

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions



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Operation.....	1
Programming	1
Setup	2
Service.....	3
Labels	4
Communication	6
AstraLink & AstraLabel.....	7

Operation

- Q: How is the price of a **Fixed Price item** changed?

A: The two following items are required to override a price.

 - Fixed Price function key
 - Key in **9000, MODE** to enter the Program menu.
 - Key in **4, ENTER, ENTER** to enter Preset Keys.
 - Key in **7, FEED, 0** to select the Fixed Price function key type.
 - Press the desired preset key* to assign the Fixed Price function.
 - Press **MODE, MODE** to exit.

Note: the Fixed Price function key may also be assigned using the AstraLink program.
 - Open Price setting
 - Key in **6000, MODE** to enter the Setup menu.
 - Key in **7, ENTER** to enter the Open Price setting.
 - Key in **0, ENTER** to enable price changes by the operator.
 - Press **MODE, MODE** to exit.

With these two items enabled, recall a Fixed Price PLU, enter a temporary price, and press the Fixed Price function key. Then print the label.
- Q: How are the **lower presets** keys selected?

A: Press the **MODE** key, then press the preset to recall the second item assigned to the preset key.

[See Programming #2](#) below for details about assigning PLUs to the lower preset keys.

Programming

- Q: **Why aren't price changes accepted** by the Astra?

A: Some Astra firmware versions allow only one price change at a time in step P03. In that case price changes should be made in the PLU File: step P01-03. The PLU File allows multiple price changes.

Note: From firmware version B0324L multiple price changes are possible in step P03.
- Q: How are the **lower presets** keys programmed?

A: In Preset Key programming step P04-01, after entering the PLU number, press the **PRINT key**, then press the desired preset key to assign the item to the lower preset.

[See Operation #2](#) above for details about recalling PLUs assigned to the lower preset keys.

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

3. Q: Can I **change the PLU Name character size**?
- A: The character size may be changed before entering the PLU description. Use the SIZE key and the Up/Down arrows to select the desired size.
- Text size cannot be changed after the text has been entered. To change the size the text must be completely deleted. Then use the SIZE and Arrow keys to choose the size before reentering the text.
- Character sizes are from 1 (smallest) to 7 (largest). Size 3 is the default.
- Note:** Use the same procedure for Message text.
4. Q: Why are the **barcode Check Labels printed continuously**?
- A: The barcode **Check Labels should be printed on the backing paper**. Thread the labels with the backing paper out the front of the printer rather than wound on the take up reel before printing Check Labels.
5. Q: Is it possible to **halt the barcode Check Labels printout**?
- A: When printing barcode check labels (Programming menu, step P09-01), press the **ZERO key** to stop printing labels.
- Note:** Press **PRINT** to resume printing or press **END** to quit.
6. Q: Is it possible to **copy an Extra Message**?
- A: Yes, an Extra Message can be copied to another number by the following steps.
1. Create a new, empty Extra Message number.
 2. Enter the number of the message to be copied.
 3. Press the **COPY** key.
 4. Edit the new message as necessary.
- Note:** PLU Names can also be copied by this procedure.

Setup

1. Q: Can the Astra print a 10-Digit / Dry Article / Source Marked barcode?
- A: There is no setting to print this barcode format but there is a work around. In the Setup menu, POS Code (step B02-02) select barcode format number 9 (shown below).
- FCCCCI IIIII (C/D)
- Where: F = Flag, C = Item code, I = PLU No., (C/D) = Check digit
- Notes:**
- Take care when creating PLU numbers to create the desired barcode.
 - To achieve the standard "02" barcode flag the value "F" set in Setup menu step B02-01 must be "0". The first digit of each PLU's Item Code (step P01-09) must be "2".
2. Q: Is it possible to **change the default Programming password**?
- A: No, the password is fixed at "9000".
3. Q: What is the **default setting for Open Price**?
- A: By default, Open Price is set as "**0**" (**allow**), meaning all prices can be changed by the operator. It is not possible to control the Open Price setting for individual items.
- The Open Price selection is made in Setup Menu, step B07
- 0 = Allow price changes
 - 1 = Prohibit price changes

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

4. Q: What could cause "**Err --9**", **Label Size Error**?
- A: Several things may cause a Label Size error (#9). Check the following.
1. The Label Format number (B01-01-01) does not match the length of the labels.
 2. The Length + Gap distance setting (B01-01-02) does not match the label format or actual labels.
 3. The gap between the labels is not the Ishida standard 2.5mm.
 4. The Label Gap Sensor is out of adjustment. [See Service #6](#) below for more details.
5. Q: Why is the **weight value approximately half** what it should be?
- A: Check if **the Astra is configured for kilograms**. The setting for pounds or kilograms is in the ROM Switch portion of the Test Mode. [See Service #1](#) below to enter the Test Mode.
1. Enter step **C06**, "**ROM Switch**" in Test Mode.
 2. Go to Switch #10: press **10**, **→**
 3. Select the Units value and press **ENTER**:
0 = Lb (default)
1 = Kg
 4. Press **END**, **END** and turn off the Astra to exit.
- Notes:**
- The Astra must be recalibrated when the units are changed.
 - [See Service #3](#) below for other causes of incorrect weight readings.

Service

1. Q: How can I **access the Test Mode**?
- A: Power up the Astra holding the "1" key. After the scale **beeps twice** release the key. The display will show: C00 TEST
2. Q: What is **error 40**?
- A: Error 40 occurs when **the memory has been corrupted**. This is usually caused by noisy power or a low voltage battery. After the cause has been determined and corrected the memory must be reset. [See Service #4](#) below for details about clearing the memory.
3. Q: • Why are the **weight readings incorrect** after the CPU board was replaced?
• Is it possible to **reset the calibration to default** when the Astra cannot be calibrated?
- A: There are two possible causes for the inaccurate weight readings.
- The calibration parameters are stored on the CPU board – not the A/D board. After the CPU board is replaced the scale must be recalibrated.
Note: The scale must be recalibrated after the CPU board, A/D board, or load cell is replaced.
 - If a 10 Lb test weigh reads as 12.5 Lb, then the **calibration parameters of the CPU board must be reset**. To reset the parameters press the **COPY** key immediately before pressing the **ZERO** key to begin the calibration process.
Note: Resetting the calibration parameters is only required once.

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

4. Q: What data are affected by the **three steps of Memory Clear**?
- A: The first two Memory Clear steps clear or reset different data in the Astra memory. The last step, which is optional, loads some dummy data. This data allows for checking without first programming PLUs, etc. If an AstraLink file is to be loaded the last step may be skipped.
- SRAM Clear** -- This procedure clears all data entered in the Programming Mode (9000) as well as any custom label formats.
- E2ROM Clear** -- This procedure clears all configuration changes programmed in the Test Mode and Setup Mode (6000).
- Test Data** -- This procedure creates the following test data:
- PLUs 1 to 10 (13 in early firmware versions)
 - Extra Messages 1 to 10 (20 in early firmware versions)
 - Store Name and Address
- IMPORTANT:** The Test Set procedure clears all programmed data (Registration Mode) and resets some configuration settings (Setup Mode and Test Mode).
- Note:** The memory is cleared in Test Mode, step C02.
5. Q: Why are the **decimal points incorrect** after changing the CPU board?
- A: When replacing a CPU board all three steps of Memory Clear must be performed. The second step, E2ROM Clear, initializes the standard USA configuration. This will restore the decimal points and other settings to the correct default values.
- Notes:**
- The Astra must be recalibrated when the CPU board is replaced.
 - [See Service #4](#) above more information about Memory Clear.
6. Q: How is the **Label Gap sensor** calibrated?
- A: The Label Gap sensor is calibrated from the Test Menu, step **C04, "Sensor Check"**.
1. Enter the Test Menu, then step C04 "Sensor Check" then step C04-00 "Label".
 2. Place only the label backing paper under the sensor.
 3. Adjust the value to **150 +/- 10** counts.
 4. Place the label on backing paper under the sensor.
 5. Confirm that the value is **60 or less**.
- Note:** Use a #0 cross-head screwdriver with at least a 2.5" shaft to adjust the label sensor sensitivity. Refer to the photo at the right.



Labels

1. Q: Why are only **two or three characters of the PLU name printing per line**?
- A: The Width value is set incorrectly in the label configuration menu. Setup menu, step B01-01-03 is set as "6.0" or "6.4" rather than "0.0".
- Note:** The Width setting controls the word wrap distance when entering text via the Astra's keyboard. The Width value should only be changed when using a label narrower than the Ishida standard 60mm or 64mm.

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

2. Q: What are the **default label formats**?
- A: The default Astra formats are:
- 1 – 60mm × 44mm
 - 2 – 64mm × 47mm
 - 3 – 64mm × 85mm, Safe Handling
 - 4 – 64mm × 59mm, Safe Handling
 - 5 – 64mm × 37mm, Non-barcode
 - 6* – 64mm × 59mm, Extended Text
 - 7* – 64mm × 85mm, Extended Text
 - 8* – 64mm × 85mm, Reduced Safe Handling
- * Available in firmware version B-0324B and later.
- Note:** Use the AstraLabel library for additional label formats.
3. Q: Can the Astra print **logo images**?
- A: No, any graphics must be pre-printed on the label.
4. Q: Is it possible to **edit a default label format at the Astra** keyboard?
- A: The default label formats cannot be edited. A default format must be copied to RAM and then edited. Refer to the procedure below.
1. Determine the format to be copied and edited. [See Labels #2](#) above for list of default label formats.
 2. Enter **6000, MODE** (B00, Setup Menu).
 3. Enter **1, ENTER** (B01, Label).
 4. Press [↓] DOWN ARROW (B01-02, Label).
 5. Enter the password: **4141** and press **SIZE** key – a long beep sounds.
 6. Press **ENTER**. (B01-02-01, Format).
 7. Enter the new format number, it must be in the range 20-99, press **ENTER**.
 8. Enter the format number to be copied (from step a), press **COPY**.
 9. Press [↓] DOWN ARROW (B01-02-02, Unit).
 10. Press **ENTER** to enter the label formatting step.
 11. Referring to the Service Manual section A.2, Label Format Worksheets, navigate through the fields and move them as needed. To disable a field set its X-axis = 9999.
 12. Press PRINT to issue sample labels.
 13. When finished press END, MODE.
- Notes:**
- Set the Astra to use the new format in step B01-01-01.
 - To modify more than the label format's field positions use the AstraLabel software program.
5. Q: What is the standard **label roll size** for the Astra?
- A: The standard label roll size is:
- 1 5/8" / 40mm core I.D.
 - 3 15/16" / 100mm roll O.D.
6. Q: What are the **minimum and maximum label sizes** for the Astra?
- A: Label length: 37mm ~ 85 mm / 1.5" ~ 3.3"
Print width: 30mm ~ 60mm / 1.2" ~ 2.2" print
Label backing paper width: 67mm / 2.6" (maximum)

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

7. Q: Why don't the Field Titles print on the label?
A: **Field Title printing must be enabled** in the Test Menu, ROM Switch (C06).
ROM Switch #9: "Field Title Print on Label".
00: Do Not Print (Default)
01: Print
Note: Refer to Astra Service Manual, section 4.7 ROM Switch. Part Number 66423.
8. Q: Why is the printing light or spotty?
A: There are many possible causes for poor printing. Check the following:
- Check and clean the thermal head:
 - Turn the **scale off**.
 - Use a **cotton swab only** (*NOTHING SHARP*).
 - Use **Isopropyl** alcohol to **gently clean** any build up from the head surface.
 - Note that thermal heads should be **cleaned weekly** at the minimum.
 - Check for **divots or debris build up on the rubber print roller**.
 - Check that the **labels are threaded properly** – especially at the peeling bar.
 - Test the **label quality** by checking the print with labels from a different case.
 - Check the **alignment of the print head**. It must be parallel with the print roller. It must also be positioned over the top (crown) of the print roller.
 - It is possible for a weak scale power supply to cause spotty printing. A replacement power supply should be considered only after all other items have been checked.
9. Q: When the date prints, why is the **month printed incorrectly**?
A: In AstraLabel set the **Font Size** of the date field to 20x12 (scale default). This is the only font size available to print the text for the month (ex "OCT"). If another font size is selected the month remains at size 20x12.
If a date must be printed in a different font size then the date format must be changed to print only numeric values such as "10.22.10". Use AstraLabel to change the **Date Symbol** field from "Jan, Feb..." to "Month Number".
10. Q: Why is the **Julian Date not printing**?
A: For the Julian Date to print **the PLU must be programmed to print the Pack Date**. The PLU's Date Flag must be set as either "2" (Pack Date) or "4" (Both Dates).
Note: Only the Julian Pack Date is available.

Communication

1. Q: What is the pin out of the serial communication cable used by the Astra?
A: The Astra uses a standard DB9 null modem cable. Both ends of the cable are 9-pin female. Pins: 2-3, 3-2, 5-5
- | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
| 9-pin
Female | ————— | 9-pin
Female |
| RXD 2 | ————— | 3 TXD |
| TXD 3 | ————— | 2 RXD |
| SG 5 | ————— | 5 SG |
2. Q: Is it possible to **transfer files directly between two Astra scales**?
A: Yes. **Connect the scales together using a null modem cable**. On both scales, enter Communication, step P10 in the Programming menu. Set the target scale as "Receiving" (step P10-02) then set the source scale as "Sending" (step P10-01).
[See Communication #1](#) above for the null modem cable specifications.

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

3. Q: Can a **USB to RS-232 Convertor** be used on a Windows Vista or Windows 7 computer?
A: Yes, a USB to serial convertor can be used to communicate with the Astra on Vista and Windows 7 computers. Refer to the following for tips.
- Install the proper drivers to support Vista or Windows 7. It may be necessary to download these from the web.
 - If communication does not work try rebooting the computer in Safe Mode then install the USB driver.
 - A USB to Serial convertor that has been tested with Vista Ultimate and Windows 7 Ultimate is available from Rice Lake. The part number is 72704.

AstraLink & AstraLabel

1. Q: Can the initial startup of AstraLink **bypass the required scale connection**?
A: The initial scale connection may be bypassed by configuring AstraLink in **Dealer Mode**. Refer to the following procedure.
1. Edit the **AstraLink shortcut properties**: right click on the shortcut icon and select **Properties**.
 2. Add **"-d"** after "...\AstraLink.exe" in the Target field.
Example: "C:\Program Files\Ishida\AstraLink\AstraLink.exe" **-d**
- Notes:**
- When initial setup is made with a scale connection the above procedure is not required.
 - After sending All Data to the scale, make a backup by reading All Data back into AstraLink. This will capture other settings that were initially missed by skipping the normal startup of AstraLink.
 - Refer to the instruction sheet "AstraLink, Changing to Dealer Mode", p/n 66152, for additional details.
2. Q: Do AstraLink and Astra Label work with **Vista and Windows 7**?
A: Yes, both programs will run on Vista and Windows 7 computers. It may be necessary, however, to run the programs in Administrator mode for proper communication.
- Setting "As Administrator"
1. Right Click the desktop icon and select "Properties"
 2. Select the "Shortcut" tab and click the Advanced button
 3. Check "Run as Administrator" box
 4. Click OK, OK
- Note:** For Windows 7 an optional compatibility setting is available.
1. Right Click on desktop icon and select "Properties"
 2. Select the "Compatibility" tab
 4. Check "Run this program in Compatibility mode for:" Windows XP SP3
 5. Click OK
- Note:** Vista and Windows 7 Home editions are not recommended with any Ishida software programs.

Ishida Astra Price Computing Scale with Printer Frequently Asked Questions

3. Q: • Is it possible to **import a PLU File** into AstraLink?
• Is it possible to **import Price Changes** into AstraLink?
- A: Only Price Changes can be imported into AstraLink. Create a spread sheet with two columns: PLU and Price. No headers are required. Save the file as a CSV (comma separated format) text file.

Text File Format

```
1001,1.23  
1002,3.45  
1003,5.67
```

The example above imports price changes for PLUs 1001, 1002, and 1003. The prices are set to \$1.23, \$3.45, and \$5.67 respectively. The decimal point in the price is optional.

Note: The PLUs must already exist in the AstraLink database.

Import the price file as follows:

1. Select **Import Prices** from the **File** menu.
 2. Select the file to import, then click **Open**.
 3. AstraLink imports the price changes from the file and updates the database.
 4. A message appears when the import has finished indicating how many prices were imported and whether any lines had errors.
An error means either the text format was invalid or the specified PLU number does not exist in the AstraLink database.
4. Q: Is it possible to **export a PLU File** from AstraLink?
- A: Yes, some PLU information may be exported to a text file. Only the following fields are exported: PLU No., Description, Sales Mode, Price, Tare Weight, and Shelf Life. The text file format is comma-separated-value (CSV).
To export the file select the **PLU List** tab and click the **Export** button. Select a destination (Save In folder), name the file, and click the **Save** button.
5. Q: Why are there **no production data** in AstraLink after reading totals from the scale?
- A: Check the following items that are required to save totals at the Astra and transfer totals to the AstraLink program.
1. Enable Totals accumulation in the Astra. In the Setup menu, Totals Save (B05), set step B05-01 = 1 (Save). [The default setting is "0" which is Do Not Save]
 2. Receive the totals from the Astra.
 - a. In AstraLink, from the Comms menu, select Receive from Scale.
 - b. At the Astra, in the Program menu, select step P10-01-09, Total Data, then press ENTER.
 3. In AstraLink, in the Setup menu, Options, set "Save Production Data for" to one or more days. A value of zero (default) prevents storage of totals in AstraLink.
 4. In AstraLink, after receiving the totals data from the Astra make sure "Load into current" or "Load into new database" is checked.