

PBS Tips and Tricks #23 – PBS & CashPoint Version Numbering

The end of the old year and the beginning new year both bring a flurry of updates, hot fixes and other changes to your Passport system. These are documented and classified by changes to the version numbers in PBS and CashPoint. But what do these numbers mean? And how do they affect your company?

The release version of the latest update to PBS is, for example, 12.07.02.01. This four-segment number represents, the Major release number (12), the Minor release number (07), the Update/Upgrade level (02), and lastly, the Hotfix number (01).

The first two segments, 12.07, are typically spoken together; “We are on 1207”, representing the overall level of the system. This number or its two-digit extension, 12.07.02, are also referred to as the version number of the system.

The Major release number corresponds to major changes in the look, feel and functionality of PBS. For example, version 12.00 was the start of our ongoing process of creating graphical screens (GUI) to supplement the existing “Classic” (or character) screens. This major release started shipping during 2012.

The Minor release number corresponds to significant changes within the major release. For example, the ability for PBS to use the Microsoft SQL database was added in Version 12.02. This was released about 1 ½ years after 12.00 during the fall of 2013. In 12.05 and 12.06 there were extensive changes to names and addresses as described below.

These release numbers tell you what you have, and also what you do not have feature-wise. So, for example, for Version 11.08, this version does **not** have a graphical (GUI) data entry capability. Nor does it have the ability to use a Microsoft SQL database. By contrast, since the ability to create graphical forms was introduced in V12.06 and enhanced in V12.07, seeing these release numbers lets you know you may use this new functionality once you are on that version. (In Tips and Tricks #10 we described the way you can easily determine your PBS or Cashpoint version number. Also check out the several links at the end of this document for information about what is in the various PBS versions.

The last two segments of the version number, the update/upgrade number and the hot fix number basically correspond to maintenance functions. Clearly because the update/upgrade number comes before the hot-fix number it has some seniority over the hot-fix. Hot-fixes are basically minor maintenance changes to the system and typically:

- Involve only one or just a few programs being changed
- Almost never require file conversions or running updates or exports or imports
- Almost never significantly change the operations or the data flow of the application the hot-fix is updating

Hot-fixes are updates released to fix specific problems and frequently the documentation does not change.

By contrast updates and upgrades (two words for the same thing) are more involved. They can include new features or changes to an existing feature, such as the Year-End updates as an example. For the year-end reporting, the format of a printed IRS form may change or there may be new requirements for the content of the reported data. In general, we attempt to keep data conversions out of the update/upgrade cycle, though this is not always possible. The year-end update is where file changes happen most frequently since we do not have control over new requirements for either the reporting/closing of the old year or the preparation/requirements for data entry for the new year. For example, the reporting for YE2020 in the last few weeks, required a pretty significant change to the 1099's because the IRS split the Non-Employee compensation off from the 1099- MISC form, creating a new form the 1099-NEC. For the opening of tax year 2020, a year ago, the new W4 forms required several new tax tables to be added.

Bottom line, updates/upgrades frequently introduce new functionality to existing features as well as aggregating all enhancements and hot fixes from the previous update/upgrade into one package. This aggregation also means that installing an update/upgrade “resets” the hot-fix counter back to zero, so any new hot-fixes start from 01 after this upgrade.

Unlike the upgrades/updates and hot-fixes, a major or minor release change will imply much more has been changed. It is here that there are likely to be requirements for file conversions because of file changes or even new files. For example, in Version 12.05 and 12.06 the weight of the changes was a dramatic expansion and updating of names and addresses, including ship-to's, deliver-to's, and contact data throughout the system. These changes involved wide-ranging changes to the sizes of many data fields as well as the creation of two brand-new files – a system wide Contacts file and a Location file. There were also changes to screen layouts and print formatting changes that were necessary for displaying and printing these expanded or new fields. These major changes required the use of our specialized EZConvert conversion program to make the changes, whereas upgrades and hot-fixes do not.

So, what does this mean to you?

- Hot-fixes can be treated rather mechanically. Besides ensuring that you have the appropriate hot-fix(es) for your system, you can simply browse the descriptions of the fixes to learn what functions have been affected and you may find an issue there that you noticed, that is now fixed.
- Update/Upgrade. Here is where studying the Update/Upgrade install instructions becomes more important. If you are not doing the actual update yourself, the descriptive introduction may be all you need to read. Generally, any decisions involved

with the upgrade will be minor. But, for example, in the 2019/2020 YE upgrade, the new W4 functionality was important and would probably prompt you to go the IRS site and view the new W4 form and documentation, as well as downloading the Federal p15-t document for the new tax tables.

- Any change to the release version (major or minor) is much more significant. Since major new features are being added, these can affect you:
 - from an education/training point of view - How can I utilize this new function? Where is this data stored?
 - to functional issues - Can I now do this and how do I set this up? (E.g. you can now accept Credit Card payments in AR directly)
 - to paper flow and company policies and procedures – For example: If I can produce and organize all of my reports and printed forms like invoices, as PDF's, do I need to print multiple copies of these documents? Do I need to print any at all?

So bottom line, a change in a release from e.g. V12.06 to V12.07 is an opportunity to review what you are doing now with respect to PBS or CashPoint, and how any new features can be implemented to help your business processes.

To help you review what you have in your version of the software and what the newer releases have, here are some handy links for you:

You can see what has been happening with the last four releases (12.04 through 12.07) at:
<https://pass-port.com/customer-quick-links/> under ***“What's New in PBS”***.

For a PDF of the details on the current 12.07 release <https://www.passport-training.com/>
(side-bar on the right hand side ***“What's New in PBS-Enhancements List.”***)

If you have not yet upgraded to PBS V12, PDF downloads for all of releases from Version 11.08 forward are located here: <https://www.passport-partners.com/pbs-enhancement-lists>