

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

As you read through the questions and answers in this appendix, be aware of the following guidelines:

- ❖ In the text, references to "A:" assume that "A:" is your floppy drive. References to "C:" and "C:\TOPSPRO" assume that C:\TOPSPRO is your installation directory. Adjust the instructions as necessary for your specific situation.
- ❖ Depth is the same as Height.
- ❖ For best results, run TOPS Pro in full-screen mode. (On many screens, the information displayed depends on the amount of room available.)

Q1: What special steps should I take to move the TOPS Pro software to a different machine?

Moving the software to a new machine requires uninstalling the authorization back onto the floppy. Follow these instructions:

1. Place the floppy diskette in floppy drive
2. From the Start | Programs, open the TOPS for Windows Apps group.
3. Run the TOPS Pro Move program (or winmove.exe file in the TOPSAPPS/TOPSPRO/ folder).
4. Select "Uninstall license to Floppy."
5. Adjust the source and destination directories as needed, then select OK

Once the authorization has been moved back onto the floppy, you may re-install the software as if it were freshly shipped from TOPS. To maintain your old data, copy the subdirectories from under the old TOPS Pro installation over to the new TOPS Pro installation.

Note: This does not apply to upgrades which should use the import/export functionality, as the data will be formatted differently.

For electronic license, please contact TOPS for assistance to move license.

Q2: When I try to run TOPS Pro, I get an error message that says, "Maximum of 1 user(s) already logged in." But I know that no one else is using the program. What's going on?

This message most often occurs when someone has logged into TOPS Pro and crashed out of the program instead of exiting normally. TOPS Pro thinks the user is still logged in. If someone attempts to login as the same person, TOPS Pro will warn them with the message, "User already logged in. Replace?" Answer Yes to log that person off the system and allow the new user to login.

If you login as someone other than the user who crashed out, TOPS Pro issues the message, "Maximum of N users already logged in." The "N" value is normally one (1) unless you've purchased additional user licenses. You can get around this message with one of two options

- ❖ Login as the same person that crashed, then log him or her out
- ❖ Login as supervisor in the TOPS Pro Config program, open the File Menu and Select User List to Logout any extra user (s)

Q3: What does selecting the various pattern styles do? You know, the ones displayed after you press the Options button in the Shipcase Parameters dialog box (also the Unitload Parameters and Transit Vehicle Parameters dialog boxes).

The pattern style checkboxes determine what arrangements TOPS Pro will attempt to use when placing your carton/shipcase/ pallet into its respective shipcase/pallet/vehicle.

Depending on your situation, you may choose to check additional patterns to attempt to get a tighter load. You may uncheck some patterns because you want simpler patterns; e.g., perhaps your stacking machine can handle only simple 1-block patterns.

Q4: I can't find yesterday's work. What happened to it?

You've probably logged in with a user name other than one you used when you saved the analyses. Each user's analyses are only visible to him or her and to someone logged in as Supervisor. If you login in as Supervisor, open the File menu and select Open, you can see everyone's work with their name after it. For more information, please refer to Login/Logout as a Supervisor.

Q5: How do I tell what version of TOPS Pro I have?

In either TOPS Pro or the TOPS Configuration program, open the Help menu and select About. A dialog box appears with version information and the name of the company who purchased the copy. Complete version information includes the date, which appears to the left of the OK button on the dialog box.

Q6: Can I have the program print fractions instead of decimals?

Starting with TOPS Pro Version 2.1, you can use fractional output. Follow these instructions:

1. Open the Tools Menu and select Configuration.
2. Click on the Fractions button.
3. Use the checkboxes to adjust the points at which you would like the program to operate in fractional mode.

All fractions will be to the nearest $1/2$, $1/4$, $1/8$, $1/16$, $1/32$ and $1/64$. Note that this will only change the output and display of a value. The numbers that are stored and manipulated are the actual decimal values – not their "nearest fractional" equivalents.

Hint: Even when not in fractional mode, the program will accept fractional input and convert the value to its exact decimal equivalent, just as if you had typed in the decimal value in the first place.

Simply hit the spacebar – or the decimal point – and type the fraction after the whole-number portion of the number. That is, the value $4 \frac{1}{8}$ and $4.1/8$ becomes 4.125 after leaving the field. However, values imported from external sources must be in decimal form for TOPS Pro to recognize them.

Q7: Assuming I want my outputs in decimal format, how do I change the number of decimals for my results?

Follow these instructions:

1. Open the Tools Menu and Select Configuration.
2. Click on the Decimals button.
3. Change the appropriate numbers.

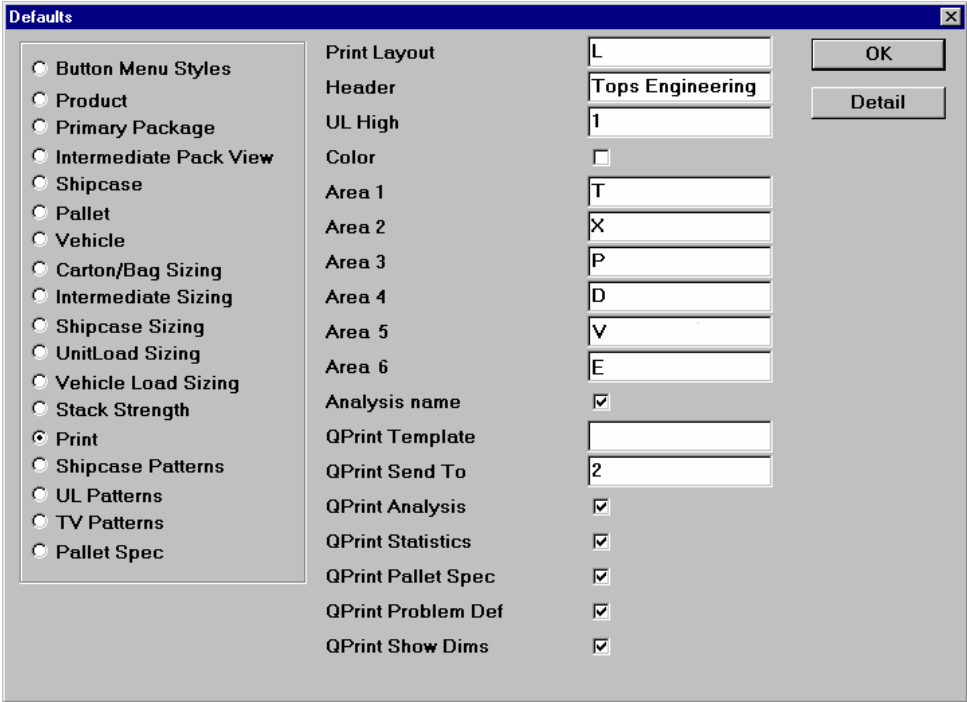
Note: Adjustments to these values only change the output and display of the numbers. The numbers stored and manipulated are their actual decimal values – not the "rounded" display equivalents.

Q8: How do I change the default printing arrangements in my analysis reports?

The default print arrangement is defined in TOPS Configuration program. To change the defaults, follow these steps:

- 1. Run TOPS Pro Configuration program and Login as Supervisor.
- 2. Open the Configuration Menu and select Default.
- 3. Click on the radio button for print.

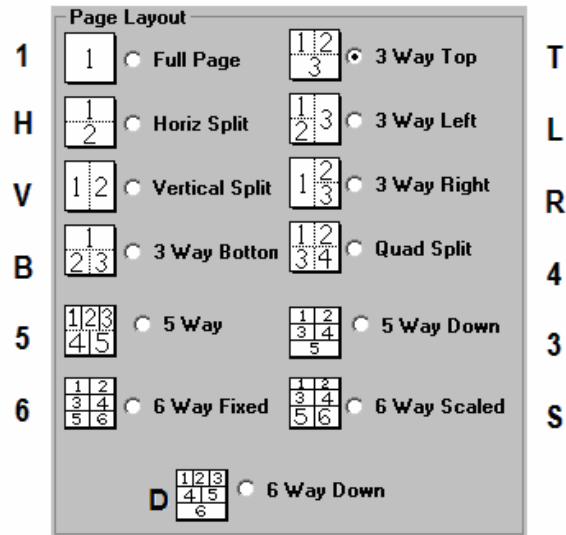
TOPS Pro displays the default printing arrangement as shown below. You can assign different default graphics or statistics in each of the 6 print areas using the single-letter abbreviations illustrated on the following page.



Note: The letters are case sensitive.

Note: Use uppercase "N" (none) in an Area field to get an empty pane.

Codes for Print Layout:



Codes for Area 1 – 6:

	Primary Pack	Bundle Pack	Intermediate Pack Case	Case	Unitload	Vehicle
3D	x	b	i	D	3	V
Plan		j	p	A	T	L
Dual Plan					U	
Pop Top					P	
Side		g	s	G	S	I
Front		e	f	B	F	R
Statistics			t	C	X	E
No View	N					

Q9: How do I change the graphical online drawing (g.o.d) window images?

The (g.o.d.) system's static pictures are stored as bitmaps in the Pict directory, which is located off of your TOPS Pro directory. You can use the Windows Paintbrush to change, edit or replace the pictures.

Q10: Ich bin Berliner; I am a Berliner. Ich sprache ein kleinste Englisch; I speak a little English. Was kannst du auf mir tunnen? What can you do for me?

The TOPS Pro software comes in several languages, including English, Japanese, Spanish, Finnish, French, Portuguese, Chinese and German. In addition, each language is fully configurable, so if you don't like the way we said it, you can say it yourself.

The Text Modification dialog box allows you to perform language editing. Use these guidelines:

- ❖ To choose a language, open the Tools menu and select Language
- ❖ To change individual strings, open the Tools menu, select Language, then select Edit

Q11: The lines on TOPS Pro's reports are too fine. When I fax the reports, the lines are so narrow they almost disappear and have gaps. How do I fix this?

Follow these instructions:

1. Open the Tools menu and select Configuration.
2. Make Printer Width non-zero; larger numbers indicate thicker lines.

This only affects printed output. The Print Preview and other on-screen drawings will still appear with normal (one-dot width) lines.

Q12: How do I change the colors of the cartons, shipcases, etc.?. When I print in color, some colors are so dark they print nearly black.

To select color, open the Tools menu and select Color Selection. Color changes are specific to each user name, not each analysis.

Q13: What is "pitch?"

Ever tried to stack cups? Some cups will stack very closely together; others will barely fit into one another. Pitch is the distance by which a cup sticks out from the cup underneath it. The more it sticks out, the greater the pitch. A pitch of zero assumes that the tubs/buckets are not nested at all.

Q14: I use dividers and box styles different than the ones that come with the program. How can I make my own?

You can define your own box styles, dividers and pallets from the Define menu options. Also, in the TOPS Configuration program, the Define menu provides a wider range of things you can define, such as papers, board combinations, flutes and environmental factors. Any and all data that can influence your single-box compression and stacking strength results is fully configurable.

For more information, please refer to Chapter 12, Designing Box Styles, and Chapter 13, Designing Divider Styles.

Q15: What is Secondary Pallet Pattern and how do I use it?

The "secondary pattern" is used to create mixed-layer pallet patterns. These are alternating layer pallet patterns in which some of the layers may be "borrowed" from other pallet patterns. To use this feature, follow these instructions:

1. Find a non-multi-dimensional pallet pattern to use as a secondary pattern.
2. Open the Edit menu and select Select as Secondary Pattern.
3. Now view another solution from the solution list.
4. Open the Edit menu, select Layer Parameters, then select which layer(s) you want to use the Secondary Pattern.
5. As you scroll through the other patterns, you'll see a mixture of pallet layers. Note that the statistics will not be accurate for alternating layer unitloads, but will reflect the original unitload before mixing the layers.

Q16: I'm trying to remove all the TOPS Pro files after uninstalling. What do I need to delete?

Other than the files in the TOPS Pro directory and its subdirectories, TOPS Pro makes the following adjustments to your system:

- ❖ It creates a TOPSPRO.INI file in the local Windows directory
- ❖ It creates the icons/shortcuts used to start the program

Q17: How is RSC board area calculated?

$$(2L + 2W) (W + H)$$

Q18: How does the program estimate the weight of my box?

TOPS Pro estimates the weight of a newly designed carton/case or a packed carton/case as follows:

- ❖ For Cartons: $\{((\text{Length} * \text{Width} * 2) + (\text{Length} * \text{Height} * 2)) + (\text{Width} * \text{Height} * 2) / 144\} * \{(\text{Caliper} / .024 * 100) / 1000\}$
- ❖ For Shippers or Intermediate Packs: $\{((\text{Length} * \text{Width} * 2) + (\text{Length} * \text{Height} * 2)) + (\text{Width} * \text{Height} * 2) / 144\} * \{(\text{Caliper} / .018 * 100) / 1000\}$
- ❖ For Corrugated cases: $\{((\text{Length} * \text{Width} * 2) + (\text{Length} * \text{Height} * 2)) + (\text{Width} * \text{Height} * 2) / 144\} * \{(\text{LBSper1000ft}^2) / 1000\}$

Q19: What are the TOPS Pro Command Line Parameters?

The following command line parameters work with TOPSPRO.EXE, CONFIG.EXE and VIEWER.EXE.

- ❖ **-DBPath="C:\APPS\TOPSPRO\DATA"**: Overrides any entries in the INI file.
- ❖ **-ini="C:\WINDOWS\TOPSPRO.INI"**: Use the specified INI file instead of the default TOPS.INI in the Windows Directory. Avoid sharing INI files.
- ❖ **-u "User Name"**: Automatically login under the name "User Name."
- ❖ **-a "Analysis Name"**: Bring up the specified analysis. Approved analyses are opened first (if there is one).
- ❖ **-print**: Auto-print and exit. Used with -a.
- ❖ **-printcs**: Auto-print package profile and exit. Used with -a.
- ❖ **-viewcs**: Auto-view package profile. Used with -a.

Q20: How do I calculate Stacking Strength?

TOPS Pro uses the McKee Formula to calculate stacking strength. First, create your analysis in TOPS Pro, then calculate it. Make sure to have the weight entered in for shipcase. Next, go to the Tools/Stacking Strength menu. From there, enter your factors into the screen, then click OK to view the stacking strength results.

Q21: How do I insert pads between layers, or add caps to a pallet pattern?

After you have calculated a pallet pattern, click on the Unitload window to highlight it. Next, go to the Edit/Layer Parameters menu. Here add what you like to your layers or pallet patterns.

Q22: How do I use the modify feature to create alternate pallet patterns?

Before you use the Modify feature, we suggest you turn off the Layer Rotation feature. Follow these instructions:

1. From the Edit menu, select Layer Parameters.
2. In the Layer Parameters dialog box, look at the Rotate column and delete any check marks you see. (Once your pallet pattern is column-stacked it will be much easier to deal with.)
3. Click on OK to close the Layer Parameters dialog box.

For detailed instructions on how to modify a pallet pattern, please refer to Chapter 5, Pallet Pattern Editor.

Q23: How do I show inside dimensions on Cartons, Intermediate Packs, and Cases?

1. Login to TOPS Pro.
2. Open the Tools menu and select Configuration.

Now check the boxes that correspond with which inside dimensions you would like to see. (Carton, IP, or Cases).

Q24: How do I use Adobe Acrobat to create PDF documents?

Adobe Acrobat[®] is a third-party product used to create PDF documents. These files are widely accepted as the industry standard for displaying documents on the World Wide Web.

One common misconception with Adobe Acrobat[®] and the TOPS program is that we can create them. In order to create a PDF file, you must have Adobe Acrobat Writer[®] installed. The Reader program is free, but Adobe[®] sells the Writer program. If you have Adobe Acrobat Writer[®] installed, you should have an Adobe Acrobat[®] printer driver installed as well. This printer driver allows you to print to a PDF file instead of to your regular printer.

Also, set up the printer driver to print to file. To do this, follow these instructions:

1. From the Windows Control Panel, go to the Printers group and select the Acrobat printer and the Acrobat printer window appears.
2. From the Printer menu, select Properties.
3. At the Acrobat Printer Properties dialog box, open the Ports tab and select the Print to File option.
4. Click on OK to apply your changes.

The next time you run TOPS Pro (or any other program), you can select the Acrobat Printer as your active printer. When you print, the system will prompt you with a "Save" dialog box, which allows you to save the new PDF document to a specific location.

Q25: How do I print a list of shipcases or pallets I have saved in TOPS Pro?

You can print databases from TOPS Pro. Go to the File/Print Databases menu and select Shipcases, Pallets or other databases, such as Cartons, Products, Vehicles, etc.

Q26: How do I login as Supervisor?

In TOPS Pro, the Supervisor user has the rights to delete users, see all analysis files and other handy things. To login as a Supervisor, follow these instructions:

1. Login as any user.
2. Open the Supervisor menu and select the Login\Logout option.
3. Enter the supervisor's password. (The default Supervisor password is "tops software".)

Q27: How do I change the defaults in TOPS Pro?

All defaults in TOPS Pro are set in the TOPS Pro Configuration program. Here you can change just about anything from the default pallet overhang to how your printouts look. Follow these instructions:

1. Login to TOPS Pro Configuration program as Supervisor.
2. Open the Define menu and select an option.

Q28: How do I replace the default TOPS logo with my company logo?

Follow these instructions:

1. Open the TOPSPRO.INI file from your Windows or WinNT folder.
2. Look for the line that reads "Logopath."
3. Change the path to point to the location of your BMP file (e.g., C:\temp\tops.bmp).

Q29: How do I turn on user passwords?

Follow these instructions:

1. Login to TOPS Pro Configuration as the Supervisor.
2. Open the Supervisor menu and select Global Configuration.
3. Select the User Passwords option.

Q30: Why do I keep getting an error saying please enter valid characters or N8068NF?

Often times the Description of trucks or shippers that were imported into your new version of TOPS Pro contain invalid characters, sometimes from previous versions of TOPS. One common example is the (ft') sign.

1. In the Vehicle Parameters dialog box select "New Veh.".
2. In the Define Vehicle dialog box select the vehicle you are going to use from the Description field.
3. Remove the (ft') sign from the description and click on Save.
4. Now if you choose, you can go back to the description box and select the vehicle with an invalid description and delete it.