



EQUINOX™



With Equinox™, all of your options are open. Mix and match various elements of data collection technologies from manual key entry to targeted fixed network RF AMR in one powerful integrated package.

Neptune has a long, successful tradition of providing utilities with innovative solutions for their meter reading and billing processes. In fact, Neptune introduced its first version of meter reading software in the 1970s.

Neptune continues this tradition with the release of Equinox-MR, the latest software platform designed to automate the meter reading process with a comprehensive, easy-to-use feature set that assists utilities to reliably maintain meter reading schedules, regardless of size or industry type.

Equinox is an extremely flexible software application that provides significant scalability. It can be operated as a Client on a stand-alone PC or in a Client/Server environment where multiple workstations and remote offices can be efficiently networked across the utility's LAN or WAN architecture.

Neptune prides itself in developing meter reading systems that allow utilities to

migrate from their initial investment to other available technologies in a seamless fashion. Equinox follows this philosophy in a number of ways. The software is designed to support previous versions of DOS-based handheld computers like the PC9300 and PC9800. The adaptability of Equinox helps safeguard investments in meters and data collection technologies.

File layouts from EZRouteMAPS™ and RouteMAPS™ are supported, eliminating the requirement to purchase new handheld devices and implement new transfer files.

New Customers – Equinox offers a File Transfer Utility that allows you to use your current CIS/Billing interface. This customizable bridge is an integrated part of the Equinox System.

Equinox also supports the latest Windows CE-based handhelds utilizing Ethernet communications for faster, more reliable data communications.

KEY FEATURES

- Supports hybrid meter reading system approach
- Compatible with industry file formats
- Supports Client and Client/Server system configuration
- Intuitive menu driven, point & click design graphical user interface
- Supported by a qualified Customer Support Center

KEY BENEFITS

- Migrates from multiple data collection methods: manual keyed entry, probed encoders with Advantage II, walk-by RF with handheld data collectors, MRX920 and MTX950 mobile RF data collectors, EZNet targeted fixed network data collectors
- Supports optical probed C & I electrical meters
- Compatible with existing transfer files of EZRouteMAPS or RouteMAPS
- Provides water utilities with E-Coder PLUS value added features: leak detection, tamper detection, meter diagnostics, and flow diagnostics
- Supports stand-alone PC environment and network of multiple users and remote site configurations – scalable architecture
- User-friendly interface that makes the application easier to learn and operate and minimizes support requirements



Equinox (1) supports both DOS and Windows CE handheld computers; (2) safeguards previous investments; and (3) is open to future technologies.

With Equinox, all of your options are open. Mix and match various elements of data collection technologies from Neptune's ARB® (Automatic Reading and Billing) Utility Management Systems™. Equinox supports any combination of data collection technology deployed — from manual keyed entry, walk-by probed, walk-by RF AMR, mobile RF AMR, and targeted fixed network RF AMR — in one powerful, integrated package.

Equinox supports meter probing for multi-utility applications. In the water industry, walk-by probed meter reading is supported via a wireless RF link between the probe and the handheld computer. Equinox also supports optical probing across a wide variety of electric meters and file types for time-of-use and mass memory meters (coming Q2 2006).

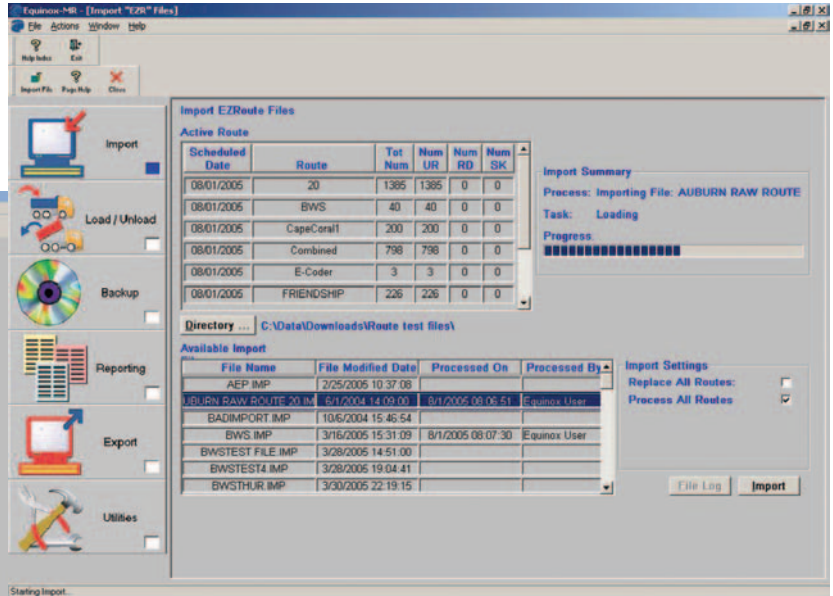
From exchanging files with the utility Customer Information System (CIS) to communicating route information to data collection devices, Equinox manages the entire process with the greatest of ease through its simple and intuitive graphical user interface.

- Route information is quickly imported from the CIS into the Equinox database and prepared for route assignment to either handheld or mobile data collection units. Routes can be split or grouped before assignment to handheld data collection units. When used with EZNet, Equinox communicates and extracts meter reading information required from the EZNet database.

- Equinox transfers route information to handheld data collection units for walk-by meter reading or onto a USB flash drive for mobile (drive-by) meter reading.
- Meter readings captured in the field are stored in the handheld or mobile data collection unit until it is returned from the field and unloaded into Equinox for processing prior to being transferred to the CIS for billing purposes.
- Equinox serves as a valuable management tool with the capability to generate backup copies of the meter reading data and provide numerous standard reports to efficiently manage the entire meter reading process. Reports are available to analyze field productivity, meter reading success rates, schedule maintenance, field service problems, and other valuable management reports. A custom report generator is available to create customized reports that best suit the utility's individual or unique operational requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the various data processing operations, completed route information is transferred to the CIS for billing and customer service purposes.

Not only is Equinox easy to implement, learn, and operate, it is backed by one of the most respected technical support groups in the industry. Neptune's System Support team is easily accessible through our toll-free number (1.800.647.4832).

Equinox manages the entire meter reading process with the greatest of ease through its simple and intuitive graphical user interface.



Neptune provides immediate access to qualified support staff that provide prompt, courteous, and conscientious assistance when customers need it most. All Support staff are trained, knowledgeable professionals dedicated to ensure the highest level of support and customer satisfaction.

Equinox is an adaptable, cost-effective meter reading software solution designed to maximize revenues for multi-utility applications. Neptune designed Equinox to provide the highest level of data integrity and system integrity to the utility industry. When you consider Neptune's vast experience, proven track record, technical innovation, and quality technical support, you can be confident Equinox is a solution that provides the best in meter reading reliability with the lowest risk of stranding metering and meter reading assets.



Equinox seamlessly supports meter reading information collected from the MRX920 (shown)/MTX950 mobile data collectors. Route information is transferred from the MRX920 to Equinox using a USB flash drive.

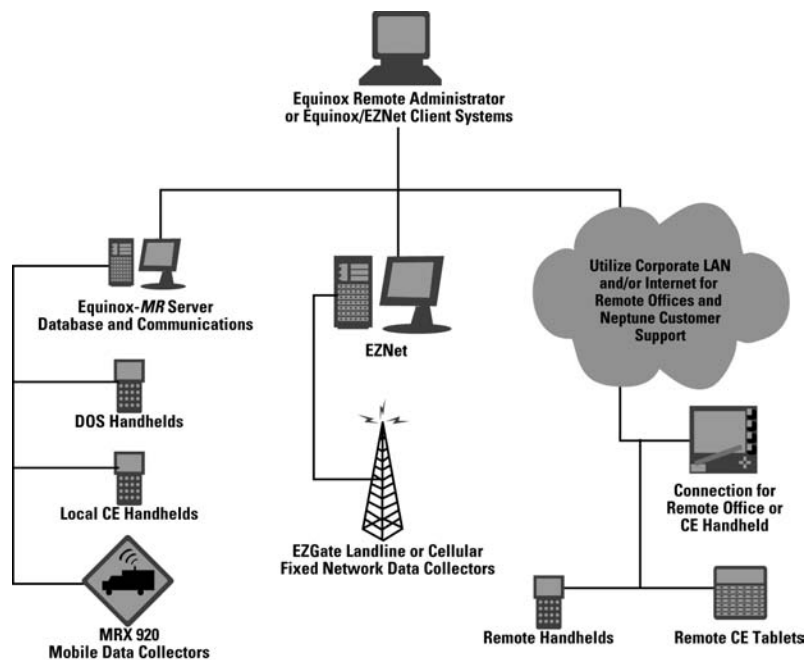
The minimum recommendation for the Equinox Route Management Server computer installation includes:

- Windows Server 2000® / Windows Server 2003®
- Intel 800-MHz, Dual Pentium II 500-MHz or compatible processor or higher, depending on the system configuration
- 256-MB RAM (512-MB RAM or higher recommended), depending on the system configuration
- For dial-up: 56 kilobits per second (Kbps) or higher-speed modem
- For networking: Network adapter appropriate for the type of local-area, wide-area, wireless, or home network to be connected to, and access to an appropriate network infrastructure; access to third-party networks may require additional charges

- CD-ROM drive
- Video graphics adapter capable of 256 colors and 1024 X 768 pixels
- 4-gigabyte (GB) available hard disk space
- Neptune Technology Group Inc. recommends using a RAID configuration for the Equinox Route Management server installation. For RAID explanations see below.

Additional items required for Automatic Update option:

- For dial-up: 56 kilobits per second (Kbps) or higher-speed modem
- For networking and Web access: Network adapter appropriate for the type of local-area, wide-area, wireless, or home network to be connected to, and access to an appropriate network infrastructure; access to third-party networks may require additional charges



The minimum hardware requirements for the Equinox Client computer include:

- Windows 2000® / Windows XP®
- Intel 800-megahertz (MHz) processor or faster
- Minimum 256 megabytes (MB) of RAM (512 MB is recommended)
- Minimum 1.5 gigabytes (GB) of available space on the hard disk
- CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive
- Keyboard and a Microsoft Mouse or some other compatible pointing device
- Video adapter and monitor with Super VGA (1024 X 768) or higher resolution

Additional items required for Automatic Update option:

- For dial-up: 56 kilobits per second (Kbps) or higher-speed modem
- For networking and Web access: Network adapter appropriate for the type of local-area, wide-area, wireless, or home network to which you wish to connect, and access to an appropriate network infrastructure; access to third-party networks may require additional charges

RAID information paraphrased from Microsoft.com

RAID is two or more mirrored hard disks, depending on your system configuration

Hardware redundant array of independent disks (RAID). Use multiple fast-SCSI (small computer system interface) drives (7,200 RPM or faster) and individual SCSI disk controllers (at least one redundant controller) to improve I/O processing and read/write times. Spread your page file across multiple disks to improve virtual memory access. If you run SQL Server 2000 on your Small Business Server network, consider using hardware RAID:

RAID-0, disk striping (2 disks minimum) offers the best performance for both read and write but offers no fault tolerance.

RAID-1, disk mirroring (2 disks minimum) provides excellent fault tolerance but only marginally improves read performance.

RAID-5, disk striping with parity (3 disks minimum) provides good read performance and the best fault tolerance for the lowest price.

RAID-0+1, mirrored disk striping (4 disks minimum) combines disk mirroring with striping and provides the highest read performance and the best combination of fault tolerance and performance. This option can be more expensive than other RAID options.

Neptune engages in ongoing research and development to improve and enhance its products. Therefore, Neptune reserves the right to change product or system specifications without notice.

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