EIM Help – Preserve Values Corrupted by Excel

Version 1.1
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Issue Opening CSV Files with Excel

When you open a CSV file in Excel by double-clicking, it assigns the "general" category to all columns. This can cause incorrect reformatting of certain data in certain columns.

Table 1: Examples of potentially affected columns and data

EIM Column	Undesired Action	Original Value	Incorrect Excel Reformat
Location ID	Converts ID to scientific notation	31E060	3.1E+61
NHD Reach Code	Converts code to scientific notation	17070101003835	1.70701E+13
Result Parameter CAS Number	Converts value to date	6373-11-1	11/1/6373
Result Value	Loss of trailing zeros and/or decimal	22.00	22
Result Value Reporting Limit	Loss of trailing zeros and/or decimal	0.20	0.2
Result Value Detection Limit	Loss of trailing zeros and/or decimal	0.10	0.1

How to Prevent the Reformat Issue

Convert all or specific columns to TEXT when opening Excel. Use the steps below.

Excel 2016

1. Open ZIP file from your Search download email.
2. Extract the file.
3. Open Excel.
4. Click the "Data" tab.
5. Select "From Text."
6. Navigate to your CSV file and click "Import."
7. This will open the Text Import Wizard.
8. Under "Original Data Type" choose "Delimited" and click "Next."
9. Under "Delimiter" check "Comma" and click "Next."
10. Scroll through the columns and highlight the one(s) you wish to convert to text. Then choose "Text" under "Column Data Format."
11. Click "Finish" and save the workbook.

Excel 365

1. Open ZIP file from your Search download email.
2. Extract the file.
3. Open Excel.
4. Click the "Data" tab.
5. Select "From Text."
6. Navigate to your CSV file and click "Import."
7. This will open a Power Query Editor window within Excel.
8. Click "Transform Data" button.
9. By default, all columns are set to "Text."
10. Unless you want to set some columns to another data type, click "Close and Load" in the upper left corner.
11. Save the file under a new name.

Don't Reopen Your Saved CSV Template in Excel

Don't reopen your EIM template in Excel once you have saved it as a CSV file. The EIM Excel template is pre-formatted to prevent Excel from corrupting your data. BUT, **if you reopen a CSV in Excel, pre-formatting goes away.**

Instead of opening the CSV, open your original Excel template file.

Document Revision History

Revision Date	Revision No.	Summary of Changes	Reviser(s)
12/29/09	1.0	Original Document	CN
9/25/2023	1.1	Updated for clarity, accessibility, and Excel 365 instructions.	MP, CN