

Importing Spreadsheets or CSV files

QGIS Tutorials and Tips



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Importing Spreadsheets or CSV files

Many times the GIS data comes in a table or an Excel spreadsheet. Also, if you have a list lat/long coordinates, you can easily import this data in your GIS project.

Overview of the task

We will be importing a text file of earthquake data to QGIS.

Get the data

NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center produces a great dataset of all significant earthquakes since 2150 BC. [Learn more.](#)

Download [Significant Earthquake Database](#) text file.

Data Source [NGDC]

Procedure

1. Examine your tabular data source. To import this data to QGIS, you will have to save it as a text file and need at least 2 columns which contain the X and Y coordinates. If you have a spreadsheet, use *Save As* function in your program to save it as a *Tab Delimited File* or a *Comma Separated Values (CSV)* file. Once you have the data exported this way, you can open it in a text editor such as Notepad to view the contents. In case of the Significant Earthquake Database, the data already comes as a text file which contains latitude and longitude of the earthquake centers along with other related attributes. You will see that each field is separated by a TAB.

signif.txt - Notepad

STATE	LOCATION_NAME	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	REGION_CODE	DEATHS	DEATHS_DESCRIPTION
10	ISRAEL	ISRAEL: ARIHA (JERICHO)	31.500	35.300	140	
		9713	Tsu	-480	9	29
		1				2
103.900	30					
GANSU PROVINCE:	LONGXI	34.900	104.700	30	3	
3		41	23			
		UKRAINE	UKRAINE: BLACK SEA		51	57
		1			44.700	33.300
		3	1001	4	67	155
					79	340
350	10					
438	2					
119		477	9	25		
		139	Tsu	551	7	9
				147	558	12
549	9	12			5.5	25
715						
175	745	6	5			7.9
2	3	187		778		
	199	811				
844	9	18				
	219	853				
857	4					

Ln 1, Col 1

2. Open QGIS. Click on *Layers* ■ *Add Delimited Text Layer*.



3. In the *Create a Layer from a Delimited Text File* dialog, click on *Browse* and specify the path to the text file you downloaded. In the *File format* section, select *Custom delimiters* and check *Tab*. The *Geometry definition* section will be auto-populated if it finds a suitable X and Y coordinate fields. In our case they are *LONGITUDE* and *LATITUDE*. You may change it if the import selects the wrong fields. Click *OK*.

Note

It is easy to confuse X and Y coordinates. Latitude specifies the north-south position of a point and hence it is a **Y** coordinate. Similarly Longitude specifies the east-west position of a point and it is a **X** coordinate.

Create a Layer from a Delimited Text File

File Name:

Layer name: Encoding:

File format: ☐ CSV (comma separated values) ☒ Custom delimiters ☐ Regular expression delimiter

☐ Comma
 ☒ Tab
 ☐ Space
 ☐ Colon
 ☐ Semicolon

Other delimiters: Quote: Escape:

Record options: Number of header lines to discard: ☒ First record has field names

Field options: ☐ Trim fields ☐ Discard empty fields ☐ Decimal separator is comma

Geometry definition: ☒ Point coordinates ☐ Well known text (WKT) ☐ No geometry (attribute only table)

X field: Y field: ☐ DMS coordinates

Layer settings: ☒ Use spatial index ☐ Use subset index ☐ Watch file

	I_D	FLAG_TSUNAMI	YEAR	MONTH	DAY	HOUR	MINUTE	SECOND	FOCAL_DEPTH	EQ_MAG_MW	EQ_MAG
1	1		-2150								
2	3		-2000						18		7.1
3	2	Tsu	-2000								
4	8		-1566								
5	11		-1450								

4. You may see some errors displayed in the next dialog. The errors in this file are mainly due to missing X or Y fields. You may examine these errors and fix the problems in your source file. For this tutorial, you may ignore these errors.

Delimited text file errors

Errors in file C:/Users/ujaval/Downloads/signif.txt

49 records discarded due to missing geometry definitions

6 records discarded due to invalid geometry definitions

The following lines were not loaded into QGIS due to errors:

Invalid X or Y fields at line 306

Invalid X or Y fields at line 2253

Invalid X or Y fields at line 3239

Invalid X or Y fields at line 3324

Invalid X or Y fields at line 3365

Invalid X or Y fields at line 3420

5. Next, a *Coordinate Reference System Selector* will ask you to select a coordinate reference system. Since the earthquake coordinates are in latitudes and longitudes, you should select *WGS 84*. Click *OK*.



6. You will now see that the data will be imported and displayed in the QGIS canvas.

