

The TLG File

We get a lot of mail asking about the file named <CompanyFileName>.QBW.TLG that is housed in the folder in which you save your company file. Many users don't know what it is, but they notice the file's size, and they write to ask what it does and why it takes up so much disk space.

The TLG file can be extremely large (even larger than the company file), and it's one of the files that are backed up when you use the QuickBooks backup function to back up your company file. If you're backing up to a 2GB or 4 GB flash drive, there may not be room on that drive to hold your backup. However, the size of the TLG file is manageable; you can perform actions in QuickBooks to reduce the file size.

We provide this article because the information explaining what the TLG file is has incorrect information in the QuickBooks 2006 and 2007 Help Files. For all versions of QuickBooks, on the QuickBooks Website Support pages, the article about the TLG file and the way it works has incorrect information.

The Purpose of the TLG File

The TLG file is a Transaction Log file in which QuickBooks tracks changes to your data since the last time you created a verified backup of your company file. In case of an accidental data loss, Intuit Technical Support can use your transaction log file, in conjunction with your most recent verified backup, to recover your data up to your most recently saved transactions.

The QuickBooks website article on the TLG says that if QuickBooks loses connection to the company file abruptly for any reason, the TLG file automatically corrects the data file as much as possible. The article states that if part of a transaction was recorded to the company file when the connection is lost, and the whole transaction is present in the .TLG, the transaction will be completed the next time the file is opened in QuickBooks. The article doesn't define what it means by "loses the connection", but it's important to know that the "lost connection" problem is not confined to network installation of QuickBooks (where there is a network connection between the user's computer and the company file on another network computer). Single-computer installations of QuickBooks, where the company file is on the same computer as QuickBooks, can produce an error message saying that QuickBooks has lost connection to the company file. We've never seen, or had users report, an automatic update/correction when QuickBooks crashes just as a transaction is completed, but it may be that this statement is accurate.

Deleting the TLG File

Users write to us to say that they've deleted the TLG file, and suffered no apparent problems using QuickBooks. That's true; QuickBooks automatically starts a new TLG file and the work you do in QuickBooks goes on as usual.

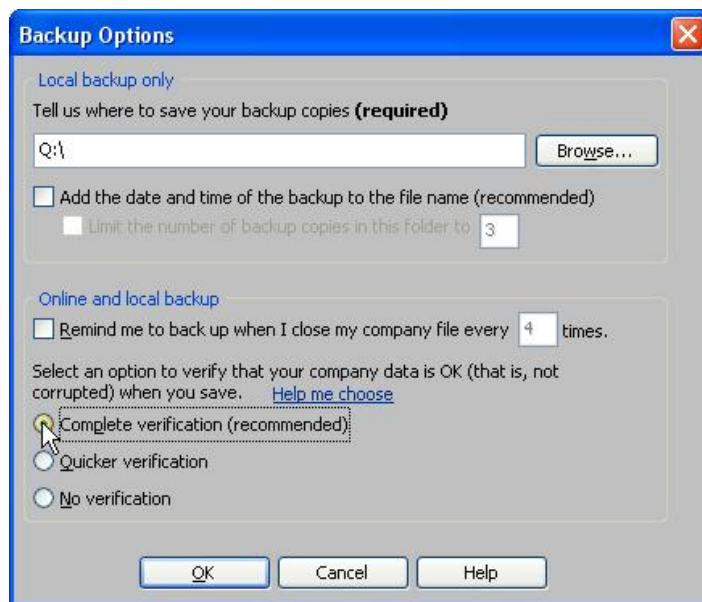
The problem with deleting the TLG file is that if catastrophe strikes, Intuit support personnel won't be able to reconstruct the data you entered since your last verified backup. Although it may be true that if you follow optimum procedures for backing up QuickBooks every day you'll probably never need the TLG file, it's a silly idea to risk your data by ignoring this safeguard.

NOTE: "Optimum procedures for backing up" means copying the entire QuickBooks data folder to an external source in addition to (or instead of) using the QuickBooks backup function. In addition, you must periodically test the ability to restore the data (a backup that doesn't restore isn't much of a backup).

Initializing a New TLG File

The TLG file is reset (the current TLG file is removed and a new one started) when you successfully perform a manual backup of the company file with Verification selected.

In QuickBooks 2007 and 2008, you must click the Options button on the second wizard window to find the Verification option in the Backup Options dialog, and make sure it's enabled.



The TLG file is reset if you select any verification option, but it's probably a good idea to do it right: select Complete Verification instead of Quicker Verification.

The TLG file is *not* reset when you back up with a scheduled backup, regardless of the setting of the verification option, nor is it reset when you backup to the QuickBooks Online Backup service. Only a manual backup with verification on resets the TLG file.

What to Ignore in the QuickBooks Instructions

The QuickBooks Knowledge Base article on the TLG file (article #1000466) says the following:

The transaction log is reset (replaced with a new one) each time you successfully complete a backup through QuickBooks. There is no need for the transaction log to keep transactions that have already been recorded to the file and backed up.

That's a logical statement; it makes sense to think you don't need a transaction log once you've backed up your file. However, the information neglects to tell you that the backup must be a manual backup, and that Verification must be enabled.

The article also has the following statement:

Note: Intuit strongly recommends running verify when doing a backup, since a successful backup will delete the .TLG file that's needed for data recovery. If the file was damaged before the backup is made, and the backup runs successfully, QuickBooks Data Services may not be able to help.

This statement is totally incorrect. A successful backup without running verify doesn't delete the TLG file.