NEMSIS v3 Guidance for the use of Not Values

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Background
All elements in the NEMSIS Version 3 standard are categorized into four "usage" types. These are the keystones of the standard. The usage types indicate when the element must be present within an XML file to meet the NEMSIS standard and the use of Not Values.

Usage Value Definition Descriptions

1. **Mandatory:** These elements are always required and must be completed in every EMSDataSet, DEMDataSet, or StateDataSet XML file. These elements do not accept Not Values.

2. **Required:** These elements are always required and must be completed in every EMSDataSet, DEMDataSet, or StateDataSet XML file. These elements do accept Not Values.

3. **Recommended:** These elements may be present in an EMSDataSet, DEMDataSet, or StateDataSet XML file. These elements do accept Not Values.

4. **Optional:** These elements may be present in an EMSDataSet, DEMDataSet, or StateDataSet XML file. These elements do not accept Not Values.

Not Value Definition Descriptions

1. **Not Applicable:** The data element is not applicable or pertinent to the EMS event, assessment, or, intervention. This value should be available to the data-entry user.

2. **Not Recorded:** The data element is considered applicable to the EMS event, but was left blank by the data-entry user. The EMS software should auto-populate blank fields with Not Recorded at the time of export. This value should not be available to the data-entry user.

3. **Not Reporting:** The data element is not being reported by the EMS agency or state. This Not Value does not apply to National elements where Usage = Required. The EMS software should auto-populate the data fields not collected with Not Reporting when exporting the record. This value should not be available to the data-entry user.

Guidance for the Use of Not Values

The information below guides the use of Not Values for the four element usage types (Mandatory, Required, Recommended, and Optional). Each Not Value is summarized with example criteria followed by a statement for each element usage type.

Not Applicable: This Not Value code applies if, at the time of the event documentation, the information requested was not applicable to the patient, the EMS response, or the patient care provided.

- Example 1: Elements documenting patient assessment and treatment (procedures, medications, etc.) would be Not Applicable for a canceled response.
- Example 2: For patients that did not have a cardiac or respiratory arrest the eArrest elements would be Not Applicable. Some states may require eArrest.01 to have a value of No and the other elements would be Not Applicable.

  1. **Mandatory** elements would never contain a Not Applicable value.
  2. **Required** elements that meet the example criteria would have Not Applicable.
  3. **Recommended** elements that meet the example criteria would have Not Applicable.
  4. **Optional** elements would never contain a Not Applicable value. They would be omitted when generating the XML data.

Not Recorded: This Not Value applies if a data element applies to the call and is left blank by a data-entry user. This Not Value applies if, at the time of patient care documentation, information was not known to the patient, family, bystander, or EMS professional. The EMS software should auto-populate the field with Not Recorded at the time of record export. This value should not be available to the data-entry user.

- Example 1: A patient may be unconscious and unable to provide medical history information. The data-entry user would leave these values blank. The software system would insert a Not Recorded value code when preparing for export.
- Example 2: A medication is given to a patient prior to this EMS unit's care. In this case, if eMedications.01 (Date/Time Medication Administered) is not known (i.e., left blank), the system would insert Not Recorded in this field.
- Example 3: Repeated completions of the eVitals group, which contains all of the eVitals elements, may not always include every eVitals element. A blood glucose assessment may not be done every time a blood pressure is taken.

In this example, the additional assessments without a blood glucose assessment would be left blank by the data-entry user. The software system would insert a Not Recorded value when the file is exported.

1. **Mandatory** elements would never contain a Not Recorded value.
2. **Required** elements that meet the example criteria would have Not Recorded.
3. **Recommended** elements that meet the example criteria would have Not Recorded.
4. **Optional** elements would never contain a Not Recorded value. They would be omitted when generating the XML data.

Not Reporting: This Not Value applies when a data element is not being reported by the EMS agency or state. Note: An EMS agency may collect a given data element (such as Beginning Odometer Reading), but their ePCR software maps the information to Not Reporting when sent to their state. This value should not be available to the data-entry user.

- Example 1: If an EMS agency is not reporting a specific element, the value submitted to the state should be Not Reporting.

1. **Mandatory** elements would never contain a Not Reporting value.
2. **Required** elements would never contain a Not Reporting value.
3. **Recommended** elements that meet the example criteria would have Not Reporting.
4. **Optional** elements would never contain a Not Reporting value. They would be omitted when generating the XML data.

Encoding Not Values in NEMSIS XML Documents
Not Values are implemented as attributes in NEMSIS XML data. The NEMSIS XSDs and national Schematron schemas require that an element can only have a Not Value attribute if the element has no content and has the XML attribute xsi:nil="true". Here's an example of an element with the Not Value of Not Recorded:
<ePatient.02 xsi:nil="true" NV="7701003"/>
The element is blank, or empty. The Not Value is added as an attribute to indicate why the element is blank or empty.

Note on State Collection of Optional Elements
State elements may be identified as Recommended or Optional. States may choose to collect Optional elements. However, states should not create Schematron rules that require Optional elements to *always* be present, because Optional elements do not allow Not Values. Optional elements must be omitted by the software generating the XML data when they are blank for any reason.