

Sabre: Refund and Exchange – Customer Questions

The following questions were raised by the audience during the Refund and Exchange Overview presented by Sabre 01 November 2017. Questions have been consolidated into one document to assist the audience. For further assistance existing Sabre customers should contact their Sabre account representative, or Sabre software support.

Sabre Automated Exchanges tool

Automated Exchanges uses the airline-filed Category31 Voluntary Changes rule to expedite and automate the voluntary ticket exchange process. Automated Exchanges also protects agency revenues as results are included in the Sabre Fare Guarantee Policy

Q: It was explained that *Automated Exchanges* is included in the Sabre Fare Guarantee Policy. Is this also the case for *Refunds and Exchanges* (previously known as QREX or WFR?).

A: *Automated Exchanges* and the recently introduced *Automated Refunds* are included in the Sabre Fare Guarantee Policy. *Refunds and Exchanges* does not reference a machine readable fare rule and the product is not included in the Sabre Fare Guarantee Policy. The product uses the most common industry standard logic to present the exchange or refund amounts, but it remains the user responsibility to validate the proposal matches the airline fare rules. When that is not the case one of the manual pricing options must be used to create the price. It is important to also note that and change/cancellation fee must be manually input.

Q: Does Automated Exchanges support the range of different passenger types, for example JCB?

A: Yes. Passenger type is an optional qualifier in the request. If no passenger type is entered the default is adult (ADT). When passenger type is added Automated Exchanges searches for the lowest applicable option between the input passenger type and ADT, or the user can specify that only the unique passenger type should be considered (and not ADT).

Q: In the presentation the input WFRFTRn was used. What does this mean?

A: With both Automated Exchanges, Exchanges and Automated Exchanges Shop the user can enter the ticket number to be changed. However to simplify the input you can select the line number of the ticket field in the PNR also. For example an input commencing WFRSTR3 will request Automated Exchanges Shop on the ticket number which is in the 3rd ticket field line in the PNR.

In cases where a PNR no longer exists (all flights are in the past and the live PNR has expired), the product can be used if a new PNR is created, ended and then retrieved before the request. Because there is no ticket field in that new PNR, the full ticket number must be input.

Q: Does Automated Exchanges know when carriers allow residual amount to be used to compensate for Change Fee or other costs on the new ticket?

A: Yes. Airlines file the instruction on how residual amounts can be handled as part of the Category31 Voluntary Changes rule. Automated Exchanges reads that rule (an airline may have different regulations depending on the fare being changed). The product also instructs the user whether a residual amount is refundable, in which case the user must process the refundable amount using the airline policy. Automated Exchanges does not instruct which form of refund (MCO, refund to original FOP or EMD) is the policy of the airline.

Sabre Refund and Exchange Overview FAQs

Q: on completion of the Automated Exchanges mask, is ticketing immediate?

A: Two options exist. Selecting RETAIN stores the new ticket record (called a Price Quote Reissue Record, or PQR) but does not issue the ticket. The PQR remains valid until midnight and the user (or their robotics) can retrieve and ticket the exchange any time before midnight. If all segments in the PNR are HK status, the user can select TICKET, and ticket directly at the end of the mask process.

Q: Can commission be returned to the carrier as part of the exchange process, or does that have to be manually adjusted in IAR?

A: As part of the exchange process, commission is entered on the Ticketing Instructions Screen 40. Fields are available for the NEW TKT COMM AMT (cumulative due for the original and new ticket), and ADD COLL COMM AMT (commission that is due as part of this exchange). If both are input as 0 (zero), the reporting file instructs that no commission is due, in order ARC accounting can directly calculate commission reclaim. Commission can be adjusted in IAR if this is required after ticket issuance.

Q: Can the Change Fee be adjusted as part of the exchange process?

A: Yes. The Change Fee is updateable but it is important to note that any updates to Change Fee (whether waive/increase/decrease) removes eligibility for reimbursement under the Sabre Fare Guarantee Policy. Any amendment to the Change Fee is recorded in the Price Quote Reissue Record (PQR) for auditing purposes.

Q: When a residual amount is non-refundable, does Automated Exchanges require the user to update the non-refundable amount in IAR?

A: With Automated Exchanges, when the residual amount is non-refundable this is included on the ticket reported to ARC in order the residual amount is not refunded. Please note this information is not reflected in the IAR Adjustment Field as this field is specific to IAR, but there is no requirement to update IAR manually. For information, it is important to know that when using Exchanges (WFR) non-refundable residual must always be manually updated via the Adjustment Field in IAR.

Q: Why would I issue an EMD for Change Fee instead of the long-standing method of the fee being on the new ticket as part of the collection?

A: The default method of Change Fee collection in ARC is on the ticket as an add-collect to the fare. The method of fee documentation is solely at the discretion of the airline. Airlines that require Fee as EMD will typically communicate that policy directly to agency customers in any given market. The number of airlines requiring Change Fee on EMD is still rather low in ARC and when EMD is required the user must select FEE AS EMD on the Comparison Summary Screen 30.

Sabre Refund and Exchange Overview FAQs

Q: Does Automated Exchanges advise the customer when airline policy is that Change Fee and/or Refundable Balance must be collected on EMD?

A: Sabre default is that Change Fee is collected in the fare which is the long-standing ARC process (reported to ARC as CP). We also allow Change Fee as EMD. The EMD option must be selected by the user, and it should only be selected if the Airline EMD profile in Sabre includes that the airline allows EMD for change fee.

Sabre supports residual balance EMD-S if the airline has authorized that in their EMD profile. The user must create the residual balance EMD in accordance with ARC policies. Sabre information continues to be that most airlines continue to expect residual balance via ARC MCO (or refunded to original FOP). In all cases of residual balance, the user must determine which process is required (MCO, EMD or refund to original FOP) by the individual airline. Airlines individually determine how refundable balance should be fulfilled as part of their policies.

Q: Does Automated Exchanges only allow the FEE AS EMD option if the airline supports EMD for Change Fee in Sabre?

A: The field exists to select EMD on the Comparison Summary Screen (SCREEN30) for any exchange irrespective of whether the carrier supports EMD for Change Fee or not. However on the next screen – Ticketing Instructions SCREEN40, the field CHG FEE EMD <X> will only be populated if that airline supports EMD as Change Fee.

Sabre Schedule Change tool

Schedule Change is designed to minimize input following airline planned schedule change. Schedule Change can be performed for any validating carrier, but customers are advised that individual airline policy must be followed when performing schedule change as there is no mandated format for agency schedule change. In some cases airline policy may disallow use of this tool in which case Exchanges (WFR) should be used.

Q: With the Schedule Change tool, are the old ZP and PFC values carried forward to the new ticket? Can they be adjusted?

A: The Schedule Change tool carries forward all fare, tax, fee, charges and endorsements values forward from the old ticket to the new ticket and no adjustment is allowed. This reflects standard practice for agency schedule change. Existing Sabre customers are welcome to contact tony.hemsley@sabre.com to outline where specific airlines and/or cases require different values to apply to the new ticket. Although different values cannot be applied currently with *Schedule Change*, better understanding of when the tool could not be used might influence future enhancement planning.

Sabre Refund and Exchange Overview FAQs

Q: Can Schedule Change also be used in cases of Irregular Operations (e.g. cancelled flights) or only for schedule changes?

A: Schedule Change does not reference why the ticket change is being made. It can be performed on any ticket with the live itinerary in HK status (there is no technical reference that the itinerary had previously been returned by the airline as TK). Official agency resolution dictates that agencies should not perform exchange in cases of irregular operations (also known as unplanned schedule change). However it is acknowledged that this is commonly expected of agencies. Schedule Change will process the exchange and it remains the user responsibility to ensure the ticket change adheres to individual airline policy for irregular operation exchange when authorized to do so by the airline.

Q: Can pricing or passenger type qualifiers be added to Schedule Change to target specific fares?

A: No. It is important to note Schedule Change places the old fare/tax/fees onto the new ticket. No qualifiers are needed to target fares. In simple terms Schedule Change copy/pastes the old fare details onto a new ticket.

Q: Can a waiver code be added in Schedule Change that transmits into IAR?

A: There is currently no option to add a waiver code that transmits into IAR. The user can add a unique airline defined Tourcode or endorsement and those fields do transmit to IAR. This is an enhancement targeted in the 2018 product plan but until that time waiver codes must be directly input into IAR.

Q: Can Schedule Change be used for other exchanges that are fully even with no add-collect. For example minor name changes?

A: No. Although the exchange will process it would not be correctly ticketed because the fare calculation starts with I- and the first endorsement is SKCHG in accordance with industry standards for Schedule Changes. That information would not be valid for any ticket that was not a schedule change (or an involuntary change if the airline authorised use for that reason).

Sabre Automated Exchanges Shop tool

Automated Exchanges Shop is a desktop tool which allows the user to change an itinerary and request not only a reissue price for that itinerary but also up-to 19 other reissue possibilities on the same date/city pair. The user can select the best option for the customer and then proceed to change the ticket using Automated Exchanges. An enhanced exchange shopping product is available via Sabre APIs for online and developer customers.

Q: Can basic economy fares be excluded as an option when performing Automated Exchanges Shop

A: Whilst fare types can be targeted such as No Penalty Fares or a particular brand for airlines using branded fares, there is no capability in the current version of the desktop product to exclude basic economy fares. This is a consideration for a graphical version of the product we are planning to introduce in 2018, and is also a consideration for the API version used by developers. There is currently no clear definition across airlines regarding what basic economy truly means but it is typically that no baggage is allowed. There is a consideration in product planning to include a qualifier that only fares with baggage are considered. When Automated Exchanges cannot target a specific fare, Exchanges (WFR) can be used including the command price by fare basis code qualifier.

Sabre Refund and Exchange Overview FAQs

Q: Does Automated Exchanges Shop use the same repricing logic as Automated Exchanges to ensure the same result.

A: Both products use the same repricing logic. Automated Exchanges Shop searches for candidate itineraries and then reprices uses Automated Exchanges logic to provide the prices for those itineraries. There should be no difference in the repricing results between the products.

Q: Does Automated Exchanges Shop support qualifiers to target fares and itineraries?

A: Yes. When required qualifiers can be added. Both fare targeting (for example No Penalty Fares only) and itinerary targeting (for example direct flights only) can be added.

Sabre Automated Refunds tool

Automated Refunds uses the airline-filed Category33 Voluntary Refunds rule to expedite and automate the voluntary ticket refund process. Automated Refunds also protects agency revenues as results are included in the Sabre Fare Guarantee Policy. Carrier participation in Automated Refunds remains modest but much increased carrier participation is targeted in 2018 and beyond.

Q: How do existing Sabre customers activate Automated Refunds?

A: Product ordering is available online via Agency eServices. Ordering can only be placed via agency employees with ordering rights in their employee profile. From the Agency eServices homepage visit PRODUCTS > AIR PRODUCTS > AUTOMATED REFUNDS > PRODUCT ORDERING

Q: Does Automated Refunds recognize non-refundable taxes?

A: Yes. Airlines file tax refundability as part of the Category33 Voluntary Refunds rule. Automated Refunds reads that rule and does not refund those taxes. A banner is added to the response screen to indicate any taxes that are filed as non-refundable, and that banner is stored in the refund record for auditing purposes.

General Questions

Q: I am aware that Sabre has a new desktop tool "The New Sabre Red Workspace". Does this impact refund and exchange functions?

A: All refund and exchange functions are available in classic mode in the New Sabre Red Workspace, operating as they do in the existing Sabre Red Workspace. Additionally those customers more comfortable with a graphical desktop can use graphical mode for Automated Exchanges. Other refund and exchange products shall be made available in the Graphical View, with the next product scheduled to be *Exchange Shopping*, planned for release during 2018. The version of Exchange Shopping will be an enhanced version of the one in classic view, with up-to-50 exchange options returned to the user to choose from.

Q: Is more information on products stored in the Sabre Agency eServices extranet?

A: Yes. Existing Sabre customers can visit Agency eServices and simply select from the homepage: PRODUCTS > AIR PRODUCTS > AUTOMATED EXCHANGES for information on Automated Exchanges, Automated Exchanges Shop and Schedule Change, or PRODUCTS > AIR PRODUCTS > AUTOMATED REFUNDS for information on our refund tools. Included on the site are product overviews, Quick Reference Guides, and the list of carriers that qualify for products. Product help is also available in the Sabre *Format Finder* help pages.

Sabre Refund and Exchange Overview FAQs

Q: Can all Sabre exchange tools be used on partially flown tickets?

A: Yes. All Sabre products (Automated Exchanges, Automated Exchanges Shop and Refunds and Exchanges) support wholly unused and partially flown tickets, both domestic and international. The inputs and workflows in Automated Exchanges, Automated Refunds and Automated Exchanges Shop are exactly the same whether the ticket is totally unused or partially flown. With the less automated Refunds and Exchanges mask, slight variations exist in the workflow as the product requires user information as it does not read an airline-filed machine-readable rule.

Q: Must old accounting lines be removed before issuing a new ticket so that they are not re-generated?

A: If accounting lines exist in the PNR from a previous ticket issuance the following should be observed: it is not required to remove previous accounting lines for the exchange to issue but it is important to understand that by default all accounting lines are transmitted to mid/back-office systems (when the DIN entry is committed or if the agency is set up for invoicing at end transact). The user has the choice of removing all previous accounting lines before committing the DIN entry (or end transaction if the agency is set up for invoicing), or alternatively the user can select which accounting lines they wish to transmit to mid/back-office systems as the DIN entry allows selection of specified accounting lines. Typically customers will remove all previous accounting lines as they would not wish any of those to be transmitted to mid/back-offices systems when the exchange is issued. For future reference, deleted accounting lines do transfer to PNR history.

As a reminder at time of DIN or end transact, the system provides a warning when there are more accounting lines in the PNR than the number of passengers. The user must re-enter the DIN or End Transact following this warning. The warning is designed to protect the user from accidentally generating accounting lines from previous tickets if they do not wish to (but should they wish to, re-entering the DIN or End Transact will be successful).

End of Frequently Asked Questions Document