

Washington Drug Price Transparency program

Data submission FAQ

The Health Care Authority (HCA) is committed to helping reporting entities successfully submit their required data under the requirements of the Drug Price Transparency program. HCA created this FAQ to assist in answering the most common data submission errors. If you have additional questions not addressed in this FAQ, please email drugtransparency@hca.wa.gov.

HCA will update this FAQ as needed.

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Important note about Excel version


The data submission templates are designed to prevent some of the common errors we outline in this FAQ; however, we have noticed that some data fields are reformatted differently once converted to CSV. Thus, we recommend using Microsoft Excel 2016 or earlier for the submission guide templates. Using Microsoft Excel 2019 or Microsoft 365 can cause formatting issues when saving as a CSV file and result in errors.

What is a possible solution if my file is still being rejected because of reformatting issues?

1. Try saving the file as an earlier version of Microsoft Excel.
2. Then, save the file as a CSV file.
3. Upload to your SFT account.

Data fields, nullable and null values

How do I identify if a data field is required or not?



All data fields are required unless you see “nullable” in the specification. This means that you are not required to input data into this field and can leave it blank. Your file will not be rejected for blanks within “nullable” data fields. However, if you leave a required data field blank, your submission will be rejected and you will receive an error log message.

I have no data to report for a “nullable” data field, how should I report this to HCA?

When you do not have data to report for a “nullable” data field, you must leave that data field blank, do not report the value as “NULL”, or otherwise provide a special indicator of a null value (e.g. “0”, “-“, etc.).

Some data fields are only required when you select “Yes” in another data field. May I provide the additional data elements even if I select “No”?

Yes, this will not cause a validation error. The descriptive data fields are required if you answer “Yes,” but you can still provide data in the other fields even if you answer “No.” More broadly, none of our rules are configured in a way that would ever make more information get rejected; there are no conditions in our rules that require certain fields to remain empty.

Special characters

Do I need to include a dollar sign (\$) or commas when reporting currency values?

No, do not report any special characters such as the dollar sign or commas for currency related data fields, doing so will cause your submission to be rejected.

Do I need to include the percent sign (%) when reporting percent related data fields?

No, do not report any special characters such as the percent sign for percent related data fields, doing so will cause your submission to be rejected.

How do I report negative values for currency and percent values?

Include the negative or minus sign in front of the value. Do not use parentheses around the value (e.g. -10.11 is accepted but (10.11) is not) and do not include any special characters such as \$, % or commas when inputting the value, doing so will cause your submission to be rejected.

Error while attempting to check [data field]:

Multiple rules are applied to every checked value. Some of those rules rely on assumptions that are checked by other rules. For example, currency values are checked for the appropriate formatting, and checked for minimum and maximum values. If the formatting is incorrect, you will see an error like:

- Currency pattern is not a number with a maximum of 2 digits past decimal

You will also see **additional** errors when the validator attempts to check the minimum and maximum values. However, they won’t be as informative because an error will occur internally in the validator due to the incorrect formatting:

- Error while attempting check if Currency value is too large
- Error while attempting check if Currency value is not less than 14 significant digits

Because the value is formatted incorrectly, we cannot convert the value to a number to see if the value is too large, and an error is returned by these other checks.

In event that you receive error messages that start with “Error while attempting to check...”, look for *other* error messages on the same cell that give more information, and try to resolve that issue; it will likely resolve these other errors at the same time.

File name schema errors

What does “No expected pattern matches file name” mean?

- If you receive this error message it’s because your file name does not match our file naming schema.
- Files submitted by reporting entities should be named using the following schema. Although the template is posted as an excel file, you must save the file as a CSV file before you upload to your SFT account:


```

manufacturer_covered_drugs_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
manufacturer_new_drugs_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
pbm_appeals_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
pbm_formulary_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
pbm_ownership_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
carrier_cost_utilization_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
carrier_premium_impact_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
carrier_specialty_drug_list_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
psao_pharmacy_contracted_rates_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
psao_pharmacy_yoy_rate_change_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
psao_pbm_yoy_rate_change_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv
psao_pbm_contracted_rates_{YYYY}_{ID}_{YYYYMMDD}.csv

```

- Do not replace “carrier”, “manufacturer”, “PBM”, or “PSAO” with your own organization’s name.
- ONLY change ID and Date.
- Remove {} in the file name
- ID is the reporting entity ID assigned to you by HCA during the registration process (Washington DPT Number) and is 6 characters in length,
- YYYYMMDD is a placeholder for the submission date.

The correct format of the date is required when submitting. In the case of a resubmission after file rejection, please use the same value for YYYYMMDD as the file that was rejected.



Example:

```
manufacturer_covered_drugs_2020_M12345_20201005.csv
manufacturer_new_drugs_2020_M12345_20201005.csv
pbm_appeals_2020_P12345_20210301.csv
pbm_formulary_2020_P12345_20210301.csv
pbm_ownership_2020_P12345_20210301.csv
carrier_cost_utilization_2020_C12345_20201201.csv
carrier_premium_impact_2020_C12345_20201201.csv
carrier_specialty_drug_list_2020_C12345_20201201.csv
psao_pharmacy_contracted_rates_2020_S12345_20210301.csv
psao_pharmacy_yoy_rate_change_2020_S12345_20210301.csv
psao_pbm_yoy_rate_change_2020_S12345_20210301.csv
psao_pbm_contracted_rates_2020_S12345_20210301.csv
```

Header row errors

What do the following header row errors mean?

The first row of the submitted data is the header, and it is expected to exactly match the field names defined in the data submission guide/template.

a. Header row count not equal to 10

We expected 10 columns and there is not. This could occur if you used the wrong template, or missed a column, or did something that resulted in a file with the wrong number of columns in the header row.

Note: Each template is unique and has a different number of columns which align with the data fields we outline in the data submission guides. Thus, you could also see an error that says Header row count not equal to 15, 26, 49 etc. and the error message should be interpreted similarly.

b. Header row includes an unexpected column

The header row contains one or more fields that do not match those defined in the submission guide/template. If you see this error, but **not** “Header row missing an expected column”, then it is likely that you added an extra column to the file.

If you see this error **and** “Header row missing an expected column”, then there is a chance that one of the fields in your file was misnamed and doesn’t match the name defined in the guide/template.

c. Header row missing an expected column

The header row is missing one or more fields that are defined in the submission guide/template.

d. Header row may be out of expected order

One or more of the columns may be out of order.



What is a possible solution if I continue to see the errors?

1. Download a new copy of the template from the [webpage](#).
2. Copy and paste your data directly into the template but not the headers.
3. Save as a CSV file and upload to your SFT account.



Why is my error log indicating errors in rows I have not put data in?

When you use Microsoft Excel to write data to a CSV file, sometimes Excel will create new rows for you after the user does very minor things, even if the actual cells appear to be empty. One possibility is that you may have entered the first row of data, then created a few more rows of data by accident, then “cleared” the cells, but didn’t fully delete the rows. Excel assumes that you want to save something there, and the resulting CSV has empty rows.

To correct this, try these solutions:

Solution 1:

1. Download a new copy of the template from the [webpage](#).
2. Copy and paste your row(s) of data into the template.
3. Save as a CSV file and upload to your SFT account.

Solution 2:

1. Open your existing CSV file in a text editor (e.g., Notepad) and delete the lines that are appearing as empty rows.
2. Save file and upload to your SFT account.

NDC errors

Why am I receiving an error that says, “Digit value does not meet minimum length 11?”

This could be due to a source system formatting issue such as exporting from another system. When this happens the inputted NDC is being treated as a number and not a string. For example, a leading zero would be removed i.e., 01234567899 will become 1234567899. You need to ensure that leading zeros are retained in your file submission.

Why am I receiving an error that says, “Value has a trailing or leading whitespace?”

This is a cell level error and means that a value has a space at the end or the beginning. In your error log, we indicate exactly which cell is causing the error.

Why am I receiving an error that says, “Digit value is not made exclusively of numbers?”

This occurs if you report characters other than 0, 1, 2, 3, 4,5, 6,7 ,8, or 9.

ID errors

Washington DPT Number – why am I receiving an error that says, “Text value does not meet minimum length 6?”

The Washington DPT Number was provided to you after you completed your registration and received your SFT account information. This number is unique to you and follows a format of either CXXXXX, MXXXXX, SXXXXX or PXXXXX where C, M, S and P indicate whether you are a carrier, manufacturer, PSAO or PBM. The X’s are numeric digits e.g. 12345.



Why am I receiving an error that says, “Text value exceeds max length 9?”

This error occurs if you report a value that exceeds 9 characters in length. This may be because of whitespace or a hyphen. Do not use hyphens or other special characters in this field.

Why am I receiving an error that says, “Value has trailing or leading whitespace?”

This is a cell level error and means that a value has a space at the end or the beginning. In your error log, we indicate exactly which cell is causing the error.

Why am I receiving an error that says, “Value is not made exclusively of numbers?”

This occurs if you report characters other than 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9.

Date errors

What do the following date errors mean?

Issues in date values will often result in a set of errors.

a. Date value does not look like YYYY-MM-DD format

All dates follow the YYYY-MM-DD format. For example, October 22, 2021 should be reported as 2021-10-22. We recommend using Microsoft Excel 2016 or earlier for the submission templates. Using Microsoft Excel 2019 can cause formatting issues when saving as a CSV file.

Note: when a date value is not formatted correctly, it will also cause errors in the “valid date”, “minimum date”, and “maximum date” checks.

b. Error while attempting check if Date value is not a valid date

This error is indicating you reported an invalid date. For example, if you inputted 2021-13-22, this is an error because there are not 13 months in a year. Similarly, a date would be rejected if you reported 2021-11-31 because while the maximum number of days in some months is 31, November only has 30 days. This will also occur if your date is not formatted correctly, as YYYY-MM-DD.

c. Error while attempting check if Date value is before minimum year 1900

If you input a date that is before the year 1900, it will be rejected. If your date is not formatted correctly, it will trigger this error.

d. Error while attempting check if Date value is after maximum year 2100

If you input a date that is after the year 2100, it will be rejected. If your date is not formatted correctly, it will trigger this error.



Percentage errors

What do the following percentage errors mean?

In general, do not include any special characters when reporting values e.g., %, \$ or commas.

- a. **Percent pattern is not a whole number with a maximum of two digits past decimal**
This occurs if you report a percent that is not a whole number and does not have two digits after the decimal point. For example, 10.11 is accepted but 10.1 is not.
- b. **Error while attempting check if Percent value is too large**
This generally occurs when the percentage value is not in the expected pattern.
- c. **Error while attempting check if Percent value is not less than 7 significant digits**
This generally occurs when the percentage value is not in the expected pattern.

Currency errors

What do the following currency errors mean?

In general, for negative currency values, include the negative or minus sign. Do not use parentheses around the value e.g., -10.11 is accepted but (10.11) is not. Also, do not include any special characters such as \$ or commas when inputting the value.

- a. **Error while attempting check if Currency value is too large**
This generally occurs when the currency value is not in the expected pattern.
- b. **Error while attempting check if Currency value is not less than 14 significant digits**
This occurs if the value is greater than 14 digits. This generally occurs when the currency value is not in the expected pattern.

Note: The data fields are defined according to specific parameters in the data submission guides. Thus, you may see error messages that indicate a different number of significant digits, and it should be interpreted similarly.

- c. **Currency pattern is not a number with a maximum of 2 digits past decimal**
This occurs if you report a currency that is not a whole number and does not have two digits after the decimal point. For example, 10.11 is accepted but 10.1 is not.

Note: The data fields are defined according to specific parameters. Thus, you may see an error message that indicates “5 digits past the decimal” and it should be interpreted similarly.