

Tech Tip Tuesday—April 11, 2023

Backups! Do they exist? Where are they? And even if they exist, what do you do in the meantime?

Do you know where your backups are? The two key components of Livery Coach are **the Microsoft SQL database (called “lcmain”)** and your **QuickBooks data file**. Both of these data files should be backed up often, and stored in a safe place where they aren’t subject to loss from hardware failure, fire, flood, or other disaster. If you don’t know where your backups are, or if you even have any, please ask your IT person.

We strongly suggest keeping backups in multiple places—put the primary backup on a cloud drive (such as DropBox, OneDrive, Google Drive, etc.) and maybe also on a USB thumb drive that you can take home. Storage is cheap these days, and you can’t be too careful.

We recently had a few customers who used a low-cost third-party hosting provider for Livery Coach. Apparently this provider had some sort of server infection/virus, which brought down hosting for these clients. In addition, this provider seems to be having issues retrieving backups.

If you host with a 3rd party, be sure you understand what their backup procedures are, and maybe even ask them if you can get a copy at least every week or two. That way you have your own backup to their backups, so in the event of a true disaster, at least you shouldn’t lose everything.

If you host with us, we back up all hosted databases every 15 minutes, and save copies of those backups every 15 minutes to a different cloud storage device. Additionally, we do daily image server copies. That said, we still strongly recommend that you also back up your QuickBooks data file from within QuickBooks.

If you don’t get a satisfactory answer on backups from your IT person, feel free to drop us a note. While we can’t take responsibility for maintaining your server and backups in most cases, we can certainly spend a few minutes seeing what you have.

Even with a good backup, you need to bridge the gap

Even if you have good backups taken often and saved securely, all that really means is that in the event of a failure, you should eventually get most if not all of your data restored.

But what do you do in the meantime? If it takes 2 days for your IT person to replace parts or configure a new server on which to restore your backup...what do you do while you are waiting? It’s like you’re driving down the road and someone covers your eyes—how long can you keep driving before something goes terribly wrong?

Luckily, Livery Coach has an answer, called the “Trip Snapshot”. Your system can be configured to automatically create and save a text file with all your reservations over a date range—say, from 1 day in the past to 3 days into the future—so that while you are waiting, you can load this file into Excel or another viewer so at least you can see the immediate trips while you are waiting to get your full system restored. In addition to saving this file, your system can also email it to you (single email address) so in an emergency it should be easy to find.

Currently, the setup for this function is in your LCComm so might not be easily accessed. While we are working on a user interface to make this easy for you to set up yourself, in the meantime we strongly recommend that you **send an email to support@liverycoach.com** and ask us to set this up for you.

Simply tell us what email address you want the snapshot to go to, and give us a few days to get it set up. Typically we will set this up to run once an hour, for a four day range (one day back and 3 days forward). Running more often or with a larger date range will put a heavier load on your system (which could slow it down) and generally is not necessary. All you are really trying to do is bridge the gap until your system is back up, so you aren't driving blind.