



ABS Software™ - V12.5 FAQ 2022

In an effort to better serve our customers, we've included a section on the most frequently asked questions regarding the use of the ABS Software™.

General >

Q: Our ABS system has received an error message? What should I do?

A: There are three items that are essential to finding a quick solution. The first is a screenshot of the error message, which will not only indicate what the core problem may be, but also in what part of ABS it happened. The second is a basic.zip, which is a zip file that contains the data that existed in ABS at the time of the error. This needs sent to our ABS team via email or Jotform (discussed later). The third is an explanation of what the user was trying to do. For instance, what grade were they trying to make, what weight, what furnace, were they trying to restrict a raw material or force more in, etc. These three items when added together allows our technical team to quickly pinpoint the possible problem and provide a solution in the least amount of time.

Q: ABS is taking an extended time to perform calculations which previously was much shorter. At times, ABS stops working at all. Is there anything on our side we can do?

A: Many companies are increasing their IT security by enhancing virus and malware detection software. These programs are designed to interrogate any executables that are in their IT system, including those in ABS. At times, these software programs will quarantine certain files, which will prevent ABS from functioning properly. Please contact your IT team to see if anything changed on your end, and if ABS is one of the programs which is permitted to run without a continuous scan being performed on it.

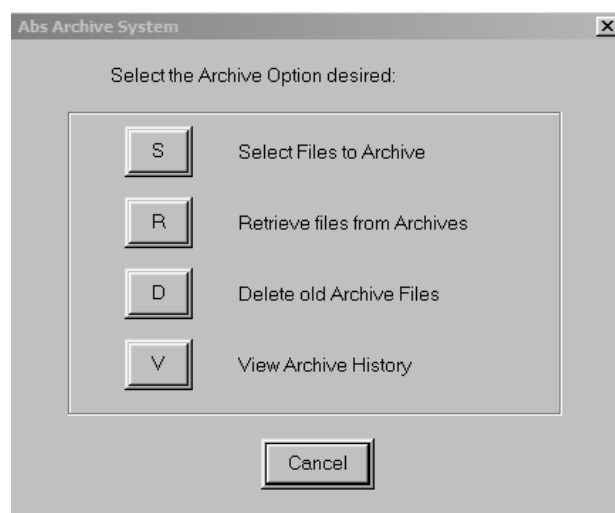
Q: In the main Page, there is a button U for Utilities. What are Utilities, and should I periodically run the programs?

A: The Utility programs are file programs that clean up errors that may occur after entering data, especially if the data flows throughout many areas of ABS. Once you have selected U (Utilities), you will see the following choices: A) **QC Material Data Files**, B) **QC Grade Files**, C) **QC Material Pointer Files**, D) **Fix Material Pointer Files**, and E) **Fix Reserve Quantities**. Briefly, these selections ensure that the data in these files are working correctly and being placed in their correct position in the program. The selections will also point out

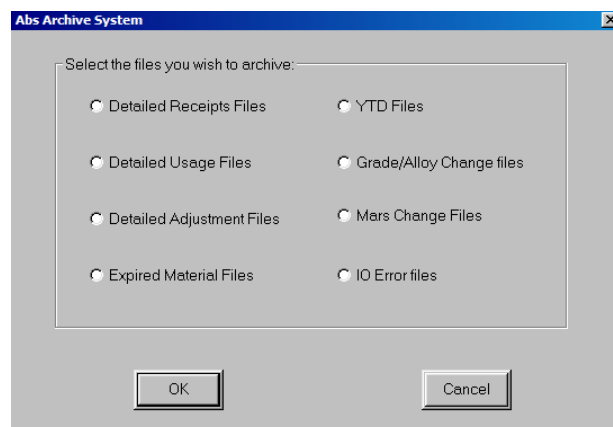
errors in the data, such as an incorrect file, class name, restriction, etc. A, B, C and E will complete their tasks in a minute or so, while D will take up to a couple of minutes depending on how much and detailed the data is. **We recommend that all 5 above (A through E) are run at a minimum once per month.**

Q: It seems like our system is running slightly slower each month. Is there a limit to how large data files can be kept in our live system?

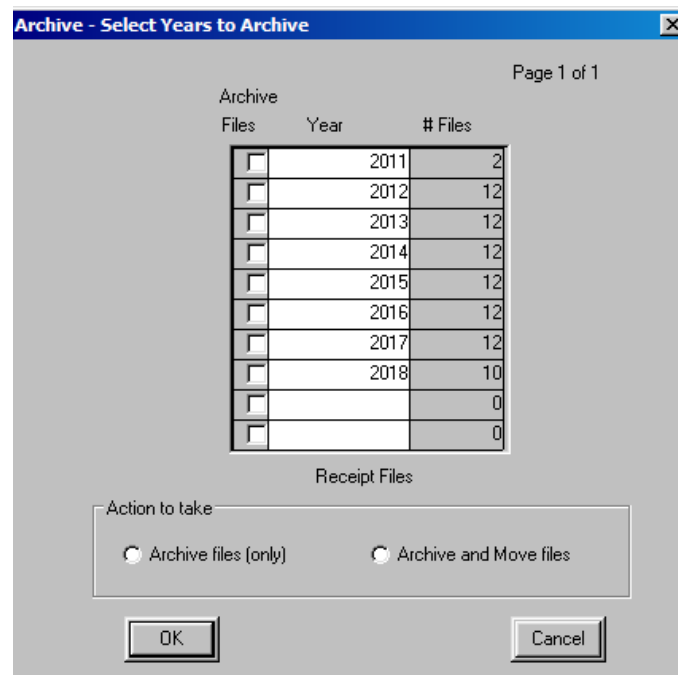
A: Although there is no specific hard data number that cannot be handled in ABS, excessive un-used data should be archived as a general maintenance practice. The more the data that ABS has to view, the longer it will take for the proper solution to be found. This can be done easily by going to the U (Utilities) on the main ABS screen, then selecting O (Archive ABS files). You will see the following screen:



By selecting S (Select Files to Archive), the next screen to appear will be:



You will now be able to archive numerous files from the above list, including receipts, usage, adjustments, year to date (YTD), grade and alloy changes, changes in MARS, and IO Error files. Once you have selected the type of file you would like to archive, the next screen will appear:



The dialog box titled "Archive - Select Years to Archive" displays a table for selecting years to archive. The table has three columns: "Files", "Year", and "# Files". Below the table, there is a section for "Receipt Files" and a group box for "Action to take" with two radio button options: "Archive files (only)" and "Archive and Move files". At the bottom are "OK" and "Cancel" buttons.

Files	Year	# Files
<input type="checkbox"/>	2011	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	2012	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2013	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2014	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2018	10
<input type="checkbox"/>		0
<input type="checkbox"/>		0

Receipt Files

Action to take:

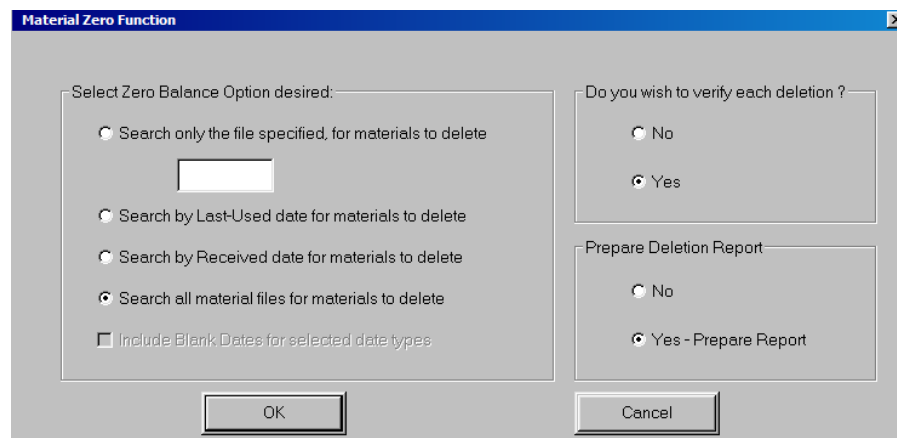
☐ Archive files (only) ☐ Archive and Move files

OK Cancel

You will then be able to archive the year(s) of the selected files. The files will be moved to the ARCH folder in your ABS system and can be easily retrieved. We recommend that no more than 5 years of records should be in your live system.

Q: There are materials in our live inventory that we no longer use. Is there an easy way to remove them?

A: Yes. On the main screen of ABS, select C (Material Editor). Then go to Z (Delete Zero Balance Materials). Once you have selected Z, you will see the following screen:



The dialog box titled "Material Zero Function" contains two main sections. The left section, "Select Zero Balance Option desired:", has four radio button options and one checkbox. The right section, "Do you wish to verify each deletion?", has two radio button options. Below these is a "Prepare Deletion Report" section with two radio button options. At the bottom are "OK" and "Cancel" buttons.

Select Zero Balance Option desired:

☐ Search only the file specified, for materials to delete

☐ Search by Last-Used date for materials to delete

☐ Search by Received date for materials to delete

☒ Search all material files for materials to delete

☐ Include Blank Dates for selected date types

Do you wish to verify each deletion ?

☐ No

☒ Yes

Prepare Deletion Report

☐ No

☒ Yes - Prepare Report

OK Cancel

From this screen, you will be able delete materials that have “zero” balance weight from by received date, last-used date, a specific material, or simply all materials that have zero inventory. You are also offered the choice to validate each selection and create a report if you wish.

Q: A material that I want to use does not show up as a candidate. What should I look for?

A: 1) The material may be part of a File, Class or Material restriction in the particular grade. 2) The material may have zero inventory and Special Option #17 may be turned to no, not allowing material to go negative in inventory. 3) The material may contain an element that is higher in % content than the constraint limit is in the Grade Editor for that specific grade/alloy. 4) In the Material Editor, the specific material may be designated “No” as far as availability to use. 5) The material may not have been transferred from Scrap Control to live inventory. 6) Use of the material, even in limited amounts, may cause the grade to be out of specification.

Q: I am trying to delete a material and the system will not allow me. Why not?

A: The most common reason for why a material cannot be deleted can be attributed to the subject material being reserved in a charge. This can be verified by going to the Inventory Reports Program – option ‘J’ and then selecting option ‘4’ – View Reserved Materials. If the material is confirmed to be reserved in one or more charges, the user will have to either record usage on those charges or cancel the charges before deleting the material from live inventory.

Q: When trying to make a change or complete an action in ABS, we are getting a message that stating that file sharing is not loaded. What may be the problem and how can it be quickly solved?

A: When a user encounters the error “file sharing not loaded” when trying to complete a task, this indicates that there is one or more user(s) running ABS sessions out of the same user folder. To avoid experiencing this error in the future, it is imperative that ABS users work with their IT groups to ensure that each user has a unique start-in folder for his/her ABS session. For example, if there are 12 active users within the ABS system then there should be 12 unique user folders inside the ABS system folder.

Q: What is Jotform and how do we access it?

A: Jotform is a tool that TMS utilizes within the ABS system to allow users to upload zip files of ABS data whenever customer support is needed. With ever increasing cyber security measures being taken with company email systems, the Jotform link has become the default method for sending ABS data to TMS International for customer support issues. All zipped data files are password protected and can only be accessed by authorized personnel within TMS International. Our Jotform link is:

<http://form.jotform.us/form/30275557482156>

Q: How do I set up a new ABS Software™ user?

A: Please refer to the PDF “Adding_New_ABS_User” located in your HELP folder.

Q: Where can I find a listing of the executable files and command line switches for ABS?

A: Please go to your HELP folder and view ABS Files.pdf.

Q: Why do I get the message "This feature is not available for your user number" when I try to access certain ABS Software™ programs?

A: Your ABS Software™ user number is probably 50 or higher (displayed at the bottom of the ABS Software™ main menu screen), and you're considered a "Non-Privileged" user. If your user number is lower than 50 and you cannot access the ABS Software™ Utilities program G (View/Set ABS Software™.INI Values), then Special Option #73 (Restrict Access to ABS Software™ INI program) has been activated. Your ABS Software™ user number and program access capabilities are established by your Company Systems Administrator, not by TMS International Corporation. Contact your Systems Administrator for more information. See Section I of the System Administrator's Guide (PDF) in your HELP folder for more information.

Q: Can I bypass the ABS Software™ main menu and run individual programs via a Windows icon/shortcut?

A: Yes. Please refer to the "wadmguide" (PDF) in your HELP folder for more information.

Q: Can we interface the ABS Software™ to our in-house MRP/ERP System?

A: Yes. Please refer to the PDF "Interface_ABS_to_any", located in your HELP folder, for details.

Directory Editor ➤

Q: Can I change the case of elements in the ABS Software™? For example, can I switch from FE to Fe? Can I change the sequence of elements?

A: Yes, ABS Software™ supports changing the case of elements. To change all occurrences of FE to Fe, you must do the following:

- Activate the Directory Editor (main menu selection "A") and select the "Change" function. The elements dialog will then be displayed.
 - Delete the existing symbol "FE" from the Master Directory
 - Re-enter the new symbol "Fe", in the case desired
 - Click on "OK" to quit and save the change.
- Activate the ABS Software™ Utilities (main menu selection "U").
 - Activate program "A" (QC - Material Data Files), select "All of the Above Files", click on "OK"
 - Next, activate program "B" (QC - Grade Files), and click on "OK"
 - When finished, click on or enter "Z" to return to the main ABS Software™ menu

To change the sequence of elements (for example, to change C, S, P, MN to C, MN, S, P), follow the same procedure. When changing the sequence of elements, make certain that you have re-entered all of the elements you removed before you activate the ABS Software™ Utility programs. Be careful, as if you omit any elements, they will be dropped when the utility functions are performed.

Grade/Alloy Editor ➤

Q: I created a grade/alloy record today and made several changes to it, but none of these changes appear on the grade history report.

A: Changes made to a grade/alloy record on the same day it is created are not logged. Activity logging does not begin until the following day.

Q: How do I change grade/alloy restrictions?

A: Permanently changing grade/alloy restrictions is accomplished via the Grade Editor's "Change" function. You can also temporarily change restrictions while running the MIX and TAP programs.

Q: How do I change grade/alloy aims?

A: Permanently changing grade/alloy aims is accomplished via the Grade Editor's "Change" function. You can also temporarily change aims while running the MIX and TAP programs.

Q: How do I control the total amount of residual or "tramp" constituents and/or represent special non-metallic constituents in a grade/alloy specification?

A: Please refer to the PDF "Special_Elements" located in your HELP folder.

Q: I need to enter 12 elements for a new grade/alloy record, but there is only space for 10. What do I do?

A: You may have purchased a system that only allows 10 elements, and may need to purchase more elements for the ABS Software™. Please contact us for more information.

MIX/TAP ➤

Q: Is there a limit to how many materials are selected as candidates in a least cost charge?

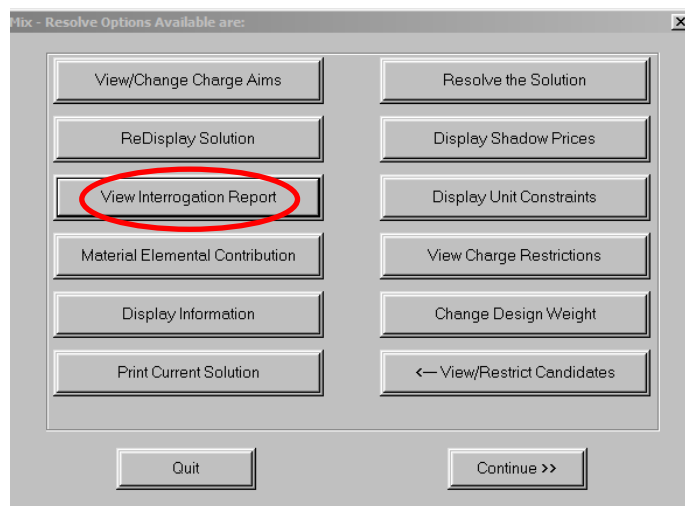
A: The MIX program can only select 1,200 materials as candidates for any given heat/charge. Ideally, materials should be grouped into various files according to the grades they would be used in (i.e., Alloy, Turning, etc.).

Q: I have a certain class of material restricted for use in my grade specifications file (0 min, 0 max values) yet when I perform a least cost charge for that grade, materials from this class are selected as candidates.

A: As stated in the previous answer, materials should be grouped into various files (Alloy, Turning, etc.) according to the grades they would be used in. If you have already entered all of your materials into one file but assigned different class codes, set Special Option #49 (Reject Max Zero Class Restrictions) in your Master Directory to "YES." This option, along with class restrictions of 0 min and 0 max, will restrict the entire class(s) from being selected as candidates.

Q: Why doesn't the MIX (or TAP) program select certain materials for a calculation?

A: After designing a charge (or additions) calculation that does not select a certain material that you feel it should have, first look at the Interrogation Report in your resolve screen below:



A list of material that were not selected for the solve in both MIX and TAP will appear along with the detailed reason why. If the material is not on this report, then look at the Shadow Pricing Report even though the material's price per pound is low, it may not be attractive for this particular calculation.

In addition, there are several fields in a material record to review to help determine why a material is not selected for a calculation. These include:

- Unit weight - If a unit weight above 1 is specified, the program may have wanted to use less than the unit weight specified. This information would be shown on the Unit Constraints Report. N"
- Cost - The price may be too high, making the material undesirable.
- Material Usage Code - If the usage code is set to "I" or "F" (or both) then this material cannot be used in a charge calculation, only in an additions calculation. Likewise, if the usage code is "C", then this material can only be used in a charge calculation, not in any additions calculations.
- Minimum Solve Lbs. (Kgs.) - If a minimum solve weight is entered and the optimum solution is less than this value, then the material won't be used.
- Available for Use - If "N-o" has been entered in this field, then the material will not be considered for any calculations.
- Furnace Codes - If a furnace code(s) is specified, then this material can only be used in calculations for that furnace(s).
- Quantity Available - There may not be sufficient quantity available for use.

If all of these fields appear correct, then review the elemental aims, restrictions, recoveries, etc. in relation to the material's chemistry.

Q: What is the basis for the restricted maximum weight on the Material Candidates/Restrictions screen?

A: The restricted maximum weight is based upon the lesser of the following:

- Chemistry Limit, or
- Class Restriction Limit, or
- Material Restriction set in the Grade/Alloy Restrictions, or
- Maximum Weight restriction imposed on itself, or
- Amount Available, or
- Unit Weight Restriction

The reason for a restriction is indicated in the material's "controlling factor". To view the controlling factor on the Material Candidates/Restrictions screen, highlight the material in question and press F5.

An asterisk (*) beside a material indicates a user-imposed restriction. Restrictions can be imposed as follows:

- In the Material record itself, when the Maximum Usage Percentage is indicated as any number less than 100.
- In the Grade/Alloy record's restrictions, as a Material Restriction or a Class Restriction.

A pound sign (#) beside a material indicates an ABS Software™ imposed restriction. The ABS Software™ will only modify the minimum or maximum values of a material if:

- The material is a unit weight or minimum weight material and;
- The material was actually selected for the optimum solution during one of the optimization passes.

When selected, ABS Software™ will adjust the minimum and maximum amount to the nearest unit weight as determined by the material's unit weight or maximum weight value.

Q: How are unit weight materials handled by the ABS Software™ when calculating a charge?

A: Please refer to the PDF "Unit Weight Processing" in your Help Folder for complete details.

Q: How do I change the default aims on the first TAP screen from Final to Intermediate?

A: To change the default aims from Final to Intermediate, you must pass the parameter -i when activating the TAP program. For example, if TAP is activated via a desktop icon, add -i to the command line on the program tab (i.e., Cmd. Line: k:\task\wtap.exe -i).

Inventory Control ➤

Q: How do I remove a heat/charge from being reserved?

A: Activate the Inventory-Usage function (choice I from the main menu, then choice U). The following screen will appear:

	Heat Number	Usage Function	Plan Number	Grade Code	Furnace Id.	Melt Date	Weight Entered
1		Usage					
2		Usage					
3		Usage					
4		Usage					
5		Usage					
6		Usage					
7		Usage					
8		Usage					
9		Usage					
10		Usage					
11		Usage					
12		Usage					
13		Usage					
14		Usage					
15		Usage					

Finished Cancel

Then select by using F2 from the list of heat(s)/charge(s) that you would like to remove from being reserved. Once you have selected a heat (s), the screen will look as follows:

	Heat Number	Usage Function	Plan Number	Grade Code	Furnace Id.	Melt Date	Weight Entered
1	treffi	Usage		AAAN-42	9	11/06/18	N-o
2		Usage					
3		Cancel					
4		Manual					
5		Usage					
6		Usage					
7		Usage					
8		Usage					
9		Usage					
10		Usage					
11		Usage					
12		Usage					
13		Usage					
14		Usage					
15		Usage					

Finished Cancel

By selecting Cancel, you will then get an acknowledgement message to continue the task.

Q: How do I correct my Usage Report when the heat/charge is no longer reserved?

A: Activate the Inventory-Usage function (choice I from the main menu, then choice U). Enter the heat/charge number you want to record usage for (MARS users can press CTRL+F2 for a list of historical heats). A message will appear stating "Heat/Charge number entered is not reserved. Do you want to process a manually prepared or standard heat/charge?" Enter "Y" to continue and enter the consumption information. When finished, press ESC to exit, and enter "Y" to each subsequent prompt to update your data files.

Q: Is it possible to only allow valid materials to be entered when recording usage information for a heat/charge?

A: Yes. Custom Option #8 was developed just for this purpose. Contact your Systems Administrator to activate this option in the CUSTOM.KSI file.

Q: I need to enter six ingots. All six have the same chemistry - the only difference is the size and ingot number (or lot number). Is it possible to enter these without re-typing all the information each time?

A: Yes, you need to go to the Main Directory, then Special Option #77 (Duplicate Previous Receipt When Name is the Same) and activated by typing in YES. This option will automatically duplicate the previous record, except for the lot number and weight.

Q: Is there a way to set the unit quantity equal to the available quantity for every material weight entered?

A: Yes, if you are using the "AVERAGE" material feature of ABS Software™. Set the unit weight of the "AVERAGE" material to zero. When the material is entered, the unit weight will automatically be set to the weight entered.