



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE
P.O. BOX 51317
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19115-6317

To All Federal Agencies for
Which Financial Services Are
Provided By The Philadelphia
Financial Center (PFC)

Management Letter No. 03-04
October 8, 2003

FMS will install edits in its pre-edit programs to detect and reject files that contain invalid hexadecimal characters. If one or more of your agency's files is rejected, we will notify you immediately via a transmitted copy of the Pre-Edit Report sent back to you annotated with "REJECTED FILE" and containing a message indicating the reason for rejection was due to "INVALID HEXADECIMAL CHARACTERS". This will allow you to begin to make corrections in order to avoid significant payment delays.

We have been experiencing problems with some input Vendor/Miscellaneous formatted and Salary payment request files that contain invalid Hex characters. We will accept alphanumeric characters: upper and lower case alphabetic characters, signed or unsigned numeric characters, blanks, and special characters (ampersand, comma, dollar sign, etc.). Note that a carriage return is NOT considered to be an alphanumeric character.

Files with invalid Hex characters do not successfully pass our payment, accounting, or debt collection program validations without manual intervention. This slows our processing; causing potential delays in payments for you and other customer agencies we service. Therefore, to prevent potential processing delays, we will begin rejecting files containing these invalid characters on December 1, 2003.

To resolve the problems, agencies will need to edit and validate their Vendor/Miscellaneous formatted and Salary payment request files. Agencies should ensure that these files do not contain invalid hex characters. Of particular concern are files that are created on ASCII devices. These files may appear free of invalid characters, but invalid characters are being added by translation software before the files are transmitted to us. The resultant payment files normally have been able to pass our validation edits for initial processing, but fail subsequently.

There are 256 possible Hexadecimal Characters. For purposes of validating the FMS payment and collection applications, the following edits will be added to the payment software to distinguish the valid and invalid hexadecimal characters in the payment files:

Valid EBCDIC Hexadecimal Characters are defined as all Hex values greater than Hex "3F".

Invalid EBCDIC Hexadecimal Characters are defined as Hex "00" thru Hex "3F".

If your agency creates payment files using ASCII devices, valid ASCII Hexadecimal Characters are defined as Hex "32" thru Hex "7E".

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If your agency creates payments files using ASCII devices, invalid ASCII Hexadecimal Character are defined as Hex "00" thru Hex "31" and Hex "7F" thru Hex "FF".

FMS will be ready to test agency files beginning October 14, 2003, to assure that agency and FMS edits are working properly.

Please call Joe DeVitis on 215-516-8100 if you have any questions about this policy or to arrange for us to test your files.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Colarusso". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

MICHAEL COLARUSSO
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
PHILADELPHIA FINANCIAL CENTER