

**Care and Feeding of Microsoft Access Databases**  
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Each term questions arise as to why a database is not working or why the validation software keeps giving run-time errors. In many cases these problems are caused by failure of the user to perform routine maintenance on the Microsoft Access database. The following information is provided in hopes of forestalling any of these problems in the future or at least greatly diminishing them.

**Background Information**

Desktop database applications, such as Microsoft Access, do not actually delete records. Records are only marked for deletion. This fact is inherent in the design of the database product and there is no way around it. If the user runs several validations to correct errors on the SIS file, the size of the database grows concomitantly and many records are marked for deletion. Unless the user does something about this through a procedure called compacting the database, the database will eventually grow to such a size that it will no longer work correctly. Please review the following steps to keep your Access database cleaned and operating properly.

**Steps for Compacting the Database**

1. Open your SIS database in whatever version of Microsoft you are using (SISDB.MDB).
2. Click or select the tools tab.
3. Click on database utilities.
4. Select the compact database function.

This procedure should be run on the database before you install a new version of the SIS validation software. Failure to do this has caused some fields not to be installed in the database or corruption of data tables in the database during installation. The importance of running the compaction process before installing the new software cannot be over emphasized.

Additionally, after running several validations to correct errors, the compaction process should also be performed. The user should do this routinely or suffer the consequences of the failure of the database and software with run-time errors or scrambled data.