

# I received a message from the Service Bureau that my report contained “incorrect date formats.” What does this mean?

People often use different shorthand notations for dates. In order to process your submission in a timely fashion, we need to have all dates in a predictable format, rather than try to figure out what shorthand was meant. The preferred date format is MM/DD/YYYY — in other words, 2 digits for month, followed by 2 digits for day-of-month, followed by 4 digits for year. Each part should be separated by the slash character “/”.

Our processing software is generally pretty flexible about interpreting dates. If you received this message, the date format you chose is not one that our software was able to automatically interpret. See the [date description](#) in the Data Dictionary for the complete set of date formats that we accept.