

# What is the earliest date in a specific column?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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The earliest date in a specific column refers to the earliest recorded date in a particular column within a dataset or table. This date signifies the earliest occurrence of a particular event or data point within the given column. It is often used to determine the starting point of a trend, pattern or analysis within the dataset. Identifying the earliest date in a specific column helps in understanding the chronological sequence of events and provides valuable insights for decision making purposes.

## R: Find Earliest Date in a Column

You can use the following methods to find the earliest date in a column of a data frame in R:

### Method 1: Find Earliest Date in Column

```
min(df$date_column)
```

### Method 2: Find Row with Earliest Date in Column

```
df
```

The following examples shows how to use this syntax in practice with the following data frame:

```
#create data frame
```

```
df <-  
data.frame(date=as.Date(c('2022-04-01','2022-02-12','2022-06-13','2022-02-04',  
'2022-07-01','2022-02-19','2022-12-03','2022-04-04'))),
```

```
sales = c(12, 15, 24, 24, 14, 19, 12, 38))
```

```
#view data frame
```

```
df
```

```
date sales
```

```
1 2022-04-01 12
```

```
2 2022-02-12 15
```

```
3 2022-06-13 24
```

```
4 2022-02-04 24
```

```
5 2022-07-01 14
```

```
6 2022-02-19 19
```

```
7 2022-12-03 12
```

```
8 2022-04-04 38
```

**Example 1: Find Earliest Date in Column**

**We can use the following code to find the earliest date in the date column of the data frame:**

```
#find earliest date in 'date' column
```

```
min(df$date)
```

```
"2022-02-04"
```

From the output we can see that the earliest date in the date column is 2/4/2022.

**Note:** If you want to find the most recent date, simply change min to max in the code.

**Example 2: Find Row with Earliest Date in Column**

We can use the following code to find the row with the earliest date in the date column of the data frame:

```
#find row with earliest date in 'date' column  
df
```

```
date sales  
4 2022-02-04 24
```

The output displays the entire row that contains the earliest date in the date column.

For example, we can see the following values in this row:

```
date: 2022-02-04sales: 24
```

**Note:** If you want to find the row with the most recent

**date, simply change which.min() to which.max() in the code.**

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