

# AIS Computer System Planning Guide

## 2004

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this guide is to provide information and recommendations for computer usage with AIS. The MPRO AIS Support Center can only recommend configurations and procedures. There will be some referenced configuration recommendations that the MPRO AIS Support Center cannot support. If an agency elects to implement non-support designated items they will need to ensure they have accessibility to support if required.

## **Configuration Topics**

- 1. Operating Systems**
- 2. Computer Hardware**
- 3. Technical Assistance**
- 4. Contingency Plans**
- 5. Virus Protection**



**The MPRO Computer Planning Assistant**

## Operating Systems



**Says...** AIS will run on any Windows operating system.

### **Obsolete WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEMS**

- Windows 95
- Windows NT Workstation

### **Older WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEMS**

- Windows 98
- Windows ME

### **Current WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEMS**

- Windows 2000
- Windows XP Home
- Windows XP Professional

**RECOMMENDED OPERATING SYSTEMS:** If your computer is using one of the older operating systems, consider an upgrade to newer equipment, as funds are available. If you are using one of the obsolete operating systems, an upgrade should be considered a priority.

## Computer Hardware



Says...

## **AIS MINIMUM HARDWARE SPECIFICATIONS May 2004**

### **Tailgate or Desktop Computer**

- Minimum 128 MB RAM.
- Minimum 40 GB hard disk.
- Floppy drive: 3.5" 1.44 MB as drive A:
- **CD-RW drive (including the tailgate computer)**
- Internal Modem (if used with the Internet via dial-up)
- Network card (if used with a network)
- Monitor - 15/17/19 inch or 15/17 inch flat display (desktop only – flat panel suggested)
- Windows XP Home or XP Professional (Professional recommended for larger networks)

A computer used with AIS may be used for several other purposes including applications such as Internet, word processing and spreadsheets. It is important to understand that just because a computer meets the minimum specifications for use of AIS and other applications that it may not be free from problems associated with a lack of memory or storage capacity.

Importance of RAM memory:

- The larger the RAM capacity the more efficient the operating system performs.
- Multiple applications can be started at the same time.
- Less chance of memory errors associated with too many applications being started.

Importance of hard disk capacity:

- More applications can be loaded on the computer.
- Greater volumes of data can be stored.
- Running out of hard disk space can severely corrupt data content.

Printers:

- Any printer is capable of printing in AIS Windows. Check with your vendor on the best product for the volume and type of printing you will need to perform. Laser printers are excellent choices.

Networking:

- 10/100mbs Ethernet Network Card with RJ45 connector port. If the computer being purchased is already configured with an adapter card, do not purchase a separate add-on card.
- RJ45 cable in sufficient length to connect physical computer locations
- Ethernet Hub with 5 or more ports (depends on the # of PC's on the network)
- Consideration can be given to wireless networking for use at a warehouse/tailgate site.

Other tools:

- "Flash memory drive" – This is a small piece of hardware that uses the USB port on any computer using Windows 98 or newer. This is an excellent method for transferring tailgate data when a network is not available. It is highly dependable and can be obtained for around \$30.00. For more information see products like <http://www.interactivemediacorp.com/usb2microdrive.html>

## Technical Assistance



**Says...**

MPRO is the primary agent for the development and maintenance of the AIS software. This includes the update of all commodity codes and rates to properly reflect the guide rate as published in the 501. MPRO will serve as the final point of contact for technical assistance. Each region has a primary point of contact for their agencies. The primary point of contact is knowledgeable of AIS and FDPIR. The regional primary point of contact will determine if the assistance request is a hardware problem, AIS software problem or user problem in order to make a determination as to if a problem requires MPRO intervention.

What MPRO cannot provide:

- Diagnose and resolve Internet hookup and usage problems. The Internet Service Provider who is charging the agency a fee for the Internet hookup must provide this assistance.
- Fix or update hardware. MPRO can only suggest a solution. All agencies will need to have access to their vendor for assistance with hardware problems that are more than a configuration problem.
- Ensure that an agency properly enters and maintains accurate information within the system. MPRO will make every effort possible to ensure that AIS is processing data accurately. If it is determined that an agency is entering data incorrectly MPRO will make a recommendation on how the accuracy can be improved through the agency's regional office.

## Contingency Plans



**Says...**

MPRO highly recommends that each agency be prepared for operations without their computer system. In the event of a computer failure that prevents an agency from using AIS to provide benefits to clients until a repair is made the agency should have a plan for performing these tasks manually.

Each agency is encouraged to ensure that they perform backups each day AIS is used. With the 0204 update AIS users were provided with the AIS Data Maintenance System. The AIS Data Maintenance System can use diskettes, CD's, Zips, Flash drives and network drives. The following table illustrates the recommended backup procedure:

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
Monday	X	
Tuesday	X	
Wednesday	X	
Thursday	X	
Friday	X	
January Month End	X	X
February Month End	X	X
March Month End	X	X
April Month End	X	X
May Month End	X	X
June Month End	X	X
July Month End	X	X
August Month End	X	X
September Month End	X	X
October Month End	X	X
November Month End	X	X
December Month End	X	X

***If your agency is using diskettes to perform the backup, you are urged to consider an upgrade to your computer by either replacing it if it is an older model or adding a CD-RW drive. Diskettes are being phased out for use with AIS.***

Users of ZIP disks and CD-RW disks for their backup are urged to maintain a minimum 8 disk backup rotation. There should be 5 disks for the daily backup – one for each day of the week. The monthly should consist of at least 2 disks – one for odd numbered months and one for even numbered months. There should be one disk used as the offsite copy, which is a duplicate of a daily backup. The offsite copy should be stored in a location other than next to the computer where all of the other disks are likely to be stored. This is to provide access to data in the event a catastrophe hits the warehouse. Where the offsite copy is stored is up to the discretion of each agency.

## **Anti-Virus Protection**

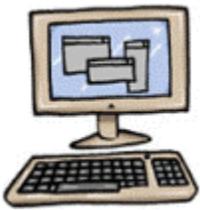


**Says...**

There have been several episodes of virus infections at agencies using AIS. Some of these virus attacks have been disruptive to the operation of AIS. MPRO cannot provide agencies with anti-virus protection. MPRO recommends that agencies contact their computer vendor for recommended anti-virus software.

Agencies need to be aware that anti-virus software usually requires a fee to obtain updated virus definition files and Internet access to download the updated definition files.

A good method for minimizing virus attacks is to be careful of the web sites being visited and especially not downloading anything without first knowing what is being downloaded. Another consideration is to not participate in e-Mail trading except for business purposes. Always consider the source of data being introduced into the computer used with AIS such as a web site, e-mail or bringing something in from home or from another person.



**Happy AIS Computing!!**