excel spill error Easy guide to fix and prevent issues

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Printing & Usage Overview

Excel spill error happens when a formula returns multiple values, but the cells below are already in use. It's that frustrating #SPILL! message that stops your sheet cold. This usually pops up with dynamic array functions like FILTER or SORT , which can spill results into adjacent cells. If those cells are occupied, Excel throws the flag. It's a modern problem since dynamic arrays rolled out, but the fix is straightforward once you know where to look. Most people run into this when they're trying to clean up a dataset or pull specific rows. For example, if you're filtering a sales log for certain products, the FILTER function might return 20 rows, but if the 5 cells below your output are filled, you're stuck. The error isn't about the formula itself-it's about the real estate on your sheet. Clear the way, and the spill works fine. Dynamic Arrays and Why They Spill Dynamic array functions like FILTER , UNIQUE , and SORT are a game-changer for handling lists. They automatically resize results without array formulas or manual ranges. For instance, =FILTER(A2:C100, B2:B100="Active") grabs all rows where column B says "Active." The catch? If the output area isn't free, you get an excel spill error . These functions don't stop at one cell-they expand vertically or horizontally, depending on the data. Set up your sheet with a clear output zone. I'd skip merged cells here, as they're a recipe for spills. Use a table (Ctrl+T) for your source data, and dedicate a separate column or area for results. For example, if filtering a customer list, place the formula in cell E2 and let it spill down column E. Keep rows below empty until you're sure how many results will appear. Name Status Date John Doe Active 2023-01-15 Jane Smith Inactive 2023-02-10 Sam Lee Active 2023-03-05 Formula: =FILTER(A2:C4, B2:B4="Active") This returns the first and third

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