

# MIRCal – General FAQs

Frequently asked questions pertinent to all data types are listed below. Many of these questions are answered in greater length in our Inpatient and Emergency Department and Ambulatory Surgery reporting manuals.

## System Requirements and File Format

1. What are the minimum computer requirements to submit data to MIRCal?

- High speed internet connection
- E-Mail account
- Adobe Acrobat Reader

2. Will the MIRCal application reside on my computer?

No. The only applications you need on your computer are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Adobe Acrobat Reader. MIRCal is available through the Internet.

3. What type of file will be used to submit data?

The data must be text (.txt) files. Excel files are not accepted. You may compress or "zip" your text file and submit the zipped (.zip) file. If your data file is over 3MB in size it must be zipped in order to submit.

4. How will data be submitted to MIRCal? Is it secure?

Data files will be submitted via a Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) file transfer format. Facility users will log in to the MIRCal system and submit their data file which will be encrypted and downloaded to OSHPD over a secure internet connection.

5. Is the file format for Inpatient data different than the Emergency Department and Ambulatory Surgery data format?

Facilities are required to report in two separate formats:

- ED and AS format
- Inpatient format

You may review the format and file specifications for each data type on the Inpatient or ED/AS [web page](#). Data files must be separate for each data type.

6. Why are inpatient data element definitions different from the ED & AS data elements?

OSHPD is mandated to use national standards for data elements included in the Emergency Department and Ambulatory Surgery data sets. The standards are based on the federal ANSI X12N 837 Health Care Service Data Reporting Guide and the OMB race and ethnicity standard. Inpatient data elements were developed from Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set (UHDDS) standards and reflect proprietary changes made by OSHPD. OSHPD is gradually updating inpatient data elements to be in closer alignment with national standards, as our statutory authority mandates.

## Data Submission

7. What is the difference between a Test submission and a Formal submission?

The Formal submission option should only be used when all data are below the allowed Error Tolerance Level (see #15) and are ready for final submission.

8. How do I test my facility's data in MIRCal?

You have two options for testing data:

1. File Format Testing. This feature only tests your file format and does not process the data file through full validation, and does not produce any error reports. File Format Testing availability is not dependent on a Report Period being open.
2. Full Validation of Test File. Submitting an entire file through the test function will mimic a formal submission. The data will be subjected to the same edits as in formal submission and provide results in the same manner.

9. If my facility changes information systems, how do I test my data?

When each report period opens for submissions, the test function of MIRCal allows facilities, vendors and Designated Agents to test the file extracts before formal submission. Facilities are responsible for testing files and making sure the files are in the correct file format. Please refer to the format and file specifications for your data type. Also see question 8 above.

## 10. Can I submit partial data?

Yes, but only by choosing test submission through MIRCal. You may submit partial data through test submission to see if the file is in the correct format. Once you confirm that the data is in the correct format you may then attach a new file for submission. Be sure to submit data for the entire report period in the file. The new file will overwrite the previously submitted data.

When entering manual records, they may be submitted either individually or in batches. You are not required to re-enter web entry records when submitting partial data. The new record(s) will be added to the previously entered web entry records.

**DO NOT SUBMIT A FILE AFTER KEYING WEB ENTRY RECORDS!** A file submission will overwrite all previous data saved in MIRCal. If you need to add records in conjunction with a file submission, first submit the file and then add the web entry records.

## 11. What constitutes an approved file?

When your data has been formally submitted and passes all OSHPD Edit Programs and the established Error Tolerance Level. When formally approved, the Report Status on the Submission Status page in MIRCal will display “Data Has Been Approved – Final Reports are ready”.

## Manual Record Entry

### 12. What errors does MIRCal check for when using manual record entry?

Each time you save a manually entered record, you can choose to Save With Validation or Save Without Validation. Saving with validation will only check for blank and invalid fields, it does not run the record through MIRCal’s full validation program. MIRCal will provide a listing of errors and return you to the location of the error so that the data can be edited. When you make a test (or formal) submission of the records, the data will run through full validation and all of MIRCal’s edit programs. Utilizing the Save With Validation function as you enter individual records is a helpful tool to address errors prior to making a test submission for full validation.

The Save With Validation function is not an option for early manual record entry before the report period is open for submissions; MIRCal validation processes and logic are in a stage of review and updating before a new report period opens.

13. Are we able to manually submit records online?

Yes, after a report period has opened, facilities may choose to submit by using the Manual Record Entry form online for each patient record. You will receive automatic feedback for any blank or invalid data when you "Save with Validation."

14. Will we be able to enter the information on a daily basis?

You are able to manually enter and save (but not submit) records at the time of the patient's visit using MIRCal's Manual Record Entry feature. Once a report period is open to accept submissions, you will submit the saved records. The Save With Validation function is not an option for early manual record entry before the report period is open for submissions.

When using early Manual Record Entry, be sure you select the correct report period before entering your records.

## Error Tolerance Levels (ETL)

15. Please explain the Error Tolerance Level (ETL).

ETL refers to the percentage of records that may be accepted with an error.

### **Inpatient**

- ETL for standard and readmission edits must be 2% or less for each category.
- Data cannot contain any records with a Blank or Invalid Principal Diagnosis.
- Data cannot contain any Critical Trend or Critical Comparative Edit Flags.

### **ED and AS**

- ETL for standard edits must be 2% or less.
- Data cannot contain any records with a Blank or Invalid Principal Diagnosis.
- Data cannot contain any Critical Trend or Critical Comparative Edit Flags.

## Corrections

### 16. How do I retrieve my correction reports?

They will be available and printable online when logged in to MIRCal. From the "Results" option on the Main Menu select "Main Error Summary." To see specific reports, go to "Error Reports".

### 17. How do I correct my data in MIRCal?

Facilities are responsible for correcting their own data. OSHPD will not make corrections to your data. Facilities may correct data in one of two ways:

1. By making corrections to the data in the facility's system and resubmitting the entire file for processing through MIRCal.
2. By using the online correction function to manually correct individual records directly in MIRCal, and then submitting those corrections.

You can correct errors online whether you submit your data via file submission or enter individual records via the web entry. However, if you choose this option, changes will not be reflected within your in-house system.

**CAUTION: DO NOT SUBMIT A FILE AFTER SUBMITTING MANUAL CORRECTIONS IN MIRCAL!** A file submission will overwrite all previous data and corrections you've saved in MIRCal. If you need to manually correct or add records in conjunction with a file submission, submit the file first and then complete the online editing in MIRCal.

### 18. Do I need to correct all of the errors before a Formal Submission?

You must correct your data so that they are below the established Error Tolerance Level (ETL). You may choose to correct your data to reach 100% accuracy. If you are at or below the established ETL and have selected Formal Submission, you will not have the option to make further corrections. However, if you use the test function, you may resubmit as many times as you wish to improve the quality of your data.

### 19. At what age do we need to collect a patient's social security number (SSN)? What if a patient refuses to provide their SSN?

The Health and Safety Code states that SSNs must be reported if they are included in the medical record. We understand that there will be occurrences when SSNs are not available. However, we strongly encourage facilities to

ensure the collection of SSNs to the extent possible. If the patient is unable to provide a SSN, report the SSN as unknown 000000001. For helpful information, see our [Personal Data Brochure](#) – English | Spanish.

## Extensions and Penalties

### 20. What is an extension? How do I get one?

If your data submission has not been formally approved on or before the due date, an extension request must be submitted to avoid penalties. Each report period your facility receives a pool of extension days for each data type. There are 14 extension days available for each report period and each data type.

- An extension is granted when you submit an online extension request or fax an [extension request form](#). The online extension request button is available beginning 6 days before each due date.
- Making a formal data submission that is rejected within 7 days of the original due date noted in regulation section 97211 applies an automatic extension of 14 days past the original due date. Also, an email of Formal Rejection is sent automatically to your Facility Administrator, Primary Contact, and Designated Agent (if applicable).

If a due date falls on a weekend or holiday, an extension request or an approved formal submission on the next business day will be considered timely. Any penalties accrued will be assessed based on the due date.

### 21. How will penalties for late submission be assessed?

Penalties of \$100 per day will be applied for each day after the due date that the data are late (formal submission required) or if an extension has not been filed and approved.

## Designated Agents and Facility Access to MIRCAl

### 22. Can I use a Designated Agent with MIRCAl?

Facilities have the option of designating an agent (having a third-party vendor) submit data on their behalf. Access to the MIRCAl system is tightly controlled. Therefore, facilities must advise OSHPD of their use of a Designated Agent prior to data being submitted. Each healthcare facility can designate one agency to be involved in data submission. The Facility

Administrator or Primary Contact at the healthcare facility must complete and sign the [Agent Designation Form](#) approving authorization to the Designated Agent before access to MIRCal is granted.

### **Download Form**

23. What type of access does a Designated Agent have to MIRCal?

Designated Agents will only have access to submit data and view reports. Designated Agents can correct errors on the file in your in-house system but will not have access to make corrections through MIRCal. (Only the facility will be allowed to correct the data.)

24. How many User IDs will each facility receive?

The maximum number of MIRCal User IDs per facility is ten. Additional user names for Designated Agents will be provided if applicable. If you submit for multiple hospitals within your corporate chain, you will need a separate user name for each facility. In order to keep patient data secure, User ID and Passwords must not be shared.

## Who Do I Call for Assistance?

25. Who should I contact if I have a question about MIRCal?

The MIRCal System is supported from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday, except for Official State Holidays. Questions can be directed to:

Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development  
Information Services Division  
Patient Data Section  
2020 West El Camino Ave., Suite 1100  
Sacramento, CA 95833-1880

Email: [MIRCal@oshpd.ca.gov](mailto:MIRCal@oshpd.ca.gov)  
MIRCal Main Line: (916) 326-3935  
Fax: (916) 327-1262

You may also contact your OSHPD analyst during supported hours.

26. What do I do if I have problems submitting my data and getting it approved? (e.g., MIRCal rejects my data due to an edit flag but the data is correct as reported.)

OSHPD is committed to providing you with the assistance you will need to successfully submit your data. Please call your OSHPD analyst who will assist you in evaluating MIRCal edits. You also have 24 hour access to our online resources.

27. Where can I obtain licensing information about my facility?

A good source of information is the Department of Public Health, [Licensing and Certification](#) Division.

## Regulations

28. Where can I find MIRCal regulations in Title 22 on the Web?

You will find Title 22 in the California Code of Regulations at <http://ccr.oal.ca.gov/> or on the [Regulation](#) page of our website.