How can I format Excel files to keep the leading zeros?

- When creating files for importing data, Excel automatically formats certain data in a number format which may remove leading zeros if they are present. This allows Excel to utilize mathematical operations in the spreadsheet.

- This article includes how to convert Excel files to include leading zeros as well as how to format existing files in Excel to keep leading zeros by using the custom format or special format feature.

- When creating Excel import files, it may be important for the data to include leading zeros if they are present in the original data.

Convert Leading Zeros when Opening Excel File

1. Open **Excel**
2. Select the **Data** tab from the menu
3. Select
   a. The **From Text/CSV** icon <u>OR</u>
   b. The **Get Data** icon
      i. Select **From File** from the Get Data dropdown and then select **From Text/CVS**
4. The Import Data window will open. Select **the file** to import and click **Open**.
5. Excel will load and display the data in a preview window. Select the **maximize** window button to see the options.
6. If any of the columns need to be converted, select the **Transform Data** button (select **Load** if no conversions need to be made).
   a. Select the **column header** of the column that needs to be converted
   b. Select the **Transform** tab from the menu
   c. Select the **Data Type** drop-down from the toolbar
   d. Select the **data format** (i.e., Text) the column needs to be transformed to
   e. Select **Replace current** in the popup window to transform the column
   f. When you have completed converting the columns select the **Home** tab on the menu
   g. Select the **Close & Load** icon
   h. Select the **Close & Load** from the drop-down which will pull the data back into the Excel spreadsheet
7. If the data changes at any point, Excel can automatically update the data and apply transformations to the spreadsheet. To perform this function:
   a. Select the **Data** tab on the menu
   b. Select the **Refresh All** button
   c. Select **Refresh All** or **Refresh** (to select a specific column) in the drop-down
8. Select the **File** tab on the menu and select **Save As** or **Save**

Format Existing Excel File to include Leading Zeros

1. Open the **Excel workbook** that requires formatting
2. Select the **cell** or **range of cells** to format
   a. Formatting will work for number codes that contain fewer than 16 digits
3. Press **Ctrl+1** (hold down the Ctrl button and the number 1 button at the same time) to open the Format Cells window
4. Select the **Number** tab
5. Select the **Category** to format
   a. Select the **Special** category for pre-formatted options (i.e., Zip Code, Zip Code + 4, Phone Number, Social Security Number)
   b. Select the **Custom** category to format based on what is needed
6. Click **OK**
7. The formatting will now be applied for all future entries on the spreadsheet
   a. Please note: This process will not restore any leading zeros that were removed prior to formatting

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