

# S9-Automatic Call Schedules Instructions Sheet

## SHIFT SCHEDULING PROGRAM OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS Automatic Call Scheduling for 10 Calls and 25 Doctors

<b>Section Name</b>	<b>Line Number</b> <a href="#">Click to go there</a>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	<a href="#">35</a>
<b>II. DOCTORS SHEET</b>	<a href="#">43</a>
<b>III. INPUT Sheet</b>	<a href="#">52</a>
<b>IV. PRE-SCHEDULE SHEET</b>	<a href="#">60</a>
<b>V. SCHEDULING SHEET</b>	<a href="#">64</a>
<b>VI. ASSIGNMENTS SHEET</b>	<a href="#">83</a>
<b>VII. SAVED ASSIGNMENTS SHEET</b>	<a href="#">89</a>
<b>VIII. CALENDAR, E-MAIL &amp; ECALENDAR SHEETS</b>	<a href="#">96</a>
<b>IX. CALL SCHEDULES SHEET</b>	<a href="#">103</a>
<b>X. CALL COUNT SHEETS</b>	<a href="#">109</a>
<b>XI. VCALENDAR SHEET</b>	<a href="#">113</a>
<b>XII. IMPORTING THE .vcs FILE INTO MS OUTLOOK</b>	<a href="#">118</a>
<b>XIII. PASSWORD PROTECTED SHEETS</b>	<a href="#">125</a>
<b>XIV. CAUTIONS</b>	<a href="#">129</a>
<b>XV. TECHNICAL SUPPORT</b>	<a href="#">135</a>

### Navigation Note:

This spreadsheet has several sheets and there is room for only a limited number of sheet tabs at the bottom of the screen. You can display additional sheet tabs by clicking on the directional arrows on the left of the sheet tabs. Another way to display additional tabs is to hold the mouse cursor over the directional arrows and click the right mouse button. You can now select the sheet of interest from the table of sheet names. You can also go from one sheet to the next by holding down the control key and pressing the Page Down or Page Up key on the keyboard.

If you find that you do not need all of the sheets, you can hide the unwanted ones. Do not delete them, for it might corrupt the spreadsheet logic. To hide a sheet, go to the sheet, select **F**ormat, **S**heet, **H**ide. To unhide a sheet, select **F**ormat, **S**heet, **U**n**h**ide, and then select the sheet from the menu.

## Excel Note:

This spreadsheet requires the Excel Analysis ToolPak Add-In. To check for this Add-In, go to Tools, Add-Ins on the Excel toolbar and be sure that "Analysis ToolPak" is checked. If this Add-In has not been installed on your computer, and if Excel asks if you would like to install it, you will need to have your MS Excel (or Office) CD available during the installation process.

## Quick Start Guide

Follow these simple steps to create your call schedules. Refer to the detailed instructions for additional details.

1. Enter call needs in the "Call Requirements Table" on the **Input Sheet**.
2. Enter Holidays and other days that should be included in the "holiday calls" pool in the "Holidays Table" on the **Input Sheet**.
3. Enter your doctor's names and call qualifications on the **Doctors Sheet**.
4. Enter up to 10 vacation periods per doctor on the **Doctors Sheet**.
5. Enter the schedule start date at the top of the **Scheduling Sheet** (needs to be the first day of the month).
6. Manually schedule any calls you want on the **Pre-Schedule Sheet**. You can clear all names on the sheet using the macro at the top of the sheet.
7. Go to the **Scheduling Sheet** and click the "Create Monthly Schedule" button at the top of the sheet after you have selected the appropriate scheduling options in the Aqua-colored boxes on the right.
8. Review results and edit if necessary using the random names provided in the drop-down menus.
9. Click the "Save Monthly Schedule to Assignment Sheet for Edits" button on the **Scheduling Sheet** and then go to the Assignments Sheet and edit as required using the drop down menus of all qualified doctors.
10. Click the macro button at the top of the **Assignments Sheet** to add the assignments to the bottom of the table on the **Saved Assignments Sheet** and to update the call count tables.
11. Distribute schedules.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This spreadsheet automatically assigns daily calls to doctors based on the doctor's availability, qualifications and previous call assignments. The spreadsheet keeps track of 80 different doctor "pools", one for each of the 10 calls for 8 days (7 days of the week plus holidays). Doctors are initially put in the "pools" based on their qualifications and once someone is selected for an assignment, he or she is removed from the "pool" until everyone in the "pool" has been assigned to that call. Then everyone is back in the "pool" and the process starts over.

Each pool will empty at a different rate. For example, if there are 100 doctors and all are qualified for "Call #1", the Monday/Call #1 "pool" will empty every 100 Mondays so each doctor can expect a Monday/Call #1 about every 100 weeks. Likewise, if only 25 doctors are qualified for Call #2, the Monday/Call #2 "pool" will empty every 25 weeks and each doctor can expect a Monday/Call #2 every 25 weeks. Of course, it is possible (but not likely) that a doctor may be the last one selected from a "pool" in one cycle and the first one selected from the "pool" on the next cycle.

There is logic that prevents a single doctor from being assigned to more than one call per day or being selected from any of the "pools" more often than required. For example, if there are 60 qualified (and available) doctors and 8 calls per day, the scheduling logic will look back 7 days and exclude anyone with any call assignment during those 7 days from consideration for another call. The 7 day look-back period in this example is equal to  $60/8$  rounded down to a whole number. Without this look-back exclusion logic, a single doctor may be selected for several different calls on consecutive days.

The schedules are created on the "Scheduling" sheet and then moved to the "Assignments" sheet where they can be edited if you need to change some of the assignments. After that, they are copied to the "Saved Assignments" sheet where up to 12 months of assignments can be stored. The various output calendars, etc. are created using the call assignments on the "Saved Assignments" sheet.

The spreadsheet incorporates a few **Special Scheduling Rules** on the Input sheet related to weekend calls. You can implement other special rules by editing the call assignments on the "Assignments" sheet. For example, if you have a rule that whoever has Call "X" on Wednesday needs to take Call "Y" on Thursday, you can adjust the Thursday assignment for call "Y" in keeping with your rule.

In addition, you can pre-schedule someone to a specific call before the automatic scheduling is activated to automatically fill your schedules.

## **II. DOCTORS SHEET**

The Doctors sheet has a table where up to 25 people can be listed. Next to the doctor name is an area where you can specify if the doctor is available each day of the week and is qualified (or to be considered) for each of the 10 calls. The call ID number 1-10 is shown on this sheet and corresponds to the calls that you specified on the Input sheet. There is also a place next to each person where up to ten vacation periods can be specified. These should be used to indicate a person's non-availability for a call. It can be a vacation, sick leave, travel, jury duty or whatever reason someone will not be available for a call. The 10 vacation blocks can contain past and future vacation periods and do not need to be filled successively. For example, you can fill the first block (Start and Stop times) and then skip the second block and fill the third block if you want to.

At the top of the sheet are two macro buttons. One is to sort the doctor's names and the other is to add a new doctor. When you want to add a new doctor. You should place the doctor's name in the light green cell and then click the **"Add New Doctor" macro** button. This approach to adding a new person assures that the new person is properly placed in the 80 call assignment "pools". If you simply type a new name in the Doctor Name column, the new person will not be properly placed in the various "pools" and will be chosen for an abnormally large number of call assignments until he or she has caught up with everyone else in the "pool".

If you want to remove someone from the list of doctors, you can simply delete the name and sort the list to remove the blank row. Or, you can leave the row blank. **Do Not Delete the Row Itself.**

To the right of the "Vacation Table" is a table that shows the number of calls assigned to each doctor. This table can be populated with historical call statistics before you begin using the spreadsheet to create the new call assignment calendars. Once it has been populated it should be hidden to prevent anyone from changing the assignment history. A macro button has been provided to hide history columns. The "Assignment History" table is updated every time the monthly assignments on the "Assignments" sheet are stored on the "Saved Assignments" sheet and will continue to update for as long as you create schedules.

Two macro buttons are provided to the right of this paragraph. One can be used to delete the call assignment history and the other can be used to unhide the call assignment history on the Doctors sheet. You should delete the call assignment history that you may have created during your free trial use of the spreadsheet before starting to create real schedules.

### **III. INPUT Sheet**

On the left side of this sheet is a place to put up to 40 dates that will be included in the "Holidays" call count. There is plenty of room in case you count days before and after holidays in this count.

On the right side is a table where you can define up to 10 daily calls. You can assign any name that you want to each call. Place a "X" in the day columns to the right of the call name if someone needs to be assigned to the call on that day. The F/S/S column is used if the same doctor needs to be assigned to the call on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The S/S column is used if the same doctor must be assigned to the same call on Saturday and Sunday. And, the F/S column is used if the same doctor must be assigned to the call on Friday and Sunday. You should not skip lines between specifying calls for it will confuse the program logic and will provide faulty scheduling results. You will be notified if you skip rows or if you forget to specify that at least one person is required for a call.

When scheduling weekend calls and you have selected one of the weekend combination rules, the scheduling logic will schedule the first day (say Friday) and use the same name for the next day or two. If your schedule starts on a Saturday and nobody has been assigned to the Friday call, the scheduling logic will be unable to comply with the weekend combination rule and the Saturday and/or Sunday call will be unfilled. You can manually schedule the unfilled calls after you have saved the scheduled calls to the "Assignments" sheet. If you are scheduling consecutive months the weekend combination rules will be followed in cases when the Friday call is in one month and the Saturday call is in the next month.

If someone is assigned to a Friday call and you have specified that the same person needs to be assigned to the Saturday and/or Sunday call, and if that person is scheduled for a vacation day on Saturday and/or Sunday, The Scheduling sheet will show an error on the Saturday and/or Sunday call assignment. You will then need to assign someone else to that F/S or F/S/S call after you have saved the scheduled calls to the "Assignments" sheet. One way to avoid this situation is to require weekend vacations to include Friday.

You have the option of having the program automatically schedule a call, or not. If you want the call automatically scheduled, check the box to the left of the call name. If the call is not automatically scheduled, it will be available for you to manually schedule it on the "Pre-Schedule" sheet. You can use the "unscheduled call" feature to assign certain types of days off to someone so he or she will not be assigned to another call on that day. For example, if your scheduling rules require that a day off must follow a certain type of call (say "Call #1"), you can randomly assign "Call #1" and manually assign the next day as a "Day Off" call on the Pre-Schedule sheet.

Below the Call Requirements Table are macro buttons that allow you to save or recall the call assignment history. Since the program updates the call history every time a call assignment is made, the program allows you to "go back" to an earlier date and start over with the call assignments. This might be the case if someone adds a new block of vacation dates and you need to recreate the schedule while considering the updated doctor non-availability.

### **IV. PRE-SCHEDULE SHEET**

If certain people need to work specific calls, you can manually assign them on this sheet. These assignments will be used on the "Scheduling" sheet instead of the random name selected by the scheduling logic. Be sure to delete these assignments before you move on to scheduling another month.

You have the option of having the menus provide a full list of qualified people or a single randomly selected person (the person the scheduling logic would assign on the Scheduling sheet). A check box is provided at the top of the sheet for use in switching back and forth between the menu options. This feature is useful if you have rules about call sequencing (such as 2 days off must follow a Call #1). In this case, you can randomly assign the Call #1 to someone and then assign a call called "Off" for the next 2 days to the person on Call #1.

## V. SCHEDULING SHEET

At the top of the sheet is a box where you specify the schedule start date. The schedule needs to start on the first day of the month and if you specify another date, the scheduling macro will not run and you will be alerted in the message box below the Start Date. The start date should be input in m/d/y format (such as 4/1/05 for April 1, 2005. It will be displayed in the mmm-yy format (such as Apr-05).

Also at the top of the sheet are 2 boxes "**Use All History**" and "**Emphasis on Recent History**". If these boxes are unchecked, no assignment history will be used in an attempt to even-out the assignment distribution between your people. All assignments will be completely random. If you check the "Emphasis on Recent History" box, the scheduling logic will not assign anyone to more than 1 call every 4 days unless the assignment is necessary to avoid a call going unfilled. If you check the "Use All History" box, everyone's assignment history will be used to even-out the assignment distribution between your people and the 4 day rule will not be applied.

If you choose to not use any assignment history in selecting people for daily call assignments, they will be completely random and while there may be some short-term and medium-term clumping of assignments, they will be evenly distributed over the long term. The shift scheduling has built-in logic to remove the short-term and medium-term clumping of assignments for an individual. If you choose to use this feature by selecting "Use All History", the program may assign people returning from a vacation to a large number of calls in attempt to prevent a medium-term clump and create a short-term clump of call assignments for that person. The problem is most noticeable in situations where you have only a few people and a large number of calls. The short-term clumping is minimized if you select "**Emphasis on Recent History**".

Also at the top of the sheet, to the right of the "History" boxes are 3 more option boxes to allow you to specify if an even distribution of calls or an even distribution of days is most important in your scheduling. If you specify that an "**even distribution of assignments over all calls is most important**", the scheduling logic will give great weight to this parameter and little weight to an even distribution of assignments over all days. If you specify that an "**even distribution of assignments over all days is most important**", the scheduling logic will give great weight to this parameter and little weight to an even distribution of assignments over all calls. If you specify that daily and call distributions are equally important, they will be given equal weight in the scheduling. And, if you select more than one box, both days and shifts will be given equal weight in the scheduling.

Each scheduling situation is different which is why we enable you to turn some of the scheduling features on and off to best fit your combination of people and call coverage needs. You should start out by selecting "Use All History", and if short-term clumping after people return from a vacation, is a problem, you should switch to "Use Just Recent History".

You may want to save the call assignment history before you run the scheduling macro in case you decide that you want to recall the history and re-run the schedule at a later date. **The "Save Call Assignment History" macro is located on the Input sheet.**

When you click the "**Create Monthly Schedule**" macro button the spreadsheet will cycle through all of the days and randomly assign someone to that day. If the scheduling logic is unable to fill a call assignment the blank **cell will turn red** to alert you of the unfilled calls. You may be able to manually schedule someone using the drop-down menu. If the menu is blank, you can still assign someone to the call after the names have been moved to the "Assignments" sheet. If someone on vacation is selected for a call assignment, the **cell will turn pink**. If this happens you will need to replace the doctor assigned to the call by selecting the name in the drop-down menu. An "On-Vacation" doctor will only be assigned to a call if you have a F/S/S or S/S call requirement specified on the Input sheet and someone is on vacation on a weekend day after he has been assigned to a call on a previous weekend day. If the spreadsheet does not recalculate between these manual assignments, you may select the same person for more than 1 assignment per day. If this happens the **cell will turn pink** and you will ne

After you have run the scheduling macro, you should review the results to see if you would like to change any of the assignments. If you would like to change an assignment, simply select the name provided in the drop-down menu. The name that appears in the drop-down menu is the next person that has been selected by the scheduling logic based on availability and previous assignment history.

If you find that you want to reschedule a month and you have not saved the results, you can simply click the **"Create Monthly Schedule" macro** and do it over. If you have saved the monthly scheduling results to the "Saved Assignments" sheet and have saved a copy of the call assignment history, you can restore the call assignment history and then re-schedule the month. Before you reschedule, you should go to the "Saved Assignments" sheet and delete the previously-generated results. If you have saved the monthly scheduling results and do not have a copy of the call assignments history for the period immediately preceding the month, the previously-scheduled (and then deleted) assignments for the month will remain in the call history and everyone will erroneously receive credit for the deleted calls.

You should schedule the months in chronological order in order for the "look-back" feature to work properly when avoiding assignments any more frequently than required.

If you do not use the F/S/S or S/S call options the spreadsheet will not erroneously assign a doctor to a call and you will not need to review the schedule before saving it. You may then want to use the **"Create and Save 12 Monthly Schedules Without Edits on the Assignments Sheet" macro** to take care of the entire year's schedule. This macro deletes all old call assignments on the "Saved Assignments" sheet and creates and saves 12 monthly schedules starting with the date you input. After the macro is finished creating the 12 month schedule, it will save the spreadsheet under its current name. If you want to save it under a new name you should do that before running this macro. This macro may take several minutes to run depending on the speed of your computer and the number of calls and doctors to be scheduled.

You may want to save the call assignment history before you run the 12 month scheduling macro in case you decide that you want to recall the history and re-run the schedule at a later date. The **"Save Call Assignment History" macro** is located on the Input sheet.

If you have already saved the assignments for a month, the "Create Monthly Schedule" macro will not work for that month. You will need to delete the saved month on the "Saved Assignments sheet" or select another month to schedule.

## **VI. ASSIGNMENTS SHEET**

The Assignments sheet contains the last-saved monthly call assignments and looks much like the Scheduling sheet, but is more printer-friendly. You may print the table on this sheet if you would like the schedule displayed in this fashion.

You may change any call assignment on this sheet by selecting a name from the drop down menu. The manual assignments menu serves up only qualified employees, but does not check for availability so it is possible to assign someone who is on vacation to a call. If you happen to do this, the **cell will turn pink** to alert you that you need to assign someone else.

The **"Copy These Assignments to the Saved Assignments Sheet"** macro at the top of the sheet will move the assignments as advertised plus **update the lifetime history call count for each doctor**. If you have already saved 12 months of assignments, you will be warned by a message below the macro button and the copy macro will not work.

## **VII. SAVED ASSIGNMENTS SHEET**

Macros on the Scheduling Sheet and the Assignments sheet save the scheduling results to this sheet. Successive scheduling results are saved on this sheet below the last-saved results. There is room to store 12 months of schedules. The scheduling results on this sheet are used to create the schedules on the "Call Schedules" sheet and on the "vCalendar" sheet. If, for some reason, you schedule your months out of order, the results will be saved in whatever order you created your monthly schedules and the results on the "Call Schedule" and "vCalendar" sheets will be in that same order.

The macro button at the top of the sheet can be used to delete all of the saved assignments and make room for another 12 months. A message at the top of the sheet will alert you when the sheet is full and you need to make room for new results. Any results stored below the twelve 31-day months on this sheet will be ignored in the schedules.

**If you find that you need to change a few shift assignments**, you can do that by selecting a name from the drop-down menu at the top of the column and then copy and paste/special/values the name to replace the previously scheduled person. The menus at the top of the columns show only qualified people for the call in that column and should not be copied to another column. The assignments thus-made will not appear on the shift history that is saved on the "Doctors" sheet. You should therefore correct the shift history by changing the call assignment counts in the call history table. The table can be unhidden by use of the macro on the "Instructions" sheet.

The manual assignments menu serves up only qualified doctors, but does not check for availability so it is possible to assign someone who is on vacation to a shift. You need to check availability before assigning a doctor to a shift on this sheet.

The print range has been set to print the entire 12 month schedule and can be printed on 9 sheets of paper. If you want to print one month per sheet you can adjust the page breaks by going to the print preview window and dragging and dropping the dotted line page breaks so they are at the end of each month.

## **VIII. CALENDAR, E-MAIL & ECALENDAR SHEETS**

A calendar can be prepared for any month saved on the "Saved Assignments" sheet. Select the month from the drop-down menu at the top of the Doc Calendar sheet and the calendar will be displayed. On the Call Calendar sheet you also need to select the call to be displayed.

When you click the macro button at the top of the sheet, the appropriate ECalendar sheet will be sent via e-mail to your employee or to the call location. Insert your employee or location e-mail address next to their name on the E-Mail sheet if you want them to be eligible to receive the calendar. You may also insert other recipient e-mail addresses in the table if there is room. Be sure to select employees and locations to receive the calendar by clicking on the individual check boxes, or you can choose the "Send to Everyone" option.

Your e-mail client will probably alert you that a program is attempting to send a message and you will need to click "Yes" in order to send each message. This is okay for a few messages, but if you are sending schedules to all of your people, this can become bothersome and time-consuming. You can change the security settings for your e-mail client to allow a program to send e-mail messages without asking your permission. The down-side of changing the security settings is that some not-so-friendly program can flood the world with spam from your computer. You need to decide if the reward is worth the risk. Instructions on how to adjust the Windows security settings for Outlook Express, Outlook and Windows Mail can be found at:

<http://www.rondebruin.nl/mail/prevent.htm>

The ECalendar sheets contain the scheduling information on the Calendar sheet and will be sent to your recipients as a single sheet Excel workbook. If any of your recipients do not have the Excel software, they can download a free Excel viewer from Microsoft at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=c8378bf4-996c-4569-b547-75edbd03aaf0&displaylang=EN>

## **IX. CALL SCHEDULES SHEET**

The scheduling results that are stored on the "Saved Assignments" sheet are presented in the table on this sheet. Each row of the table shows a doctor's name, the day of the week, the date and the call assignment. The nearly 4,000 rows of information can be filtered to display only the entries you want to see. Each column has a small down arrow that you can click and select the information you would like to be displayed. The filters hide the unwanted rows so just the requested records are displayed. For example if you want to see all of the call assignments for a single doctor, you can select the doctor's name from the list in the doctor column drop down menu and only that doctor's calls will be displayed. You can filter the data on more than 1 column by selecting an item from a second column. For example, you can filter the one doctor's calls to display only those on a Sunday, or only a specified call type.

After you are through viewing the filtered data, you should select "all" from the drop-down menu to display all of the data in that column. The little down arrow will be blue if a filter has been selected and black if a filter has not been selected for the column.

The print range has been set to print the displayed list on as many sheets of paper as necessary. The entire list of 3720 rows will require about 76 sheets of paper while a schedule for a single doctor will probably fit on one sheet.

## **X. CALL COUNT SHEETS**

The "Month Call Count" sheet shows the number of calls assigned to each doctor in the last-scheduled month stored on the "Assignments" sheet. The "Lifetime Call Count" and the "Lifetime Day Count" sheets show the total number of calls ever assigned to each doctor and includes calls in the "Lifetime History" table plus the calls shown on the "Scheduling" sheet and the "Assignments" sheet.

## **XI. VCALENDAR SHEET**

The scheduling information can be saved as a file using the vCalendar data format that can be imported into MS Outlook or other software that can read vCalendar files. click the **"Create the vCalendar Now" macro** button to create the file. The macro will save scheduling spreadsheet under it's current name and then save the vCalendar file in your scheduling directory with the name shown in the cell below the macro button. After the vCalendar file is created, the spreadsheet will close. The vCalendar file includes all call assignments for each month that you have saved on the "Saved Assignments" sheet. The hidden vCal Out sheet is used in the creation of the vCalendar files and should not be deleted.

If there is already a file in your scheduling directory with the same name as the vCalendar file being created by the macro, Excel will ask if you want to replace the old file with the new one. If you select "No" the macro will display an error message. Simply select "End" and the macro will stop. Also, after the vCalendar file is saved, Excel will ask you if you want to save the changes in the ??????????.vcs file. You can select either "Yes" or "No" since the old file is the same as the new file.

## **XII. IMPORTING THE .vcs FILE INTO MS OUTLOOK**

In MS Outlook select File, Import and Export. Then choose "Import an iCalendar or vCalendar file (.vcs) and browse to your scheduling directory or other folder where you have stored the vCalendar file. Select file type = vCalendar and all of the .vcs files will be displayed. Click on the one you want to import and then click "OK". The procedure to import a file into a PDA or other device is probably similar, but you may need to check your operating manual.

**Warning:** If you import a file into Outlook more than once, the Outlook Calendar will display the calls more than once each day. So, if you import a file with January calls and then later import a file with January and February calls, the Outlook Calendar will display each January call twice.

If you receive an error when importing the .vcs file into MS outlook, it is probably due to miscellaneous punctuation marks in the "SUMMARY" and/or "LOCATION" lines in the .vcs file. When Excel saves a worksheet as a text file, it puts quotation marks (" ") around lines containing certain punctuation marks such as a comma (,). MS Outlook can't import the lines with the quotes and will give you an error message. You can open the .vcs file with Notepad or other text editor and search for the lines containing quotation marks to locate the miscellaneous punctuation marks causing the problem.

Therefore you should not enter doctor names in the last name first, first name last format on the "Doctors" sheet.

## **XIII. PASSWORD PROTECTED SHEETS**

'All of the sheets have protected cells (cells that you may not use to input data). All of the unprotected cells for data input are light green in color. Each worksheet is protected to prevent you from overwriting the information in the protected cells. We advise that you leave the worksheets protected unless you want to make changes on a worksheet that can not be made if the sheet is protected. For example, if you want to hide or unhide rows and columns or change cell colors you will need to unprotect the sheet (Tools, Protection, Unprotect Sheet). Be sure that you do not change the contents of the protected (non-light green) cells. You can, however, change the color, formatting, etc of the protected cells. After you have made the changes, be sure to protect the sheet (Tools, Protection, Protect Sheet). No password has been assigned to the sheet protection. You may wish to add a password (part of the Tools, Protection, Protect Sheet series).

## **XIV. CAUTIONS**

**Do not add or delete rows or columns** on any of the worksheets, for it may corrupt the spreadsheet logic. Rows and columns may be hidden if you do not need them or do not want to see them.

**If cells with input data are hidden** (the light green cells), any data contained in those cells will still be used by the spreadsheet.

## **XV. TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

Technical Support is available by phone, fax or e-mail during normal business hours (Mountain Time).

**Phone:** (208) 855-2502

**Facsimile:** (208) 855-2503

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