

Introducing the Fall 2022 Release

With each major release, software companies must balance new features, tech modernization, improved administration, and features to enhance usability. Accela's Fall 2022 release was based largely on customer input and includes a combination of these aspects and was designed to ensure customers get the maximum value from their Accela implementation.

Products Included in the Fall 2022 Release

This document covers the new aspects of Accela's Fall 2022 product launch including:

- > V22.2 of the Civic Platform (SaaS and self-hosted, and SaaS-only)
- > Enhancements to Accela Citizen Access
- > V22.2 of Accela Mobile
- > Enhancements to the Civic Application for Environmental Health

Accela Civic Platform V22.2: SaaS and Self-Hosted

Related Record Enhancements

Many agency users of Accela view records via the "related record tree view" feature, especially when hundreds or thousands of records are related. This helps them better see the relationships between records and keep them organized.

With the V22.2 release, Accela has enhanced performance for this view, adding pagination (first page, page numbers, last page), a default record count display, a quick filter based on record attributes, and improved sorting options to better manage large numbers of records.

The result of these new features is an estimated 10x faster loading of records in the related records tree view, and the filtering and sorting options let users more quickly view and locate transaction record relationships, increasing productivity and efficiency.

Minimum Convenience Fee Configuration

Many customers use the service fee setup in fee management to configure a convenience fee for payment transactions. A convenience fee can be configured as a percentage of the total or as a flat fee.

With the V22.2 release, Accela has enhanced the service fee setting to add a minimum fee option. If this is configured, Accela will compare the calculated convenience fee to the minimum fee and default to the greater fee amount.

Space Management Enhancements

As part of the normal activities for users of Accela solutions, they view and manage spaces in the global navigation toolbar.

With V22.2, Accela has enhanced the use of spaces in the global navigation bar, adding consistency in viewing and managing the product spaces. This includes more consistent behavior and gives users the ability to automatically close or remove old spaces from the global navigation during their workday. Also, when accessing transaction records from various areas that refresh in the main window, the records will now display as separate spaces, including renewal and asset records.

The objective of this enhancement is to make it easier for users to organize and manage their workspaces, improving efficiency and productivity.

Communication Manager: Modern Authentication Protocol

For the communications functions within the Civic Platform, some administrators use Microsoft Exchange Servers for Communication Manager. Microsoft has formally announced the deprecation of Basic Authentication for Microsoft Exchange Online, affecting the Civic Platform users who use this technology for Communication Manager.

With V22.2, Accela has implemented OAuth for Exchange Online and NTLMv2 for Exchange On-Premises. This addresses the EOL and subsequent maintenance issues of Basic Authentication, but also modernizes and enhances the security for our authentication protocols for Civic Platform's Communication Manager.

Accela Civic Platform V22.2: SaaS-only

New Staging Environment

When Accela provides a new release, our customers' non-production environments are updated one week prior to the production release for a service pack, and five weeks prior for a major release. This early release period is intended for customers to test and prepare for the production release.

Customers shared with us, however, that they found this process to be challenging during the testing time as the production and nonproduction environments were not on the same version, which can interfere with a customer's SDLC processes.

With V22.2, Accela is providing a new environment dedicated for early-release testing. This means non-production and production environments are always on the same version and are updated at the same time.

Global Search

Global Search now provides a "show only" exact match option on the Global Search form. This new checkbox allows users to search for an exact match without having to use quotation marks. The search will return only the transaction or reference records that exactly match the staff user's keyword or phrase. This enhancement makes it easier for users to locate the records they need, improving efficiency and productivity.

Set Number of Search Results Rows to Display

The Standard Choice MAX_ALLOWED_LIST_ROWS has been updated to reflect other Elasticsearch improvements. It defines how many rows of results display for each group list page in Global Search results.

Global Search—Record Results Display

This enhancement displays record results in separate columns instead of as cards. All column headers are sortable as either ascending or descending. The number of rows displayed on the results page is specified by the MAX_ALLOWED_LIST_ROWS Standard Choice setting.

Global Search—Record Advanced Search

This enhancement brings more major search forms and capabilities into our consolidated Global Search area—where staff users can easily find, review, and view transaction and reference records that are important to them as they perform their daily tasks. The Record Advanced Search functionality contains record, location, and people search parameters accessible through a new Search Tools option on the right side of the tool bar.

This form lets users specify search criteria including record ID, application name, status, location information including address and parcel ID, and people information including contact and owner. Each parameter provides a dropdown of the operators that can be used for the search.

Production

The screenshot shows the Accela Civic Platform interface in the Production environment. The main screen displays three inspection tasks in a grid:

- HAZMAT Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:44 PM on Sunday, Aug 29. Address: 8925 Fullbright Ave, Chatsworth, 91311. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-001195.
- Special Event Inspection**: Scheduled for 12:00 PM on Friday, Jul 30. Address: 1322 Montrose. Group: FIRE_FPR_SE. Alt ID: Z1CAP-00000009.
- General Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:50 PM on Monday, Nov 30. Address: 1445 Sepulveda Blvd, Torrance, 90501. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-000978.

Non-Production Support/NonProd1

The screenshot shows the Accela Civic Platform interface in the Non-Production Support environment (NonProd1). The layout and data for the three inspection tasks are identical to the Production environment:

- HAZMAT Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:44 PM on Sunday, Aug 29. Address: 8925 Fullbright Ave, Chatsworth, 91311. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-001195.
- Special Event Inspection**: Scheduled for 12:00 PM on Friday, Jul 30. Address: 1322 Montrose. Group: FIRE_FPR_SE. Alt ID: Z1CAP-00000009.
- General Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:50 PM on Monday, Nov 30. Address: 1445 Sepulveda Blvd, Torrance, 90501. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-000978.

Test/NonProd2

The screenshot shows the Accela Civic Platform interface in the Test/NonProd2 environment. The layout and data for the three inspection tasks are identical to the Production environment:

- HAZMAT Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:44 PM on Sunday, Aug 29. Address: 8925 Fullbright Ave, Chatsworth, 91311. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-001195.
- Special Event Inspection**: Scheduled for 12:00 PM on Friday, Jul 30. Address: 1322 Montrose. Group: FIRE_FPR_SE. Alt ID: Z1CAP-00000009.
- General Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:50 PM on Monday, Nov 30. Address: 1445 Sepulveda Blvd, Torrance, 90501. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-000978.

Staging (Early Release)

The screenshot shows the Accela Civic Platform interface in the Staging (Early Release) environment. The layout and data for the three inspection tasks are identical to the Production environment:

- HAZMAT Reinspection**: Scheduled for 1:44 PM on Sunday, Aug 29. Address: 8925 Fullbright Ave, Chatsworth, 91311. Group: FIRE_OPP_OCC. Alt ID: OCC-2020-001195.
- Special Event Inspection**: Scheduled for 12:00 PM on Friday, Jul 30. Address: 1322 Montrose. Group: FIRE_FPR_SE. Alt ID: Z1CAP-00000009.
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Securities Enhancements for Password Policy

Security is a priority for government agencies as ransomware and phishing attempts continue to rise. In many cases, bad actors use methods to identify passwords of authorized users to gain access to systems.

With V22.2, Accela is adding a new password security feature to our user authentication functions. This enhancement limits excessive invalid login attempts in a specific amount of time to prevent accounts from being accessed by unwanted sources. The limit is now 6 login attempts within 1 hour, and additional unsuccessful attempts will disable that user's account. An administrator will need to verify the user and then re-enable the user's account.

Integration to PayPal Commerce Platform

In the V22.2.2 release, Accela will offer a prebuilt, PCI-compliant integration to the PayPal Commerce platform. Agencies can use PayPal Commerce through both Accela ACA and through back office. This PayPal integration can be set up through a simple configuration process and does not require any development work. The benefits of using the PayPal Commerce platform include:

- Low processing fee of 2.40% + \$0.10 per transaction
- Simple online signup process
- Ability to offer PayPal as a payment method, as well as credit and debit cards
- One provider for both payment gateway and payment processing

Accela Citizen Access (ACA)

Account Registration Enhancements

Ease of use and efficiency are key objectives for process automation systems. When a system is easy to use for citizens, and the steps to register their accounts are simple and clearly explained, they are more likely to complete their interaction or transaction online instead of phoning the agency or visiting the office to ask questions to complete their work with the agency.

For this reason, Accela enhanced the account registration function of its Accela Citizen Access product, benefiting both citizens and agency employees. Account registration allows a citizen to log into their account and see history, work in process, payments, and other information relevant to them.

For citizens, the updates in V22.2 reduce the steps in the registration process from 8 to just 3 so a citizen can more quickly get to the tasks they need to complete. We have also updated the user interface in ACA with a responsive design that is more intuitive on mobile devices.

For agency employees, the enhancements in ACA Admin ensure address fields do not appear twice during registration contact creation, improving usability and productivity. Also, we have enhanced the WCAG compliance in ACA with this release.

Screenshots of the new user log-in screens in ACA.

Other Usability Updates with ACA

Other general enhancements to ACA with V22.2 include enhancements to the primary buttons in Brand Builder, making them more consistent and easier to use, plus new enhancements to data masking for SSNs and employee identification numbers (FEINs). Finally, the new release includes improvements in mobile responsiveness for a better user experience.

Accela Mobile V22.1.5

Route Sheet Ordering

When an inspector gets assignments for the day, the routing is usually a manual process determined by the inspector and based on trying to be as efficient as possible.

With the new version of Accela Mobile, there is a “Route Sheet Order” option that then creates a route in the job listing for an inspector. The routing is defined in the back office and is applied automatically when this option is selected. This makes it much easier to create an optimized route, increasing speed and efficiency for inspectors. An example of the routing is shown below, where each item in the job list has been ordered according to the defined rules.

Display of Address Fractions

Some addresses include fractions, which can create issues when sorting or searching for these types of parcels. In the past, users could have trouble choosing the right address to create a record in Accela Mobile if one included a fraction, as they would be displayed the same in the UI.

With V22.1.5, Accela Mobile can now display a fraction correctly if one exists in an address when creating a new record. This way users can clearly see the fraction and select the correct address, saving them time and rework in the field.

Size Options for Image Upload

In the Work Crew and Inspector mobile solutions, a user could choose the size of an image being attached to a record. This can be helpful to create efficiencies when sending large files over a network or cell data transfers.

With V22.1.5 of Accela Mobile, we have added this feature to achieve parity with the legacy mobile applications. A user can attach an image and choose image size options of *actual*, *large*, *medium*, and *small*, with default value of *actual*. When the user selects an option other than actual, the images uploaded from their app will be adjusted to a selected size before uploading.

Application Name in Inspection Job List

Many agencies, particularly environmental health agencies, have the need to enable their inspectors to search for inspections by the business name on the application. These agencies generally store or can add automation to store the business name in a permit record's Application Name field.

Automatic Inspector Location

Sometimes it helps for agency employees to know where an inspector is located as they are resulting an inspection to ensure all is running efficiently in the field. Previously, it was not possible to easily track this information.

Route Sheet Ordering interface (left). Route Sheet Ordering allows an inspector to sort by various criteria in the field (right).

Order	Address	Scheduled Start Time	Scheduled End Time	Inspection Type	Unit Nbr	Alternate ID	Record ID	Request Comment	Status	Estimated Start Time
3	1500 RAMON ST BERKELEY, CA 94710			Communications...		MISC-COMM-19-0...	RFC19-00000-000LP	Sche...		
1	1200 COTTON RD ST BERKELEY, CA 94710	12:00 AM		Framing Inspe...		REF-NEW-20-000005	RFC20-00000-00010	Sche...		
4	1200 COTTON RD ST BERKELEY, CA 94710			Insulation Ins...		REF-NEW-20-000005	RFC20-00000-00010	Sche...		
2	1200 COLUSA AV BERKELEY, CA 94710			Footing-Foundat...		COM-NEW-20-000010	REC20-00000-00011	Sche...		
6	1200 COLUSA AV BERKELEY, CA 94710			Slab Inspection		COM-NEW-20-000010	REC20-00000-00011	Sche...		

With V22.2.5, Accela has provided an agency-level setting to provide this functionality. If the setting is enabled, Accela Mobile will send the inspector's location (latitude/longitude) to the Civic Platform when they result an inspection. This feature not only makes it very simple to track this information, but also provides parity for customers using Accela's Inspector mobile solution and enabling an easier path to migrate to Accela Mobile.

Accela Mobile V22.2.1

Editing of Record Description

When an inspector is in the field, the information they get about a record, including the description, is driven from the back-office system. There are times an inspector may want to edit the description while in the field to make it more applicable or informative. Also, if there are records that are created in the field by inspectors, they need the ability to edit the description field.

With this version, Accela Mobile now includes this capability, ensures the data is clear about a record, and removes the extra steps needed when having to do this from the back office.

Timestamp Format Options

In the field, it is often helpful to have a timestamp on photos taken and uploaded from Accela Mobile. Previously, there has been just one way to do that, with a set format that is fixed.

With this release, a new setting in Accela Mobile allows the user to choose two options, including date-only or date + time. Once the selection is made, all images uploaded from Accela Mobile will have timestamps that follow the user's format selection. This improves the user experience and ensures agencies can tailor the information included with photos to be what they deem to be most useful.

Display Document Group/Category

For every document uploaded into the Civic Platform, there are group and category names assigned to that document. This helps organize documents and link them to the appropriate records.

In the Documents section of the back office, the group and category information was not previously displayed. With this new release, that information is now displayed so a user can better understand how their documents are stored in the system, which enhances the user experience.

This feature also helps Accela ensure that Accela Mobile provides parity features with Accela Mobile Office (AMO)—where this feature is available—and supports the capability of being able to edit this information as documents are uploaded, which will be coming in future releases.

Civic Applications

Civic Applications are the prebuilt configurations used by customers to shorten implementation time, leverage best practices in configuration and design, and ensure customers always know what the solution will look like and how it will behave when taken live.

Enhancement to the EH Civic Application

With the Fall release, Accela is including one enhancement for the Civic Application for Environmental Health, allowing public users to click a link in Accela Citizen Access and get inspection information for a particular foodservice business.

When an establishment is inspected, the report information is stored at the agency but is not easily accessible for the public. With this release, residents can utilize ACA to easily and immediately download a PDF document of the inspection history for a particular facility. They can use this information to better understand many safety elements, including cleanliness and adherence to proper food preparation procedures.

For More Information

For additional detail on what is included in the Fall 2022 Release, or to request a demonstration, please see your Accela Account Executive.