

MDS Alert

Get Answers To 5 Common Questions About PBJ

Use this conversion list to properly report partial hours worked.

Do you have head-scratching questions about inputting data into the Payroll-Based Journal (PBJ) system? If so, you're not alone.

The good news is the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services** (CMS) is continually updating an FAQ document for PBJ-related questions. Here are the newest questions and answers, which CMS added on Jan. 5:

Don't Lose Those Employee IDs

Question 1: If our facility moves from manual reporting to a vendor solution, or switches vendor solutions and is not able to keep the same unique employee IDs, what should we do?

Answer 1: Your facility should do everything possible to retain the same employee ID numbers, CMS says. If this isn't possible, then your facility must understand that the PBJ system will identify these new employee IDs as new employees, which may affect your turnover and tenure data.

Question 2: How should our facility enter a hire and rehire date for an employee who is hired and rehired within the same quarter?

Answer 2: For questions related to entering the hire and rehire dates for employees, refer to Section 8.4, "Manual Data Entry and XML Submission Rehire Process," of the PBJ User Manual (www.qtso.com/pbjtrain.html), CMS states.

Convert Rounded Staffing Hours This Way

Question 3: How should we round staffing hours in PBJ?

Answer 3: Time entered is calculated in fractions, not as direct hours and minutes, so you will need to round to the nearest tenth (10th) when converting minutes to fractions, CMS instructs. To convert from minutes to tenths of an hour:

- 1 to 6 minutes = 0.1
- 7 to 12 minutes = 0.2
- 13 to 18 minutes = 0.3
- 19 to 24 minutes = 0.4
- 25 to 30 minutes = 0.5
- 31 to 36 minutes = 0.6
- 37 to 42 minutes = 0.7
- 43 to 48 minutes = 0.8
- 49 to 54 minutes = 0.9
- 55 to 60 minutes = 1.0

Examples: If you have an employee who worked seven hours and six minutes, this would equal 7.1. Seven hours and 30 minutes would equal 7.5. Seven hours and 48 minutes would equal 7.8.

CMS notes that facilities may opt to round to the nearest 100th when entering hours. But don't report actual hours. For instance, if an employee works seven hours and 33 minutes, you should not report 7.33. Instead, the correct time to report would be 7.6 hours (rounding to the nearest 10th) or 7.55 hours (rounding to the nearest 100th).

Look for 'Save Successful' Message

Question 4: When entering data manually, how do I know my data has been submitted?

Answer 4: The Save and Submit buttons serve the same purpose, according to CMS. Once you click the Save button, you will receive a Save Successful message, which means that you've successfully entered your data.

Then, you'll be able to go back to the Manual Data Entry section and view that data immediately. If you want reports that reflect this data input, you can run them from CASPER Reporting.

Navigate Hire/Termination Dates for Contracted Staff

Question 5: For employee reporting, do we have to track hire and termination dates for contracted staff? The contracting agencies we work with generally do not share this information with our facility □ this applies to contract (agency) nursing staff, but also other types of staff.

Answer 5: For contract staff, the hire date is the first date worked and billed for at your facility, CMS notes. If the staff member transfers to a new facility, then his hire date will be the first date that he provides services at the new facility.

The termination date is the date the facility or the agency communicates that the contract individual will no longer be providing services at that facility (either voluntary or involuntary). If you're not sure of this date, do not fill in an end date.

Example: The nurse employment agency hired an agency nurse on March 1, 2016, but the nurse didn't start working at the nursing home until May 15, 2016. In this case, May 15, 2016 would be that agency nurse's hire date for that nursing home.

And if the nursing home told the nurse's employment agency not to have that particular nurse return to the facility after July 1, 2016, then the facility would use the termination date of July 1, 2016, even though that nurse may continue to be employed by that employment agency beyond that date and perform services at other unrelated facilities.

Rule of thumb: "Hire and termination dates are reported at the facility level, not the company level," CMS states. "These dates must reflect the time each staff member worked at an individual facility, and not the dates hired and terminated at a company."

Link: For more PBJ-related FAQs, go to www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityInits/Downloads/PBJ-Policy-Manual-FAQ-1-05-17.pdf.