

Validation and Input Masks

Using the Field Size Property to Restrict Data

You can set the **Field Size** property for the **Text**, **Number**, and **AutoNumber** data types. This property restricts the number of characters you can enter in a text field and the size of numbers that can be entered in a number or AutoNumber field. For text fields, the **Field Size** property can be set to any number from 0 to 255

Using Validation Rules to Restrict Data

A **validation rule** is an **expression** that can precisely define the information that will be accepted in one or several fields in a record. You might use a validation rule on a field containing the date an employee was hired to prevent a date in the future from being entered. Or if a customer has to be a certain age the rule may be set to ≥ 18 for example to refuse entries below 18.

Make sure to type the validation text so an error message comes up when incorrect data is entered

Validation Rule setting	Validation Text setting
$\neq 0$	Please enter a nonzero value.
0 or >100	Value must be either 0 or over 100.
$< \#1/1/2000\#$	Enter a date before 2000.
$\geq \#1/1/2000\#$ and $< \#1/1/2001\#$	Date must be in 2000

Using an Input Mask to Restrict Data

When you use **masks** in tables or forms, people entering information can see at a glance the format in which they should make entries and how long they should be. You can use the **InputMask** property to control how data is entered in text, number, date/time, and currency fields.

The following list explains the purpose of the most common input mask characters:

Character	Description
0	Required digit (0 through 9).
9	Optional digit or space.
#	Optional digit or space; blank positions are converted to spaces; plus and minus signs are allowed.
L	Required letter (A through Z).
?	Optional letter (A through Z).
A	Required letter or digit.
a	Optional letter or digit.
&	Required character (any kind) or a space.
C	Optional character (any kind) or a space.
<	All characters that follow are converted to lowercase.
>	All characters that follow are converted to uppercase.
!	Characters typed into the mask fill it from left to right. You can include the exclamation point anywhere in the input mask.
\	Character that follows is displayed as a literal character.
Password	Creates a password entry box. Any character typed in the box is stored as the character but is displayed as an asterisk (*).

Using a Lookup List to Restrict Data

For a short list of choices that won't change often, you can have the combo box look up the options in a list that you provide. Although you can create a lookup list by hand, it is a lot easier to use the **Lookup Wizard** to do it.