

# MSAccess

## Naming Conventions for Table Fields

When creating Tables in Access, it is a recommended to follow a pattern for naming fields in your tables. By using this method, you will never have ambiguous table fields and Access will never throw up errors when running macros, queries or sql code.

Say you want to create a table in Access to store all your customers details. Say we will name the table "Customers". We introduce a prefix for every field in your Customers table which is an abbreviation of the table name itself. Lets start with the ID field. This field is also known as the Primary Key. The ID field's purpose is to keep all records in that table unique and therefore the Primary Key is known as a Unique Identifier. It shares these common names which go hand in hand with using the AutoNumber dataType. Following is a suggested format for your Customers table.

### Customers

cusID	AutoNumber
cusCompany	Text
cusFirst	Text
cusLast	Text
cusStreet	Text
cusCity	Text
cusState	Text
cusZip	Text
cusCountry	Text
cusPhone	Text
cusMobile	Text
cusFax	Text
cusEmail	Text
cusWWW	Text
cusBecameClient	Date/Time
cusCreditTerms	Number
cusCreditAmt	Currency

### Suppliers

supID	AutoNumber
supCompany	Text
supContact	Text
supStreet	Text
supCity	Text
supState	Text
supZip	Text
supCountry	Text
supPhone	Text
supExtension	Text
supMobile	Text
supFax	Text
supEmail	Text
supWWW	Text
supBecameSupplier	Date/Time
supCreditTerms	Number
supCreditAmt	Currency

Look at the above two Table examples. Observe how many fields are similarly named. Can you see that if you were to run a query with these linked Tables, it is inevitable that several fields with the same names would be selected. For instance, "City" the customer resides in and "City" the supplier supplies from. By prefixing the above fields using the recommended naming convention herein this handout, you (or Access) will never be confused again by similar meta data.

## Choosing an appropriate Data Types

You may also ask why I am using the data type "Text" for data which are most likely going to be stored numbers. For instance, Phone numbers, Postal Codes, Mobiles etc... There is a clear explanation for this. A good rule of thumb to follow when selecting data types for your table fields is: The number data type should only be used for data which you intend to do calculations with. You will never do calculations with Phone Numbers or Postal Codes, so you should not use numbers. Also, in some countries, Postal Codes have letters in them and selecting "Number" as a data type would disallow the storage of those letters in your Postal Code field.

Another reason to store phone numbers as text is because a mobile number (in Australia) begins with a zero. Mathematically, a zero in front of a number can be omitted as it has no value. If you select the "Number" data type, Microsoft's Excel and Access programs just do away with the zeros leaving your mobile numbers without their first digit. Selecting the "Text" data type can remedy this. You can always be sure your mobile numbers will retain their zeros at the front of them.