Follow these instructions¹ to download the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) Complaints data and import them into Microsoft Excel. ODI Complaints data are available in the compressed data (ZIP) format on the ODI web site. The large amount of data requires breaking the data up into two parts.

The system characteristics of the target machine will affect the speed and performance of the processing needed to accomplish the downloading and importing of the Complaints data. At least 2GB of available disk space is required. This space requirement will increase as more data are continually being added to the ODI database.

Detailed field descriptions of the data file are given in Appendix A.

Note: For consistency the original file name **FLAT_CMPL** is used throughout these instructions.

1. Go to the following URL:

https://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/downloads/index.cfm

ne file layout. All times shown are Eastern Tim		the corresponding .txt file for a descri
nplaints		
Name	Last Modified	Size
Single file of all Complaints		
FLAT_CMPL.zip	05/10/2021 01:53:11 PM	264.8M
Import_Instructions_Excel_All.pdf	05/10/2021 12:24:59 PM	531K
Five-year sets based on Received Date		
COMPLAINTS_RECEIVED_2020-2021.zip	05/10/2021 12:37:32 PM	17.5M
COMPLAINTS_RECEIVED_2015-2019.zip	05/10/2021 12:35:19 PM	78.0M
COMPLAINTS_RECEIVED_2010-2014.zip	05/10/2021 12:33:25 PM	69.2M
COMPLAINTS_RECEIVED_2005-2009.zip	05/10/2021 12:31:58 PM	43.6M
COMPLAINTS_RECEIVED_2000-2004.zip	05/10/2021 12:31:05 PM	38.0M
COMPLAINTS RECEIVED 1995-1999.zip	05/10/2021 12:30:41 PM	13.7M
Import_Instructions_Excel_5-year.pdf	05/10/2021 12:23:59 PM	315K
Import_Instructions_Access.pdf	05/10/2021 12:24:59 PM	1.2M
CMPL.txt	05/10/2021 12:24:57 PM	8K

http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/downloads/folders/Complaints/Import Instructions Excel All.pdf

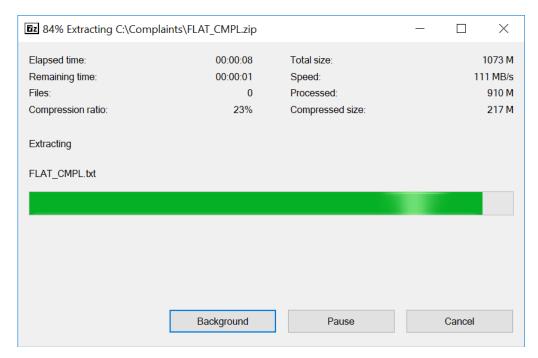
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¹ The PDF version of this document is located at

- 2. Select the **FLAT_CMPL.zip** file.
- 3. **Save** the file to your Downloads folder or another destination folder on your system.

(This is a large file and may take a few minutes to download.)

4. Extract the zipped file (**FLAT_CMPL.txt**) to the desired folder.



Note: The unzipped text file of Complaints data is now ready to be imported into a Microsoft Excel workbook.

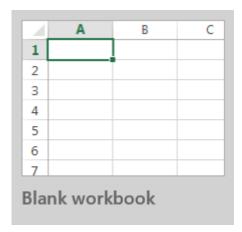
5. Open Microsoft Excel.



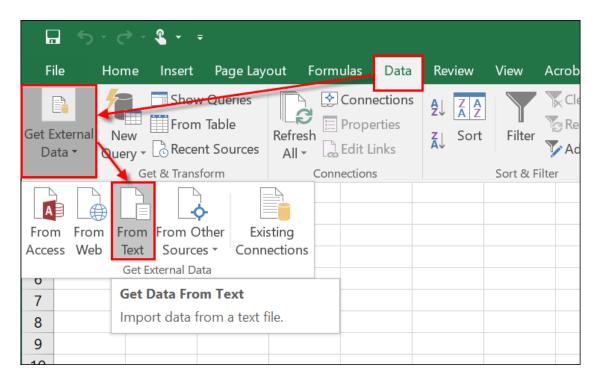
Note: The following screenshots are from the Microsoft Excel 2016. Other versions will have similar views and functionality, but may have differing features and limitations. Use the toolbars or help feature if you have difficulty locating or using a function.

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6. Open a **Blank workbook**.



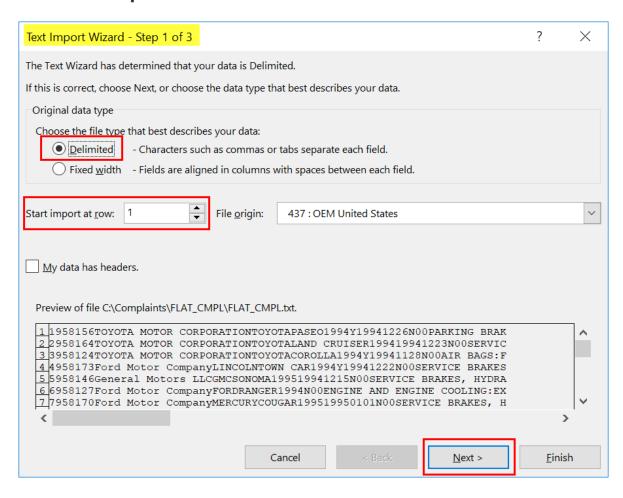
7. Open the **Text Import Wizard** by selecting **Data > Get External Data > From Text**.



8. Locate and select the **FLAT_CMPL.txt** file that was extracted from the downloaded .zip file.

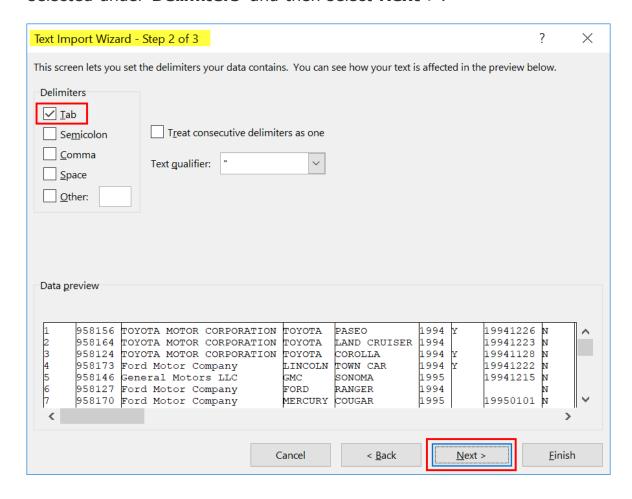
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9. In the **Text Import Wizard – Step 1 of 3** select **Delimited** and make sure that **Start import at row** is set to 1 and then select **Next >**.



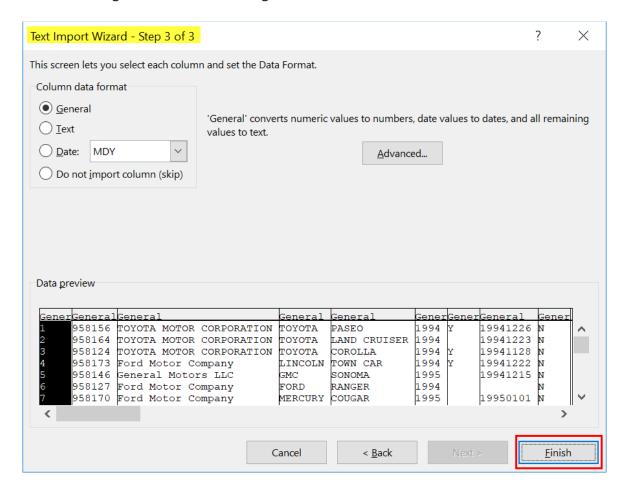
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10. In the **Text Import Wizard – Step 2 of 3** make sure that only **Tab** is selected under **Delimiters** and then select **Next >**.



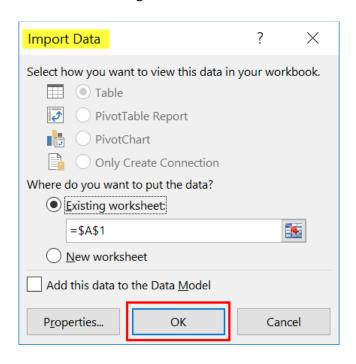
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11. In the **Text Import Wizard – Step 3 of 3** select **Finish** to import all of the data as is. If you wish to reformat or skip importing any of the columns, make those changes before selecting **Finish**.

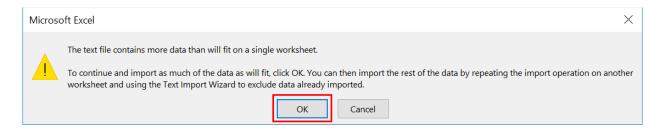


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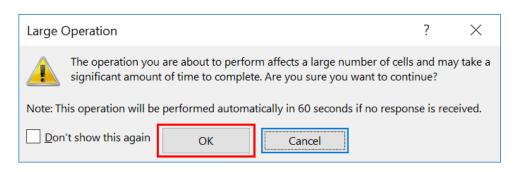
12. In the **Import Data** window select **OK** to import the data at the beginning of the current worksheet. If a different location is desired, make that selection before selecting **OK**.



13. If the data being imported will not fit on a single worksheet, a message box will be shown, as below. Select **OK** to continue the import. The remaining data can be imported separately as described further in these instructions.

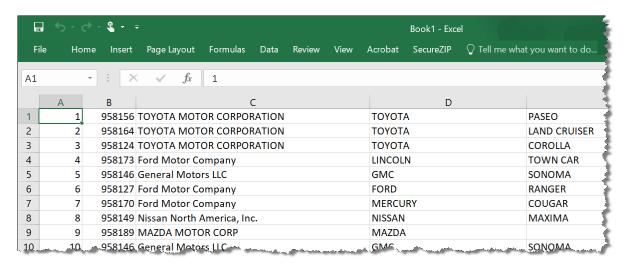


14. Select **OK** on the displayed warning about the time it will take to import the data to continue with the import.

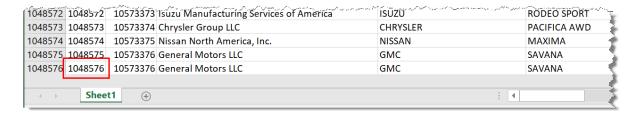


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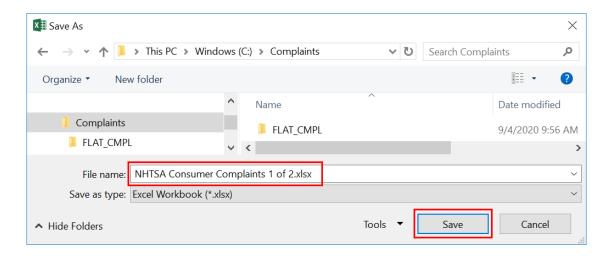
15. Importing the data can take several minutes, depending on system characteristics. A portion of the worksheet is shown below.



16. Scroll to the bottom of the worksheet and note the **Row Number** of the last row imported (**1048576** in this case for Excel 2016). This **Row Number** will be used for importing the remainder of the data.



17. Use the Excel **Save As** function to **Save** this first part of the import with a meaningful filename, such as **NHTSA Consumer Complaints 1 of 2.xlsx**, in the desired folder.



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- 18. Close Excel after saving the data and then re-open Excel. Perform Steps 6 through 17 above with the following **exceptions** to save the remaining data in a second workbook:
 - In Step 9 change the **Start import at row** from 1 to **one more than the Row Number** noted at the bottom of the earlier worksheet in this case, **1048577**. This will start the import at the row following the last row saved in the first file.
 - If any of the columns were previously reformatted or skipped in Step 11, perform the same changes for the second workbook for consistency between the two files.
 - Step 16 can be skipped.
 - In Step 17 enter a filename that is different from the earlier one, such as **NHTSA Consumer Complaints 2 of 2.xlsx**.

This concludes the import process. You can now view all the data in the two Excel workbooks. If system resources permit it, two worksheets in the same workbook may be used instead of two separate workbooks.

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Appendix A. Complaints File Characteristics

Field#	Name	Type/Size	Description
1	CMPLID	CHAR (9)	NHTSA'S INTERNAL UNIQUE SEQUENCE NUMBER. IS AN UPDATEABLE FIELD, THUS DATA FOR A GIVEN RECORD POTENTIALLY COULD CHANGE FROM ONE DATA OUTPUT FILE TO THE NEXT.
2	ODINO	CHAR (9)	NHTSA'S INTERNAL REFERENCE NUMBER. THIS NUMBER MAY BE REPEATED FOR MULTIPLE COMPONENTS. ALSO, IF LDATE IS PRIOR TO DEC 15, 2002, THIS NUMBER MAY BE REPEATED FOR MULTIPLE
_			PRODUCTS OWNED BY THE SAME COMPLAINANT.
3	_	CHAR (40)	MANUFACTURER'S NAME
4	MAKETXT	CHAR (25)	VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT MAKE
5	MODELTXT		VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT MODEL
6 7	YEARTXT CRASH		MODEL YEAR, 9999 IF UNKNOWN OR N/A
8	FAILDATE	CHAR (1)	WAS VEHICLE INVOLVED IN A CRASH, 'Y' OR 'N'
9	FIRE	CHAR (1)	DATE OF INCIDENT (YYYYMMDD) WAS VEHICLE INVOLVED IN A FIRE 'Y' OR 'N'
10	INJURED	NUMBER (2)	NUMBER OF PERSONS INJURED
11	DEATHS	NUMBER (2)	NUMBER OF FATALITIES
12	COMPDESC	CHAR (128)	SPECIFIC COMPONENT'S DESCRIPTION
13	CITY		CONSUMER'S CITY
14	STATE		CONSUMER'S STATE CODE
15 16	VIN		VEHICLE'S VIN#
17	DATEA LDATE	CHAR (8)	DATE ADDED TO FILE (YYYYMMDD)
18	MILES	NUMBER (7)	VEHICLE MILEAGE AT FAILURE
19	OCCURENCES	NUMBER (4)	DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY NHTSA (YYYYMMDD) VEHICLE MILEAGE AT FAILURE NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES
20	CDESCR	CHAR (2048)	DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPLAINT
21	CMPL_TYPE	CHAR (4)	
			CAG =CONSUMER ACTION GROUP
			CON =FORWARDED FROM A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE DP =DEFECT PETITION, RESULT OF A DEFECT PETITION
			EVOQ =HOTLINE VOQ
			EWR =EARLY WARNING REPORTING
			INS =INSURANCE COMPANY
			IVOQ =NHTSA WEB SITE
			LETR =CONSUMER LETTER
			MAVQ =NHTSA MOBILE APP
			MIVQ =NHTSA MOBILE APP MVOQ =OPTICAL MARKED VOQ
			RC =RECALL COMPLAINT, RESULT OF A RECALL INVESTIGATION
			RP =RECALL PETITION, RESULT OF A RECALL PETITION
			SVOQ =PORTABLE SAFETY COMPLAINT FORM (PDF) VOQ =NHTSA VEHICLE OWNERS QUESTIONNAIRE
22	POLICE RPT YN	CHAR (1)	WAS INCIDENT REPORTED TO POLICE 'Y' OR 'N'
23	PURCH_DT	CHAR (8)	DATE PURCHASED (YYYYMMDD)
24	ORIG_OWNER_YN	CHAR (1)	WAS ORIGINAL OWNER 'Y' OR 'N'
25	ANTI_BRAKES_YN	CHAR (1)	ANTI-LOCK BRAKES 'Y' OR 'N'
26	CRUISE_CONT_YN	CHAR (1)	CRUISE CONTROL 'Y' OR 'N'
27 28	NUM_CYLS	NUMBER (2)	NUMBER OF CYLINDERS
∠ 0	DRIVE_TRAIN	CHAR (4)	DRIVE TRAIN TYPE [AWD, 4WD, FWD, RWD]

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29	FUEL_SYS	CHAR (4)	FUEL SYSTEM CODE: FI =FUEL INJECTION
30	FUEL_TYPE	CHAR (4)	TB =TURBO FUEL TYPE CODE: BF =BIFUEL CN =CNG/LPG DS =DIESEL GS =GAS HE =HYBRID ELECTRIC
31	TRANS TYPE	CHAR (4)	VEHICLE TRANSMISSION TYPE [AUTO, MAN]
32	VEH SPEED	NUMBER (3)	VEHICLE SPEED
33	DOT	CHAR (20)	DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TIRE IDENTIFIER
34	TIRE SIZE	CHAR (30)	VEHICLE SPEED DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TIRE IDENTIFIER TIRE SIZE
35	LOC OF TIRE	CHAR (4)	TIRE SIZE LOCATION OF TIRE CODE:
	200_02 _2 21.2	52 (1)	FSW =DRIVER SIDE FRONT DSR =DRIVER SIDE REAR FTR =PASSENGER SIDE FRONT PSR =PASSENGER SIDE REAR SPR =SPARE
36	TIRE_FAIL_TYPE	CHAR (4)	TYPE OF TIRE FAILURE CODE: BST =BLISTER BLW =BLOWOUT
			TTL =CRACK
			OFR =OUT OF ROUND
			TSW =PUNCTURE
			TTR =ROAD HAZARD
			TSP =TREAD SEPARATION
37	ORIG EOUIP YN	CHAR(1)	
38	MANUF DT	CHAR (8)	WAS PART ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT 'Y' OR 'N' DATE OF MANUFACTURE (YYYYMMDD)
39	SEAT TYPE	CHAR (4)	TYPE OF CHILD SEAT CODE:
	_	- ()	B =BOOSTER
			C =CONVERTIBLE
			I =INFANT
			IN =INTEGRATED
			TD =TODDLER
40	RESTRAINT TYPE	CHAR (4)	INSTALLATION SYSTEM CODE;
	_		A =VEHICLE SAFETY BELT
			B =LATCH SYSTEM
41	DEALER NAME	CHAR (40)	DEALER'S NAME
42	DEALER TEL	CHAR (20)	DEALER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER
43	DEALER_CITY	CHAR (30)	DEALER'S CITY
44	DEALER STATE	CHAR (2)	DEALER'S STATE CODE
45	DEALER ZIP	CHAR (10)	DEALER'S ZIPCODE
46	PROD TYPE	CHAR (4)	PRODUCT TYPE CODE:
	_		V =VEHICLE
			T =TIRES
			E =EQUIPMENT
			C =CHILD RESTRAINT
47	REPAIRED_YN	CHAR (1)	WAS DEFECTIVE TIRE REPAIRED 'Y' OR 'N'
48	_	CHAR (1)	WAS MEDICAL ATTENTION REQUIRED 'Y' OR 'N'
49	VEHICLES_TOWED_YN	CHAR (1)	WAS VEHICLE TOWED 'Y' OR 'N'

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