



Q. What is CONNECT Meter Reading System Software?

A. CONNECT software provides a flexible interface between the billing system and meter. It works with automatic meter reading technologies that Badger Meter provides.

Q. Why is CONNECT based on a Windows platform?

A. CONNECT requires a powerful operating system to perform its tasks. Windows® is not only powerful, it also gives CONNECT the flexibility to support current and future meter reading technologies. Windows is also very easy to use by simple point and click operations.

Q. What is the number one selling point in using CONNECT?

A. Simply stated, CONNECT is *very easy* to use. For example, information needed to load and unload reading collection devices (hand helds) can be stored in CONNECT by a name that you can assign. When you are ready to load a collector, choose the name and then choose the load option. With CONNECT there is no need to enter volumes of information every time you want to perform a task.

Q. I want to use the Mini Mobile Interrogator (MMI) as my AMR reading collector. The MMI needs the latitude and longitude values for each meter. Does my billing system need to store the latitude and longitude values for CONNECT?

A. No. CONNECT can store the latitude and longitude values for the billing system. Once the billing system is communicating with CONNECT, the MMI can be used with no additional changes.

Q. I sometimes have trouble finding a specific account. Does CONNECT offer an easier way to find specific accounts?

A. Yes. The Find feature in CONNECT allows you to search for specific accounts by the following ways:

- customer name
- address (street name, then house number)
- account number
- meter serial number
- reading module serial number
- route number and sequence number
- sequence number (regardless of the route number)
- ACCESSplus system number

CONNECT will search and update the display as each character is typed. For example, if you want to search by route number (three digits) and sequence number (5 digits), and you enter "01" in the route number field, the display will be updated to show the start of route 1. If a "7" is then added to the route number field, CONNECT will display the start of route 17. In this way, you only need to enter enough information to "get close" to the specific account in order to find it.

Q. I have an older PC that is about 5 or 6 years old. Can CONNECT run on that computer?

A. Maybe. CONNECT needs a computer that can run the Windows 95 operating system. Older computers usually don't have enough power but some do. A Pentium computer with 16MB of memory and 500Kb of available disk space will do just fine. Any new computer purchased within last two years or so should have enough power to run CONNECT.

Q. I have a very old 486 computer running Windows 95. Since CONNECT needs Windows 95, will this computer work for CONNECT?

A. No. The problem with a computer that has an older processor (older than a Pentium) is that CONNECT will run slowly if you have 50 to 100 accounts. But once you get more accounts, it will run so slowly that it cannot be used. The number of accounts will vary depending on the memory and disk for the particular machine.

For customers that do not want to buy a new computer, we suggest they buy a new motherboard. The cost is usually around \$100 to \$200. They can use the same memory in the 486, but with the Pentium processor on the new motherboard, they will have all the processing power CONNECT needs.

Q. I have a mixture of DIALOG® and TRACE® meters. Currently, I use the PI to read the TRACE accounts. Will this situation cause any problems or slowdowns in using CONNECT?

A. No. CONNECT is able to load whatever accounts you want into whatever hand held you choose. DIALOG and manual accounts can be loaded into the MC-V™. TRACE and manual accounts can be loaded into the PI. If a route has all three, you can load the radio and manual reads into the PI, and then load just the DIALOG accounts into the MC-V (if that is what you want to do). CONNECT has no restrictions. The only problem you'll run into is that the PI will not read DIALOG.

Q. I do a lot of analysis of the accounts using a spreadsheet program. Can CONNECT make this analysis easier?

A. Yes. CONNECT, using the Custom Reports feature, can send any information in the CONNECT data base to a file that is easily brought into a spreadsheet (a comma delimited ASCII file). In other words, you can gather the readings and send the needed information to a spreadsheet for further analysis.

Q. I have a number of commercial meters that are read on a manual basis daily. I'd like to convert them to an ACCESSplus MRT. Can CONNECT read ACCESSplus modules?

A. Yes. CONNECT has been updated to incorporate all the functions of ACCESSplus.

Q. What happens after I order CONNECT?

A. Once CONNECT is ordered, the Badger Meter's Application Services group will contact the billing vendor and get a copy of the information that is sent to your current reading system. From that information, the initial CONNECT data base will be built.

When Application Services goes out to train you, your data base and the CONNECT software will be installed at that time. They will then take the latest information from the billing system and update the CONNECT database so that it matches the billing system. When your training is completed, you are ready to go.



Q. What if I have a problem? How is that handled?

A. Call the 800 Tech Support number or send questions via e-mail to techsupport@badgermeter.com. The support group will work with you to determine the problem and then solve it. If you order CONNECT with the Remote Diagnostic Software, Tech Support can, over the phone, access your computer to find the problem.

Q. What if I have a problem using CONNECT? Can I get some help?

A. CONNECT can be shipped with a product called PC Anywhere. With PC Anywhere, the technical support people can phone your CONNECT PC and diagnose problems. We also ship a telephone line splitter, allowing you to plug the computer's modem into the voice phone line. This allows you and the Tech Support person to talk before connecting the computers on the same phone line. No second phone line is needed.

Q. I hate reading manuals, and don't always remember what I learned in the training session. What's available to assist me?

A. Almost all of the CONNECT manual is on the computer, in the on-line Help menu. Pressing the F1 key brings up access to on-line Help. Every chapter and every topic is included in the on-line Help.

Q. Some of the competitors have a feature enabling the user to access their meter reading system with a password. The password also limits the ability of some of them to those

software functions that are not password protected. Does CONNECT have a feature like this?

A. Not yet. This feature is used mostly at electric utilities, where the level of computer detail is much higher, and the work is divided among a number of people. Still, it is a very useful feature. We have it on our list of features to include in a future release.

Q. Some of the competitors have a feature called "unattended operation" which enables using the meter reading software without human interaction. Do we have such features in CONNECT?

A. Not yet. Like the password feature above, this is a good feature to have. But we did not want to hold up the release of CONNECT for this feature. It is on the list of features to include in future releases.

Q. I have a procedure that is not covered in CONNECT. What do I do?

A. CALL US ASAP! Technical Support will work with you and software engineering to find a solution. We need to know more about it in order to define what CONNECT could do for your customer.

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