

ANESTHESIA TIME QUICK-REFERENCE GUIDE

Coding Tools | Practical Time Review for Anesthesia Coders & Auditors

Start with the record - not the arithmetic. Before calculating minutes or time units, confirm that the documented interval is supported as anesthesia time and identify the payer methodology that applies.

1 | CORE TIME REVIEW

Review Point	Coder / Auditor Check
Start time	Is a clear anesthesia start time documented and attributable to the anesthesia service?
Stop time	Is a clear anesthesia stop time documented? Do not manufacture a stop time when it is absent.
Elapsed minutes	Calculate the complete supported interval. Recheck arithmetic when the case crosses an hour or midnight.
Multiple segments	Review why separate segments exist. Do not automatically treat an undocumented gap as billable anesthesia time.
Record consistency	Evaluate conflicts, amendments, gaps, handoffs, overlaps, or other documentation that may affect interpretation.

2 | ELAPSED-TIME MATH

Scenario	Example	Elapsed Time
Same day	7:15 AM to 9:00 AM	105 minutes
Crossing the hour	10:48 AM to 12:07 PM	79 minutes
Crossing midnight	11:35 PM to 1:20 AM next day	105 minutes

3 | FROM MINUTES TO TIME UNITS

Mathematical relationship: supported anesthesia minutes / applicable minutes-per-unit denominator = raw time units. **Example only:** 92 minutes / 15 = 6.1333 raw mathematical units. Do not apply payer rounding/reporting until the applicable methodology is verified.

VERIFY THE PAYER BEFORE YOU CALCULATE: Time-unit conversion, rounding, reporting, payment adjustments, and other anesthesia payment rules may vary. Do not treat one payer's methodology as universal.

4 | TIME RED FLAGS

• Missing start or stop time • Claimed minutes do not match the documented interval • Unexplained gaps, interruptions, or separate segments • Conflicting or amended time entries • Cross-midnight calculation error • Overlapping cases requiring concurrency/medical-direction review • Time units calculated before payer methodology is verified

5 | CODER'S TIME CHECK

Who provided the service? | When did anesthesia time begin and end? | Are the times internally consistent? | Are there gaps or overlaps? | Which payer methodology applies?

EDUCATIONAL DISCLAIMER

This quick-reference guide is for education and workflow support only. It does not replace the current CPT code set, ASA guidance, Medicare requirements, payer policy, contractual requirements, clinical judgment, or organization-specific compliance guidance. Always use the complete current anesthesia record and applicable authoritative guidance.