

TOPS[®] Pro User Guide

(Version 5.6X)

January 2007 Print Version



Total Optimization Packaging Software

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Preface

About TOPS Pro

Congratulations on purchasing TOPS Pro. You're now the owner of the most advanced packaging software in the world. TOPS Pro is extremely powerful and has proven to save millions of dollars for thousands of companies due to the efficiencies you'll realize in your business. We're confident that TOPS Pro will provide the same benefit to your company, regardless of your product, package or volume.

We've engineered TOPS Pro to meet the needs of the packaging professional. The software allows you to conduct a comprehensive range of analyses based on your product, package requirements, equipment and operations. You'll be able to perform operations that were never before possible without a quality software system.

Over the years, we've maintained a steady effort to simplify our software so that you, the end user, are able to conduct your packaging analysis quickly and efficiently. Just in case you have a problem, we've written this *User Guide* to assist you with every possible issue or question you might have.

If this *User Guide* does not answer your questions, or if you experience problems while using the TOPS Pro software, please call TOPS Technical Support or your TOPS sales representative at (972) 739-8677 or email us at tech@topseng.com.

How the User Guide is Organized

This *User Guide* is organized into 15 chapters and seven appendices, as follows:

Chapter 1, **Getting Started**, discusses system requirements necessary to run TOPS Pro and instructions on how to install the TOPS Pro software.

Chapter 2, **The Basics**, presents the basic features and functions of the TOPS Pro system, such as the Control Panel, performing a simple analysis, the Analysis View and printing an analysis.

Chapter 3, **Advanced Features**, walks you through some of the more complex exercises, such as performing analyses with both fixed and newly designed containers, shipcase consolidation and performing a knockdown analysis.

Chapter 4, **Publishing an Analysis**, explains how to convert an analysis to an HTML page and publish it to a web site or network location.

Chapter 5, **Pallet Pattern Editor**, explains how to reconfigure boxes on a pallet by moving individual boxes to different positions, removing boxes from the pallet and adding boxes to the pallet. The Pallet Pattern Editor allows you to manipulate the configuration in a way that cannot be accomplished with the standard dialog boxes and parameters.

Chapter 6, **MixPro Pallet**, discusses how to design a pallet for display with any number of different size boxes. The MixPro Pallet system allows you to easily load and place all types of shipcases onto a pallet. Use MixPro Pallet to create mixed pallets for display.

Chapter 7, **MixPro Tray**, discusses how to design a tray for display with any number of different size items. The MixPro Tray system allows you to easily load and place all types of items onto a tray. Use MixPro Tray to create mixed trays for display.

Chapter 8, **Create A Shape Yourself (CASYS)**, explains how to design custom-shaped bottles, cans, shipcases and trays for more realistic displays.

Chapter 9, **Stacking Strength**, discusses how to calculate the stacking strength of your shipcases, how to analyze stacking strength results and the technical formulas TOPS Pro uses in its calculations.

Chapter 10, **Package Profile**, explains how to create a package profile, which contains a number of products that use the same packaging; for example, several brands of cereal that use the same type of cereal box.

Chapter 11, **Printing**, walks you through all the system's printing functions, including how to define print parameters, add text and graphics to a print preview, the Quick Print feature and the new Combined Report feature.

Chapter 12, **Designing Box Styles**, presents the basic box drawing styles used in the TOPS Pro system and provides guidelines for designing box drawing styles tailored to your own needs.

Chapter 13, **Designing Divider Styles**, presents the basic divider drawing styles used in the TOPS Pro system and provides guidelines for designing divider drawing styles tailored to your own needs.

Chapter 14, **Configuration**, discusses the functions provided by the TOPS Configuration program, which is a separate program that allows you to customize TOPS Pro to meet your needs in a number of ways. For example, the TOPS Configuration program allows you to define a range of default settings – environment factors, box design factors, board combinations, paper, flutes, etc. – that TOPS Pro uses to perform everyday analyses.

Chapter 15, **Supervisor Functions**, explains how a supervisor can add, delete and rename users in the system; approve or deny an analysis; and set up an analysis or Quick Print template.

Chapter 16, **RFID Analysis**, gives a preview of the upcoming new feature, RFID Location Optimizer and explains how TOPS Pro can help determine placement of RFID tags for optimal readability on shipcases.

Appendix A, **Frequently Asked Questions**, outlines a comprehensive range of questions posed by TOPS Pro users.

Appendix B, **Dialog Boxes**, presents all the dialog boxes used in both the TOPS Pro system and the TOPS Configuration program, including the function of the dialog box, a screen shot of the dialog box, how to access the dialog box, and field descriptions and instructions.

Appendix C, **Menu Options**, outlines the eight menus that comprise the TOPS Pro menu bar – File, Edit, View, Definitions, Tools, Export, Supervisor and Help – and describes the options included in each menu.

Appendix D, **Pallet Patterns**, presents the 13 primary pallet patterns used in the TOPS Pro system.

Appendix E, **Box Styles**, presents the available box styles defined in the TOPS Pro database.

Appendix F, **Divider Styles**, presents the available divider styles defined in the TOPS Pro database.

Appendix G, **Tops Bookmarks**, provides a list of all bookmarks and corresponding TOPS images and statistics which you can include in any Word documents.

Appendix H, **Glossary**, provides definitions for a range of terms used in the TOPS Pro system and the packaging industry.

New Features in TOPS Pro 5.60

- ❖ **MixPro Auto Load Generator:** An automatic calculation engine to place mixed size shipcases onto a pallet which is optimized for aisle display in club stores.
- ❖ **Enhanced MixPro Functions:** New enhanced functions within MixPro include support for slip sheets, corner posts, ability to set/show shipcase display face directions and other edit functionalities.
- ❖ **Advance Container Optimization:** Allows users to load shipcases directly onto the void spaces to the side, top or end of the unitloads and further increase cube utilization.
- ❖ **Unitload Labels and Display Face Direction:** Allows users to add labels to selective sides of the pallet load and specify where the labels will be placed for all sides.
- ❖ **Inverted Nesting:** Inverted nesting arrangement is available to blister packs, tubs and buckets. This will be useful for packages like flower pots, plumbing parts, water glasses and more.
- ❖ **Blister Packs:** Supports blister packs, in straight or nested inverted arrangements.
- ❖ **New Shapes:** The sample database will come with more shapes including stand-up pouches, custom trays and boxes with lid.
- ❖ **Analysis Comparison Report:** Allows users to create reports with side-by-side comparison between any two solutions as well as between two analyses at any state of an analysis (shipcase, pallet load or container).

- ❖ **New Flute Definition:** In addition to the existing nine flute types defined in TOPS Pro, users can define new flute parameters in the TOPS Configuration program.
- ❖ **Slave Pallet and False Bottom:** Allows users to place a unitload on top of another pallet or add a raised platform for the shipcases on the pallet.
- ❖ **New File Interface with Quick Find and Sort Capabilities:** The File operation dialog box takes on a more traditional Windows look with Find and Sort capabilities. Use the Find function to quickly filter analyses containing the matched string.
- ❖ **Enhanced Reports:** The Package Analysis Report can compose of up to 6 panels for more package illustrations and statistics. Users can also change the fonts used in these reports to accommodate more texts.
- ❖ **More Database Functions for Primary and Intermediate Packs:** The database function is added to support Intermediate packs. Users can now instruct TOPS to go through the shipcase database for intermediate packs.
- ❖ **Shipcase Costing:** Allows users to enter cost per shipper box or cost per square area unit to give a quick glimpse of the total corrugated costs.
- ❖ **Auto Export Functionality:** Automatically exports analysis data from TOPS to be used with other systems like SAP or other ERP systems.
- ❖ **Direct PDF Output:** Exports analyses directly to PDF even without installing Adobe Acrobat Writer or third party PDF writer.
- ❖ **Enhanced Information:** Creates details for each analysis with custom defined fields and enter tare weight for shipcases and pallets.
- ❖ **Drag and Drop Analysis Import:** Offers a quick and easy way to import an analysis. Instead of first importing the analysis and then opening it in TOPS, users can simply drag and drop the analysis from its folder directly into TOPS.

Chronology of Features in TOPS Pro

This section outlines the various releases of the TOPS Pro software, along with the features included in each release.

Version 5.02 (Major Release)

- ❖ Create New Template allows you to save the analysis as a template and add it to the Template Toolbar
- ❖ Publish Analysis to Web or to a local network
- ❖ Creates folders for organizing and storing analyses
- ❖ Shipcase Parameters allows you to choose All or Multiple shipcases from the database
- ❖ Unitload Parameters allows you to specify the maximum number of layers on a pallet
- ❖ Send to Word uses a Word template to convert an analysis directly to a Microsoft Word file
- ❖ Email Stacking Strength Board Combo List directly from TOPS
- ❖ New Print Preview includes Unitload Dual Plan preview of a unitload with the rotation of each layer
- ❖ Updated Windows Toolbar including Stacking Strength button and the All Stages Enhanced View button added
- ❖ Define Stacking Strength Factor for a Non-RSC Box
- ❖ New Divider Styles include 2-Way Air Cell and U Simple
- ❖ Supports Pop-Up Help Tips
- ❖ New flyBar for easy access to routine function buttons in Analysis View
- ❖ Optional arrows indicating pads and slipsheets on unitload
- ❖ More Print Parameters including additional notes for information such as Label Format, Test Weight and Package Quantity
- ❖ Define default thickness for a slipsheet; maximum length, width and height increments for Intermediate Pack Sizing or Shipcase Sizing in TOPS Pro Configuration program
- ❖ Save to Shipcase Database at the same time you save the analysis

Version 5.X (Major Release)

- ❖ One-click design sequence template in Control Panel
- ❖ Organized analysis into projects or folders
- ❖ Selectable shipcase list for database analysis
- ❖ Supported maximum number of layers for unitload
- ❖ Exported analysis to MS Word custom templates
- ❖ Directly email stacking strength board combo list
- ❖ New Dual Pane print option showed rotated layers for unitloads
- ❖ New CASY shapes (trigger top and rounded rectangles) and shape (match top, match bottom, match both, pinch top or pinch bottom)
- ❖ Right-click menu at Graphic View pane to access frequently used functions
- ❖ Supported stacking strength factor for non-RSC boxes
- ❖ New divider styles of U simple and 2-way air cell
- ❖ Floating toolbar for graphic screen to access common functions
- ❖ Optional quad view with all stages
- ❖ Enhanced graphics view with marker for pads and slipsheets
- ❖ Included additional information fields for print reports
- ❖ Additional default settings on thickness for slipsheets, maximum size for intermediate pack, maximum and minimum size for shipcase
- ❖ Saved analysis-generated shipcase to database
- ❖ Added bundle with straps as new shipcase style
- ❖ Traditional and Simplified Chinese language support
- ❖ XML Export

Release 2 (Major Release)

- ❖ Added MixPro Tray Design Editor
- ❖ Added ePAC™ Publisher
- ❖ New, realistic wrap-around box style
- ❖ Accounting for overlapping of bags
- ❖ Define columns for the stacking strength report
- ❖ Direct email from MixPro Pallet and MixPro Tray
- ❖ Thumbnail images of pallet patterns
- ❖ Interlocking of products in a shipcase

- ❖ Added PNG and WMF to available graphic file formats
- ❖ Display shrinkwrapped and strapped pallets
- ❖ Use multiple pallets in a calculation

Version 4.xx (Major Release)

- ❖ Automatic layer calculation for MixPro
- ❖ Automatic Knockdown Calculations based on RSC cartons
- ❖ Added MixPro Pallet Design Editor
- ❖ Analysis templates easier to define and use
- ❖ Custom shape generator for trays and extruded
- ❖ Direct email of reports using MAPI clients
- ❖ Improved supervisor access control features
- ❖ Layer adjustments above 14 layers
- ❖ One-click access to stage parameters via the Windows Toolbar
- ❖ Email support for Lotus Notes

Version 3.5x (Major Release)

- ❖ Packed case weight calculations now use RSC Board Area instead of Surface Area
- ❖ Program now pays attention to "max along" limits
- ❖ Changed simple and none printing STR adjustments
- ❖ Four-digit dates for year 2000 compliance
- ❖ Added support for additional bundling stage
- ❖ Packer now allowed to be a fixed size
- ❖ Now reports Pallet Dimensions in Unitload Parameters dialog box
- ❖ Bulk Product icon can now be turned off
- ❖ Added time stamp to printout
- ❖ Standardized graphics file output (BMP, JPEG)
- ❖ Added paste-on graphics to Box drawings
- ❖ Added (manual) pallet pattern editing capabilities
- ❖ "Show Contents" state now saved with the analysis
- ❖ Combined reports for KnockDown/Erected Boxes
- ❖ Added support for Robotic Palletizer
- ❖ Added five most recently used analyses to File menu