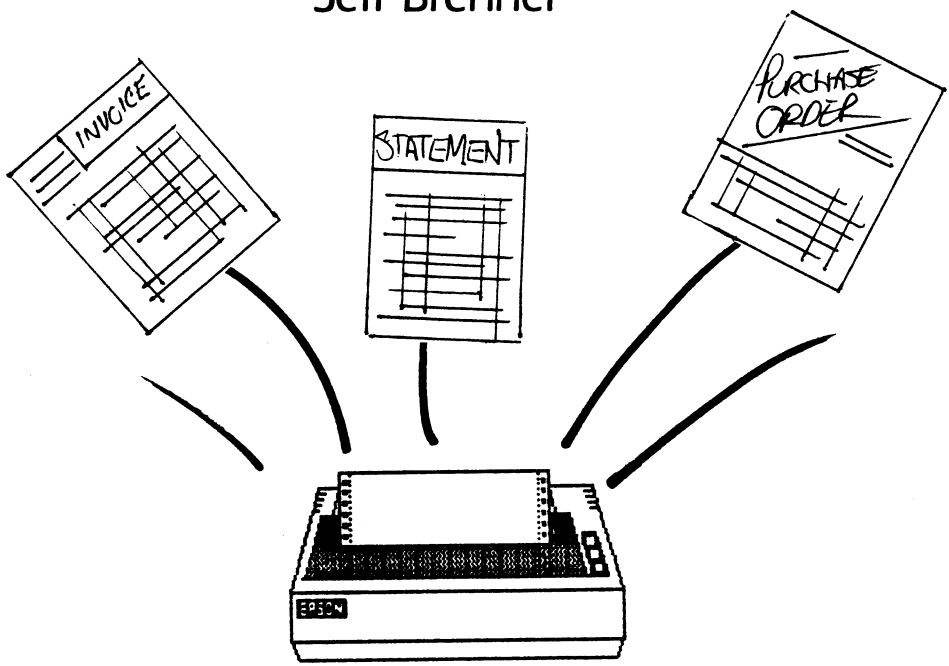


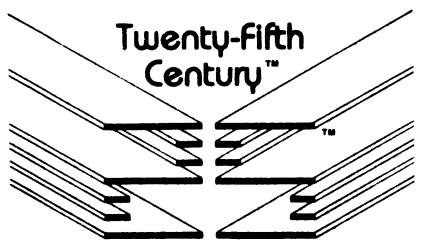
ATARI™ 800/XL/XE

Forms Generator™

by
Jeff Brenner



Manufactured and distributed by:



P.O. Box 8042
Long Island, New York 11802

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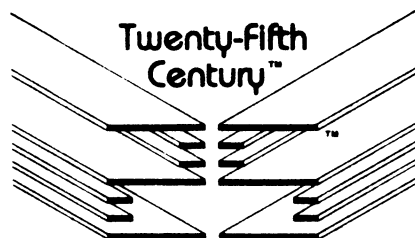
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Forms Generator



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This instruction manual and accompanying software were written by Jeff Brenner.

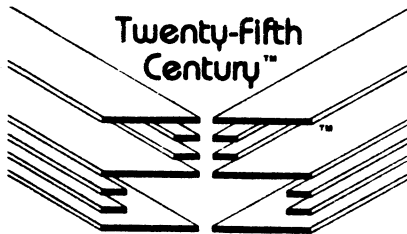
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#ATA611/First Printing, November 1986

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NOTE: Before using FORMS GENERATOR, use DOS to format a blank diskette for saving forms. Do not save forms on the FORMS GENERATOR diskette itself.

The next time you buy by mail, why not help your order get filled in a hurry with a customized purchase order form? With FORMS GENERATOR, you can design the form to suit your exact needs, placing your name and address, fields (date, quantity, description, etc.), or messages anywhere on the form. FORMS GENERATOR can then be programmed to calculate the extended prices and the total, even adding in tax if necessary. Once the form is designed, all you need to do is load it in and enter the essential data. FORMS GENERATOR will then print out the actual form, complete with the information you entered and with its calculations. You can even save the filled form to diskette as a record of your order.

In addition to purchase orders, FORMS GENERATOR can create statements, memos, proposals, invoices, sales orders, job work orders, or almost any other form you might need. The special graphics capability of this version allows you (with supported printers) to make truly realistic looking forms.

LOADING THE PROGRAM

Insert the FORMS GENERATOR diskette into your disk drive and turn on your Atari. The program will load and execute automatically. The program will continue to load routines from the diskette as a "PLEASE STAND BY" message appears. When the initialization is complete, the main menu is displayed consisting of the following options: CREATE FORM, EDIT FORM, DEFINE CALCULATIONS, SAVE FORM, LOAD FORM, ENTER DATA AND CALCULATE and PRINT FORM. Use the select key to cycle through the options, and press the START key to initiate the highlighted function.

CREATE FORM

When you first use the program, you'll want to create a form, so select the CREATE FORM option and

press START. A section of an 80 by 64 line scrolling screen will appear with a black cursor in the center. This scrolling screen will be referred to as a screen-page, since it essentially functions as a piece of paper that you can type on. Your television screen serves as a window through which you view a portion of the screen-page. You can move to any position of the screen-page by using the control-cursor keys, a joystick plugged into port 1, a CX-85 keypad plugged into port 2, or any combination of these. On the keypad, the four keys on the left side are used to move about the screen: ESCAPE moves up; NO moves down; DELETE moves left; YES moves right.

Now you can begin to design your form! Place text anywhere on the screen-page and use hyphens and the underline character to improve the look of your form. The vertical line character (SHIFT and the = key) is great for long vertical lines and the cursor will automatically move down the screen-page when this character is used. When the form is printed in the text mode (described later) it will fill up the entire width and height of an 8-1/2 by 11 inch page. Therefore, any margins should be provided for while you are designing the form. In other words, if you want a half-inch margin on the top and bottom of the printed form, leave two or three blank lines at the top and bottom of the screen-page.

If you are using one of the supported printers, then you can use inverse video and Atari graphics characters to dramatically enhance the realism of your form. Later, when using the PRINT FORM option, you can select the graphics mode and your form will be printed with the exact characters you used on the screen. All connected characters on the screen will appear connected on the printed page. Forms printed in the graphics mode fill up a smaller portion of the printed page (the actual size depends on your printer model), so you probably won't need to leave any margins when using graphics.

TABBING

The TAB key can be of enormous help in designing your forms, particularly when aligning columns. When

you begin, the tabs are preset at every ten characters. The tab marker (^) can be found at the top or bottom of the screen-page. To set your own tabs, position the cursor in the desired column and press SHIFT and the TAB key. To erase a tab, press CONTROL and TAB. Pressing TAB by itself will cause the screen to scroll to the next tab position. The scrolling screen-page can be interrupted at any time as it moves along to the next tab position by pressing the space bar. The tab positions that you set for a particular form are automatically saved with the form when the SAVE FORM option is selected.

HORIZONTAL LINES

FORMS GENERATOR also allows you to rapidly place characters across a line of the screen-page. This is particularly well suited for making horizontal lines, an important component of most forms. To string a character across a line of the screen page, bring the cursor to the line which you want to fill, then hold down the SELECT key while pressing the character that you want the line composed of. For example, if you want to separate two lines of an order form with dashes (i.e. -----), position the cursor between the two lines and press the hyphen key (-) while holding hold down the SELECT key. A string of 80 hyphen characters will be printed on the screen-page on the specified line. You can then make any minor changes to the line as needed to fit the margins of your particular form (i.e. delete some characters from the beginning and end of the line).

RETURNING TO THE MENU

After you've finished designing your form, you can press the ESC key to return to the main menu. The ESC key serves to interrupt the program at a given point and will usually bring you back to the main menu.

EDIT FORM

This option is used to make changes on the form currently in memory. If after creating a form and printing it, you decide you want to change a few items,

you can select the EDIT FORM option and make the changes. EDIT FORM functions identically to CREATE FORM with the important exception that the current form in memory is not erased. You could also load a form from disk and select the EDIT FORM option to make changes to the form before printing.

DEFINE CALCULATIONS

Once you've designed a form, and you are satisfied with its appearance, you can use the DEFINE CALCULATIONS function to describe where data is to be entered and what calculations are to be automatically made. This is one of the most powerful features of FORMS GENERATOR, but also the most difficult to learn how to use. It is designed to give you a logical and straightforward means of defining fields. With practice you should learn quickly. Those who are experienced with VisiFile-type field definitions should have little trouble adapting to the methods which FORMS GENERATOR uses to define fields. It is not essential to define calculations, since you can use the EDIT FORM to manually enter data or you can use predefined forms (to be offered on diskette -- see end of instructions). However, to make the most of FORMS GENERATOR's power, you'll want to be able to define calculations for any form you create.

When the DEFINE CALCULATIONS option is selected, you are again brought to the screen-page. If calculations have already been defined, you are asked "NEW OR ADD TO CURRENT," to which you would type N to erase the previous calculations and start anew, or A to add to the existing calculations. The cursor keys, joystick and keypad work the same as on the CREATE and EDIT options. This time, however, you are prompted (on the bottom lines of the screen) to enter a "COMMAND OR RETURN TO MARK FIELD BEGIN." Bring the cursor to the first position of the first field you want to define and press RETURN.

Let's use the invoice form on the back cover as an example. (You might want to load in the sample invoice form included on the FORMS GENERATOR diskette for hands-on practice as you read these instructions. See the LOAD FORM section for loading a form from

disk.) You should define the fields in the order you would be entering the data. Let's assume the DATE field, on the right of the page, is your first field. To define the DATE, position the cursor in the first space of the DATE field, or under the "D." You'll find it most convenient to use a joystick for positioning when defining calculations. When you press RETURN, or press the joystick trigger, you are prompted to use the left and right arrow keys to mark the length (or you can use the joystick to mark the length). The length is represented by an inverse video "box." "Stretch" the box on the screen (with the right-cursor key or joystick) until it covers the entire length of the field. If you need to reposition the box, you can "un-stretch" it with the left-cursor key or by moving the joystick to the left. Then you can select a new position to mark the start of the field. On our sample invoice form, we require a field length of eight characters to fill the date box. So we would stretch the inverse video box to fill the eight characters in the date field. If you know in advance the number of characters required for a particular field, you can simply press that number on the keyboard (providing the number is between one and nine) The minimum field length is three characters. The maximum length is limited only by the right edge of the screen-page, so conceivably fields can be up to 80 characters long.

Once the position and length are marked, press RETURN again. You'll be asked to type in the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F." In our example, we are defining a date, which is a text field, so we would press "T." Any field that will not be used in calculations should be defined as a text field. Hence names, addresses, phone numbers, and dates would all be classified as text fields.

Once the date is defined, a "MORE DEFINITIONS (Y/N)?" prompt is printed on the bottom line of the screen. Answer Y to continue defining the remaining fields. On our sample form, we would next define the SALESPERSON, TO:, SHIP TO, ORDER NUM, DATE SHIPPED, SHIPPED VIA, F.O.B. POINT, and TERMS fields all as text fields, in the same manner that the DATE field was defined.

Numeric fields that are to be used in calculations are defined similarly, but instead of typing "T" for the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F?" prompt, you would type: zero through five to specify the respective number of decimal places (type zero for an integer); N to display numbers exactly as they are entered; \$ to round numbers to two decimal places and place a dollar sign before the value; or F, to incorporate a constant number that is a part of the form itself, such as a tax percentage, or a number that has already been placed on the form by a previous calculation. A variable is assigned to each field defined and is also displayed at the bottom of the screen. After defining a numerical field, the next prompt, "NEXT OPERATION (+,-,/,*,=)?" lets you build up the actual formula that is to be calculated on the form. The formula is displayed on the bottom line of the screen as it is constructed.

Let's go through the steps of defining the first calculation on our sample invoice form. Position the cursor on the first line of the form under the QUANTITY heading. Press RETURN (or the joystick trigger) to mark the position and then stretch the inverse video box to cover the entire quantity field (ten characters). Again press RETURN. You are now asked, "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F?" We will assume that the quantity will be an integer, so we press zero to indicate zero decimal places. If we were not certain that the units would be an integer (i.e. 3.75 pounds) then we might press N. This will cause the quantity to be displayed exactly as it is entered. For the case of non-integer units, we might also choose to define the number of decimal places as three or four, but this would give all entries three or four decimal places -- a quantity of three would be displayed as 3.000 or 3.0000. So it is better to use N for this field if non-integer input is anticipated. When a field is defined as N, an entry of 3.75 is displayed as 3.75, and an entry of 3 is displayed as 3.

After the format is selected, a variable A0 appears in the first quantity box, and the NEXT OPERATION (+,-,/,*,=) prompt appears. The A0 variable is also displayed on the bottom line of the screen. When we enter data on our form, we will want FORMS

GENERATOR to multiply the quantity and the unit price to give us the extended price. Therefore, our next operation will be multiplication and we press the asterisk (*). This asterisk will be displayed on the bottom of the screen next to the A0 variable.

Before we define the next element of the calculation, the UNIT PRICE, we will want to define the STOCK NO./DESCRIPTION field, since this is the order in which we would be entering the data. Text fields are completely independent of the calculations, so we can define this text field despite the fact that we are in the middle of defining a calculation. Move the cursor over to the first line under the STOCK NO./DESCRIPTION heading and press RETURN. Stretch the inverse video box to the end of the DESCRIPTION field and press RETURN again. Now press "T" for the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F?" prompt, since this is a text field.

Now we'll continue with our QUANTITY x UNIT PRICE = EXTENDED PRICE calculation by defining the UNIT PRICE field. Bring the cursor to the first position under the UNIT PRICE heading and press RETURN. Again mark off the length and press RETURN. Now, for the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F?" prompt, we'll type 2, since this price will be a dollar amount with two decimal places. We could also use \$, but this instructs FORMS GENERATOR to place a dollar symbol before the value, and we don't need dozens of dollar symbols all over our form. We'll save the dollar sign for the final TOTAL value. A second variable will be assigned, such as B0, and will appear on the bottom line of the screen. For the "NEXT OPERATION" prompt, press the equal sign (=) since we now want to assign the product to a variable to be created in the EXTENDED PRICE margin. Notice that the bottom line of the screen is beginning to look like a formula: A0*B0=.

Position the cursor at the first position under the EXTENDED PRICE heading and press RETURN. Define the length and again press RETURN. For the decimal places, we again have a dollar amount, so press 2. (If the quantity multiplied by the unit price yields a value with more than two decimal places, the value will be rounded to two places -- 2.508 becomes 2.51. Also, a value with fewer than two decimal places is placed in

the two decimal place format -- 2 becomes 2.00. Thus all values in the column will be aligned.) A third variable is assigned to the new field, say C0, and the formula on the bottom of the screen is complete: A0*B0=C0. (BASIC programmers will notice that the variables are assigned in a logical order, albeit in the reverse order of BASIC.) Press Y for the "MORE DEFINITONS" prompt since we have more calcuations to make.

Now we have defined the first line of our invoice form -- we have 15 more to go. "What!" you scream, "do I have to define these calculations 15 more times?" The answer, of course, is no. A special COPY command lets you copy the last calculation you defined to any number of other lines. Move down two screen-page lines to the next line on the invoice. Now press "C" for the "COMMAND OR RETURN TO MARK FIELD BEGIN." The calculation of the previously defined line will now also be used for this line. COPY will be printed on the bottom line of the screen and "<" and ">" symbols will appear on the left and right edges of the screen-page to indicate that the line's calcuations were defined by copying another line. After you press C, the cursor moves down a line on the screen-page. Move down an additional line to the next line of the invoice and press C again. Continue copying the original calculation for the remaining lines of the invoice.

Thus far, we can enter the quantity and unit price and FORMS GENERATOR will calculate the extended price for us. But we can do much more than that. Let's add up the extended price column to get the sub-total. Position the cursor at the first position under the EXTENDED PRICE heading, press RETURN, mark its length and press RETURN again. Now, we do not want to enter a value in this position, but we want FORMS GENERATOR to make use of the value that has already been calculated and placed there. Therefore we press F for the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F." This tells FORMS GENERATOR to take the value that it finds on the form itself. The variable for that field is printed on the bottom of the screen and we are asked for the NEXT OPERATION. Press + since we want to add up all of the values in that particular column. Next, position the

cursor on the second line of the invoice form below the EXTENDED PRICE heading and define its length. Again press F to indicate that the value is to be taken from the form. Since a variable was not assigned to this box (we copied calculations for this line), FORMS is printed on the bottom of the screen: C0+FORMS. Again press + for the NEXT OPERATION and continue to add up the extended price column.

When the last extended price has been added, press = for the NEXT OPERATION prompt. Since we want to place the sum in the sub-total box, position the cursor at the first position of the sub-total box, define the length and define the format as two decimal places. A variable, say D0, is defined as the sub-total. Press Y for the MORE DEFINITIONS prompt.

Now lets calculate the tax. The tax on the invoice form is currently set at 7%. You can later change this to your to own sales tax rate by selecting the EDIT FORM option and changing the value on the form. Now, we want to take the sub-total, multiply it by the tax rate, and place the tax amount on the line for the sales tax. So, position the cursor at the sub-total box, define the length, define it as a forms variable (we want to take the value that has just been calculated and placed on the form) and press * for the NEXT OPERATION prompt since we want to multiply this value by the tax rate. FORMS GENERATOR understands percentages if the percent sign is at the right-most position of the defined field. Position the cursor over the space preceding the 7% and press RETURN. The inverse video box will cover the space, the 7 and the %, since the minimum field length is three characters. If we positioned the cursor over the 7, as we might normally do, the minimum field length of three would cause the 7, the %, and the space following the % to be included in the field. But we must have the % as the last character of the field for FORMS GENERATOR to treat the value as 7/100. Therefore, it is necessary for us to position the cursor at the space preceding the 7 in order for the % to be the last character in the defined field. Now press RETURN again and type F for the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F" prompt, since the percentage is serving as a constant on the form. Press = for "NEXT OPERATION." The formula on the

bottom of the screen will look like: $D0*7\%=.$ We want to place the tax amount in the box to the right of the 7%, so position the cursor in that box, define the length, and press 2 for the "DECIMAL PLACES" prompt, as we want a dollar value format. Our tax calculation has now been defined: $D0*7\%=E0$. Press Y for "MORE DEFINITIONS?"

Our final calculation consists of adding the sub-total and the tax to get the total order. By now you should have an idea of how to do this: Position the cursor in the sub-total box, define the length, define it as a forms value (F) since we want FORMS GENERATOR to take the value previously calculated on the form, and press + for "NEXT OPERATION." Define the tax box in the same way and press = for "NEXT OPERATION." The sum now needs to be placed in the total box. Place the cursor at the first position in the total box and define the length. Now, for the "DECIMAL PLACES, N, \$, T or F" prompt, press \$, since we want a dollar sign to precede the total of the order. The formula for the total ($D0+E0=F0$) is complete. We can now press N for "MORE CALCULATIONS" and we'll return to the main menu.

FORMS GENERATOR gives you about 800 bytes of memory for definitions, which is more than enough for most forms. If you are defining calculations for a very complicated form, it is a good idea to make sure you have enough memory remaining. Press and hold the "M" key at the "COMMAND OR RETURN..." and the amount of memory remaining will be displayed at the bottom of the screen. You'll automatically get a warning message if the memory gets too low.

All field definitions and calculations are automatically saved along with the form when the SAVE FORM option is used. Due to the nature in which the fields are defined, the definitions cannot be edited once they are entered, but they can be added to or erased. Therefore it is a good idea to save your form (and calculations/definitions) after every three or four calculations, particularly if you are defining fields for a complicated form. Each time you save the form, make a note of the point in the calculations you have reached. This way, if you make an error in a definition, you can reload the last form you saved,

select the DEFINE CALCULATIONS, type A for "NEW OR ADD TO CURRENT," and continue where you last saved the form.

Another suggestion: After you've designed your form with the CREATE FORM option, print it on the printer. Then make notes on the printed form and plan precisely what fields you want to define and what calculations are to be made. This will be of enormous help when you later DEFINE CALCULATIONS.

SAVE FORM and LOAD FORM

These options are used to save or load either blank or filled forms. Tab positions, calculation definitions and printer codes are automatically saved with the form. Saving filled forms is great for record keeping purposes. It is recommended that you use a different filename extension to distinguish between blank and filled forms. For example, the invoice form is saved under INVOICE.FRM, but use, say, INVFE87.DAT for a filled invoice form. (A text version of the invoice form is saved under INVOICE2.FRM.)

If you select the LOAD FORM option when a file is already in memory, you'll get an "ERASE CURRENT DATA (Y/N)?" prompt. Type "Y" to erase the current data or "N" to cancel.

On both the SAVE FORM and LOAD FORM options, you are offered a directory listing. At this point you can insert whatever data disk you want and press "Y" to the "DIRECTORY?" prompt. Then, to load or save, simply enter the name that you want to load from/save to. If you are saving forms and a form is already in memory, you'll be asked if you want to "REPLACE FORM OR RETURN TO MENU." Press R to replace the form on the diskette with the current form in memory.

ENTER DATA AND CALCULATE

Now for the FORMS GENERATOR magic. This function enables you to actually enter the data according to the

calculation definitions you entered. You'll actually see FORMS GENERATOR place its calculations on the screen as you enter your data.

For numerical definitions, you'll see an "ENTRY" line on the bottom of the screen. Type in your entry and press RETURN. The value will be reproduced on the form in its proper format. For text definitions, you'll get an "ENTER DATA" message on the bottom of the screen and the cursor will be positioned on the screen-page itself, allowing you to type the text directly onto the form at the specified position.

When you have a form with a lot of lines of "copied" definitions, but have finished entering your data, you can simply press RETURN to the ENTRY prompt and FORMS GENERATOR will skip the remaining copied lines.

Load the invoice form again to see how data is entered on this particular predefined form. First, the cursor moves over to the "TO:" name and address lines and an "ENTER DATA" is printed on the bottom of the screen. Type a name on the first line and press RETURN. Now type the address on the next two lines. Now the cursor will move to the DATE box, followed by SALESPERSON, SHIP TO, ORDER NUM, DATE SHIPPED, SHIPPED VIA, F.O.B. POINT, and TERMS. Enter the data that you want, or just press RETURN to leave a box blank.

Now for the numerical entries: The cursor will move to the QUANTITY BOX and you'll be asked to "ENTER VALUE:" on the bottom of the screen. The value is actually typed on the bottom of the screen and is then reproduced in its correct format in the quantity box. Next, you'll be asked to type in the description followed by the unit price. Once the unit price is entered, FORMS GENERATOR will multiply the quantity and the unit price and will place the product in the EXTENDED PRICE box. Continue filling the invoice form. When you have entered enough items, press RETURN to the

"ENTER VALUE:" prompt and FORMS GENERATOR will skip the remaining lines on the invoice form (the copied lines) and will begin summing up the extended prices to get the subtotal. You can actually see on-screen as FORMS GENERATOR takes each value from the screen, and places the sum in the subtotal box. Next, it takes the subtotal, multiplies it by the tax rate, and places it in the sales tax box. (Remember, you can change the sales tax rate to that of your own state and/or county by selecting the EDIT FORM option, changing the value on the screen-page, and resaving the changed form.) Finally, FORMS GENERATOR takes the subtotal and the sales tax, adds them up, and places the sum in the total box. Nice! You can now SAVE the filled form, or print it out on your printer.

OVERFLOW and OTHER ERRORS

A note here about errors. FORMS GENERATOR will not always give an error message when calculated values do not fit the defined field. In most cases, the program attempts to accommodate your entries or the calculations involving your entries. For example, on the invoice form, the TOTAL can be up to 14 characters in length. This includes a decimal place, the digits for the cents, and a dollar sign, since the TOTAL is defined to be a \$ format. Should one of your customers order 18,350,929,300.00 worth of your products (I'm using hypothetical examples here!) the 18350929300.00 would fill the entire TOTAL box, so FORMS GENERATOR would omit the \$ sign. In other instances, FORMS GENERATOR might omit the last digit to accommodate a value. For example 125.70 would be printed as 125.7 in a field of five. Other field length errors can be more serious. A 12500 for example, would be printed as 1250 in a field defined as four characters. Thus, while FORMS GENERATOR will accommodate for some overflows, it is best to avoid them entirely by defining your field lengths large enough to accommodate the largest input or calculated value anticipated. This is why some of the numerical fields on the sample invoice form were defined to be up to 14 characters long. This form could accommodate even the largest businesses.

Other errors, such as disk errors, printer timeout errors, etc. will be greeted with an error screen that gives the number of the error and the line number where the error occurs in the program. In most cases, you can look up the error code in your Atari's reference manual to determine the cause. You can recover from the error and return to the main menu by pressing RETURN.

PRINT FORM

When you select this option, you'll be asked if you want to define initial printer codes. This allows you to send commands codes to your printer before printing, for such features as emphasized print, compressed print, italics, double-strike, left-hand margin, etc. The codes are entered as decimal values and up to 100 codes can be entered. The defined printer codes are automatically saved along with a form. An example of using the printer codes: To set an Epson, Gemini or compatible for emphasized print (when printing a form in the text mode) press "Y" for the "DEFINE INITIAL PRINT CODES?" prompt. When asked for "CODE #1:" you type 27, the escape code. When asked for "CODE #2:" you type 69, the code for emphasized print. Press RETURN for "CODE #3:" Now if you print your form in the text mode, you'll get emphasized print.

If printer codes are already defined (i.e. if you loaded a form for which you defined printer codes) you'll be asked if you want to enter "NEW INITIAL PRINT CODES?" If you want to change the current codes in memory, type "Y" for this prompt. You will be shown the current codes and asked to enter the new codes.

After you have defined printer codes, or if you chose not to define the codes, you'll be asked if you want to print in the "TEXT OR GRAPHICS MODE." The text mode prints out your form in your printers character set. This mode will work with any 80-column (or more) printer. Your form must have been designed using only ASCII characters. In other words, you can not print

graphics characters or inverse video. An invoice form designed for the text mode is included on the FORMS GENERATOR diskette as INVOICE2.FRM.

When you select the graphics mode, you are given a selection of printers. If one of your printers is listed (or a compatible) press the indicated key. Next you are asked if you want the form printed in "NORMAL OR WIDE MODE." The wide mode is intended for printers with a 15 inch carriage using wide paper. If you are using standard-sized paper, select the normal mode.

If you would like to use the graphics capability of FORMS GENERATOR with a printer that is not listed (the printer must have graphics capability to use the graphics mode) send me photocopies from your printer manual of your printer's graphics commands and I'll let you know if a specialized driver can be created.

Once the mode and printer have been selected, turn on your printer and press the RETURN key to begin printing. The screen will show portions of the screen-page as the form is being printed. To interrupt the printing, press the ESC key and the main menu will appear after the printing of the current line is completed.

A form printed in the text mode will fill up an entire 8-1/2 by 11 inch page, while a form in the graphics mode will take up less room (unless the wide mode was selected.)

Once the form has been printed, you are asked if you want "ANOTHER PRINTOUT?" Type Y if you want a second printout in the same mode, or type N for the main menu.

