

## 6.1.7 Client Programming Security Guidelines

Applications that access MySQL should not trust any data entered by users, who can try to trick your code by entering special or escaped character sequences in Web forms, URLs, or whatever application you have built. Be sure that your application remains secure if a user enters something like “`; DROP DATABASE mysql;`”. This is an extreme example, but large security leaks and data loss might occur as a result of hackers using similar techniques, if you do not prepare for them.

A common mistake is to protect only string data values. Remember to check numeric data as well. If an application generates a query such as `SELECT * FROM table WHERE ID=234` when a user enters the value `234`, the user can enter the value `234 OR 1=1` to cause the application to generate the query `SELECT * FROM table WHERE ID=234 OR 1=1`. As a result, the server retrieves every row in the table. This exposes every row and causes excessive server load. The simplest way to protect from this type of attack is to use single quotation marks around the numeric constants: `SELECT * FROM table WHERE ID='234'`. If the user enters extra information, it all becomes part of the string. In a numeric context, MySQL automatically converts this string to a number and strips any trailing nonnumeric characters from it.

Sometimes people think that if a database contains only publicly available data, it need not be protected. This is incorrect. Even if it is permissible to display any row in the database, you should still protect against denial of service attacks (for example, those that are based on the technique in the preceding paragraph that causes the server to waste resources). Otherwise, your server becomes unresponsive to legitimate users.

Checklist:

- Enable strict SQL mode to tell the server to be more restrictive of what data values it accepts. See [Section 5.1.7, “Server SQL](#)

## Modes”.

- Try to enter single and double quotation marks (“’” and “””) in all of your Web forms. If you get any kind of MySQL error, investigate the problem right away.
- Try to modify dynamic URLs by adding %22 (“”), %23 (“#”), and %27 (“’”) to them.
- Try to modify data types in dynamic URLs from numeric to character types using the characters shown in the previous examples. Your application should be safe against these and similar attacks.
- Try to enter characters, spaces, and special symbols rather than numbers in numeric fields. Your application should remove them before passing them to MySQL or else generate an error. Passing unchecked values to MySQL is very dangerous!
- Check the size of data before passing it to MySQL.
- Have your application connect to the database using a user name different from the one you use for administrative purposes. Do not give your applications any access privileges they do not need.

Many application programming interfaces provide a means of escaping special characters in data values. Properly used, this prevents application users from entering values that cause the application to generate statements that have a different effect than you intend:

- MySQL C API: Use the [mysql\\_real\\_escape\\_string\(\)](#) API call.
- MySQL++: Use the [escape](#) and [quote](#) modifiers for query streams.
- PHP: Use either the [mysqli](#) or [pdo\\_mysql](#) extensions, and not the older [ext/mysql](#) extension. The preferred API's support the improved MySQL authentication protocol and passwords, as well as prepared statements with placeholders. See

also [Choosing an API](#).

If the older `ext/mysql` extension must be used, then for escaping use the `mysql_real_escape_string()` function and not `mysql_escape_string()` or `addslashes()` because only `mysql_real_escape_string()` is character set-aware; the other functions can be “bypassed” when using (invalid) multibyte character sets.

- Perl DBI: Use placeholders or the `quote()` method.
- Ruby DBI: Use placeholders or the `quote()` method.
- Java JDBC: Use a `PreparedStatement` object and placeholders.

Other programming interfaces might have similar capabilities.