Feature Focus Guide:

Drink Dispensers

Core Product: Aloha Quick Service, Aloha Table Service
Last Updated: June 11, 2024

Contents

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Revision Record

Date	Version #	Description
Prior to 01/31/2023	v4.0+	Implemented support for drink dispensers.
		Updated Feature Focus Guide to reflect CFC and Aloha Manager.
01/31/2023		Converted document to use new templates. Updated the front cover and back page to reflect new NCR branding.
06/11/2024		Updated document to reflect NCR Voyix branding.

About Drink Dispensers

Drink Dispensers at a Glance	
Core Product	Aloha® Quick Service, Aloha® Table Service
Complementary Products	Software provided by drink dispenser manufacturers
Separate License Required?	Yes
Other References	Aloha Quick Service Manager Guide, Aloha Quick Service Reference Guide, Aloha Table Service Manager Guide, Aloha Table Service Server Guide, Aloha Table Service Reference Guide

Drink dispensers assure the Aloha® Point-of-Sale (POS) system accurately accounts for every liquor drink poured, and that the bartender pours every drink exactly the same way each time. Drink dispensers eliminate the potential for employees to over-pour or forget to ring up drinks. These devices can also help to identify and eliminate other causes of shrinkage, such as spillage. The following table shows the supported drink dispensers, and their communication parameters:

Drink Dispenser	Baud	Parity	Data Bits	Stop Bits	Cable
Berg Liquor System	2400	Even	7	1	Null modem
EasyBar Liquor System	9600	None	8	1	Straight through

Each type of dispenser includes installation instructions and software you must install to make them operational. You must use this software to configure and control the dispenser.Each drink dispenser must have an ID that matches a corresponding ID in the Aloha system. Configure each drink dispenser according to the documentation included by its manufacturer.

Configuring Drink Dispensers

This section details the configuration requirements within Aloha Manager and Aloha Configuration Center (CFC) for Drink Dispensers. If you are an experienced user, refer to Procedures at a Glance for abbreviated steps. If you prefer more detail, continue reading this document.

Drink Dispensers Procedures at a Glance:	
If you are viewing this document using Adobe Acrobat Reader, click each link for detailed information regarding the task.	
1.	Access **Maintenance > Hardware > Drink Dispensers** to create a record for each dispenser. See page 5.
2.	Access **Utilities > POS > Refresh POS & All Installed Products** to update the information on the FOH terminals, or wait for the End-of-Day (EOD) process to accomplish the data refresh for you. See page 6.
3.	Configure and price drink items using the PLU numbers. See page 7.
4.	Configure multiple drink dispensers and multiple terminals. See page 8
5.	Using multiple terminals with Berg dispensers. See page 9
6.	Configure environment variables for the Berg dispensers. See page 10

Creating drink dispenser records

You can configure several drink dispensers to communicate with the same terminal, or you can connect several terminals to use the same drink dispenser. These configurations require parallel configuration in the software received with the drink dispenser. Consult manufacturer documentation for information about how to configure the drink dispensers correctly.

Configuring a drink dispenser in the Aloha system is very simple, requiring only that you create a record for each dispenser and tie it to the terminal to which it is connected. If, however, you are running multiple dispensers from one terminal, or if you are connecting multiple terminals to a single dispenser, a simple process can quickly become very complex.

To create a drink dispenser record:

1. Select **Maintenance > Hardware > Drink Dispensers**.
2. Click the **New** drop-down arrow, accept the **system assigned number**.

Figure 1 Drink Dispensers Function

3. Type a **descriptive name** for the drink dispenser you use, such as 'Berg.'
4. Select the **terminal** to which the drink dispenser is connected from the 'Terminal' drop-down list. Click Terminal to open the Terminal Maintenance function, if needed.
5. Select the **port** from the drop-down list.
6. Select the **type of dispenser** you are connecting from the 'Type' drop-down list.
7. Click **Save.**
8. Repeat this **procedure** for each drink dispense attached to a terminal.
9. Exit the **Drink Dispensers** function.

Refreshing the data

After all settings are in place in Aloha Manager, you must select Utilities > POS > Refresh POS & All Installed Products to transfer the new information to the FOH terminals, or wait for the End-of-Day (EOD) process to accomplish the data refresh for you. If you run the refresh prior to the EOD process, select 'Automatically restart all POS terminals' and click OK to continue. After the data refresh is complete, all the new settings become operational across the Aloha network.

> ⚠ **Caution**
> Refresh data with caution and never during peak hours of operation. All FOH terminals reboot during a refresh and are down for a short period of time.

Configuring and pricing drink items

You must adhere to specific rules, when creating and pricing drink items in the Aloha system to interface correctly with the drink dispensers. These rules are as follows:

- Create the same drink items in the drink dispenser software and in the Aloha software, using the same ID (PLU) numbers.

> 💡 **Tip**
> You must configure drink items in the Aloha system, and also in the software provided by the manufacturer of the dispenser, using the same ID numbers (some companies refer to them as PLU numbers). If the numbers do not match, a message similar to 'Item #### not found in database. Notify Manager,' appears when you attempt to dispense a drink.

- Do not use modifiers, such as 'olive,' with items that interface with drink dispensers. Create separate ID (PLU) numbers for drinks with and without these modifiers.
- Use different ID (PLU) numbers for size variations, such as 'small,' 'double,' or '16 ounce.'
- You can use price levels in the Aloha system for drink dispenser items, but it is not necessary.

Configuring multiple drink dispensers and multiple terminals

The Aloha system can interact with multiple drink dispensers across multiple terminals. You must configure the software provided by the dispenser manufacturers to coincide with the configuration of the Aloha system with regard to drink item numbers and terminal numbers. You must consult with the documentation provided by the drink dispenser manufacturers for detailed information about configuring both the hardware and software, to accomplish your business needs. Any comments provided in the document about configuring software provided by other manufacturers is very general in nature, and not intended as a detailed explanation of that configuration.

When attaching multiple drink dispensers to a single terminal, create a drink dispenser record in the Aloha system for each dispenser, selecting the same terminal for each record. You must configure the hard and software provided by the dispenser manufacturer, to make use of the configuration in the Aloha system.
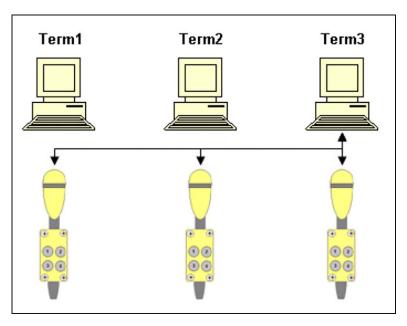

Figure 2 Multiple Dispensers Connected to a Single Terminal

If you are connecting multiple terminals to a single drink dispenser, you must create a drink dispenser record in the Aloha POS system for each terminal with which you wish to interact with the drink dispenser, selecting a different terminal for each drink dispenser record.
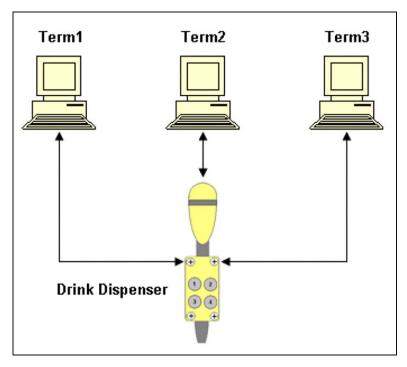

Figure 3 Single Dispenser Connected to Multiple Terminals

Although it is possible to connect multiple dispensers to multiple serial ports, common practice is to connect several dispenser together, and let them use a single serial port. The Aloha system recognizes this configuration as one drink dispenser.

Using multiple terminals with Berg dispensers

The Aloha system allows you to connect up to eight terminals to a single Berg beer tap unit. You can assign each button on the Berg tap to a specific item number for ordering on a specific terminal. For example, button on a tap can order a beer on terminal one, button two on the same tap can order a beer on terminal two, and so on. The message travels via the Berg 'Fan-Out' box to all connected Aloha FOH terminals. The terminal with the matching ID number accepts the message and reacts, while the remaining terminals ignore the message.

You can enable this ability by configuring the item number programmed into the Berg unit to include both the terminal ID number and the item ID number. Assign each button on a beer tap to a number based on the terminal on which the order is to appear, coupled with the item ID number to which it coincides. For example, if you want button number four to pour a beer, item 123, and order it on terminal number one, (as defined with the MULTILIQUORTAPTERM variable, discussed below), assign the string 1123 to button number four on the tap. To order the same item on terminal number two, assign the string 2123 to a suitable button.

Configuring environment variables for the Berg dispensers

You must define two environment variables on each terminal. The first is LIQUORPLUDIGITS. This variable defines the number of digits in the item number the Berg unit will send to the Aloha application software. For example, if the beer has an item ID number of 1234 (do not include the leading zeros), set this variable to 4 by adding the line SET LIQUORPLUDIGITS=4 to the system environment variables on each terminal, in accordance, with the operating system requirements. This setting does not include the terminal number sent by Berg. If you do not set this variable, the default value is 3. If you assign a value lower than 1 or higher than 4, it defaults back to 3.

The second variable is MULTILIQUORTAPTERM. This variable defines the number of the terminal in relation to the terminal number assigned in the Berg software. It has no relation to the terminal number assigned to the terminal in the Aloha POS system. For example, if you have four terminals connected to the Berg unit, you will arbitrarily assign each terminal a number 1 through 4. Any product dispensed through a button assigned in the Berg software to terminal 1 orders the item on the Aloha terminal assigned by this variable as terminal 1. An example of this variable is SET MULTILIQUORTAPTERM=1. Set this variable in the system environment variables on each terminal, in accordance with the operating system requirements.

The Berg unit uses cables to connect the Berg 'Fan-Out' Box to the Aloha FOH terminals. These cables are six-wire (three-pair) cables terminated with size-wire RJ11 ends. The run is straight through, so no wire crossing is needed. If using POS terminals with RJ45 type serial ports, plug these cables directly into the serial port. If you are using DB9 style serial ports, use an RJ45 to DB9, wired straight through.

If you are ordering items assigned to a four-digit item number in the Aloha POS system, the Berg hardware limits you to six terminals. For example, if the item is assigned the number 1234, you cannot assign the item to appear on terminal seven via programming the Berg unit for 71234. If you are connecting more than six terminals to one Berg unit, you need to assign the items to three digit numbers since this configuration permits up to eight terminals.

Drink Dispensers, Feature Focus Guide

NCR Voyix welcomes your feedback on this document. Your comments can be of great value in helping us improve our information products. Please contact us using the following email address: Documentation.HSR@NCRVoyix.com