated. If no other work will be performed for the client, then you can run a payment-only statement.

Tip: You can run a report of all cash receipts. In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Cash Receipts Report."

Step 9 – Matter Manager

The Tabs3 Billing Matter Manager shows client contact information, balance due information, work-in-process information, the date of the last statement and payment, client funds and trust balances, and a list of recent transactions and statements. You can launch the reports you run most often for individual clients. The PracticeMaster button launches the Matter Manager in PracticeMaster, which provides quick access to other matter related information.

► To launch the Matter Manager, do one of the following:

- Click the  button on the toolbar.
- From the **File** menu, click **Matter Manager**.
- In the Quick Launch, search for and select "Matter Manager."
- Press *Ctrl+M*.

Resources

This Getting Started Guide provides you with the information you need to start using the software. There are many other resources available to help you learn the software.

Training Videos

The Tabs3 Software include numerous training videos to help you learn the software. Training video libraries can be accessed via the Quick Launch by searching for and selecting "Training Videos."

Help

Help is installed with the software and is easily accessed by pressing *F1*, by clicking the button, or in the Quick Launch by searching for and selecting “Help Topics.” Help includes detailed information regarding specific programs. Clicking the button opens Help for the window you are currently using. Many times, reading the appropriate Help topic may be the fastest way to find your answer.

Tabs3 Billing Guides and Report Pack

There are multiple Tabs3 Billing guides and a Tabs3 Billing Report Pack installed with the software in PDF format. Shortcuts are created during installation. In the Quick Launch, search for and select “Documentation” for a list of all available Tabs3 Software Documentation. The guides include information on basic setup and use of the software. Tabs3 Billing has dozens of reports and the Tabs3 Billing Report Pack makes it easy to see examples of each report. Many firms will print this Report Pack as a reference guide for the various reports to help familiarize them with what is available. The guides and Report Pack can also be accessed via our website at Tabs3.com/docs.

Knowledge Base

An extensive Knowledge Base with advanced information is available for Tabs3 Software users. The Knowledge Base contains information on Error Troubleshooting, Networking & Windows Issues, “How To” articles, and product-related articles. You can access the Knowledge Base via the Quick Launch by searching for and selecting “Knowledge Base,” or from your Internet browser at support.Tabs3.com.

For example, as a new Tabs3 Billing user, you may want to read some common questions regarding Tabs3 Billing. Knowledge Base Article **R11103**, “Tabs3 Frequently Asked Questions,” provides numerous questions and answers on various areas of the software. The Knowledge Base is intended to work in conjunction with the Help, by providing more focused and detailed information on certain topics.

Tabs3 Support

Tabs3 Software provide some of the best support in the industry. Service to our customers is extremely important to us—so much so that our motto is:

Reliable software. Trusted service.

Tabs3 Support is provided at no charge with a maintenance plan and is available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please feel free to call our Tabs3 Support staff at (402) 419-2210. Email support can be requested via Tabs3.com/support.

Tabs3 Consultants

Tabs3 Software is available through a national network of over 250 consultants. Those consultants are small independent firms that specialize in the sales, installation, training, and support of billing, financial, and

practice management software for law firms. By having consultants service all 50 states, you can work directly with a local person familiar with Tabs3 Software, who can provide personalized on-site installation, training, and support services. Visit our website at [**Tabs3.com/find-a-consultant**](https://www.tabs3.com/find-a-consultant) for a consultant near you or contact our Sales staff at (402) 419-2200.

Thank you for choosing Tabs3 Software. We look forward to serving your practice management and billing needs with reliable software and trusted service for many years to come. Let us know how we can help you get started with Tabs3 Software.