

## Format Numbers Using Field Codes

### Formatting a Currency Field

Let's start with an example. Say you insert a Price field into a form letter that you're preparing for a mail merge. In the main document, it looks something like this, where «Price» is the field:

The gizmo you ordered will cost «Price».

Press ALT+F9, and you'll see the code behind the field. That code will look like this:

The gizmo you ordered will cost { MERGEFIELD "Price" }.

You can control the formatting of the prices in that field just by typing a few additional characters (that is, by adding a formatting switch) inside the braces.

To include:

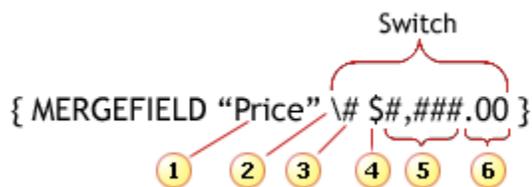
- a dollar sign
- four digits by default, and a space if the number you're merging has only three digits
- two decimal places
- and a comma between the first and second numbers

this is what you type (shown in bold) in the field code:

```
{ MERGEFIELD "Price" \# $$,###.00 }
```

When you finish typing, press ALT+F9 to stop looking at field codes. Now when you merge, all of your prices will be formatted exactly the way you want. (You can use this same approach with numbers other than prices.)

Here's a breakdown of the elements in the switch we just used:



1. The name of the field that you inserted into your main document. It corresponds to a column in your Excel worksheet.
2. Backslash, which starts the formatting switch.
3. Definition of the switch— in this case, to format numbers.
4. Characters that you want to include— for example, a \$ that appears before each price.
5. The maximum number of digits. If there are fewer digits in a number, Word leaves a blank. Type commas where you want them to appear in the number.
6. Decimal point, which you type where you want it to appear. The zeros specify the maximum number of digits after the decimal point. If there are fewer digits, Word puts in a zero

## **What about Zip Codes?**

When merging a Zip Code that has a leading zero as in 02920, the leading zero is suppressed and the Zip Code appears as 2920 in the merged document. This is a problem for the US Postal Service and could result in your mail be delayed for weeks. Here is the code

The merge field will look like this { MERGEFIELD "Zip" }.

To stop the suppression of the leading zero, use this { MERGEFIELD "Zip" \# 0#### }.

This instructs Word to stop zero suppression at the first of the five numbers, meaning do not suppress the leading zeros.