

Revising the Standard Occupational Classification system for 2010

Theresa Cosca and Alissa Emmel

Theresa Cosca and Alissa Emmel are economists in the Division of Occupational Employment Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, Bureau of Labor Statistics. They are also members of the Standard Occupation Classification Coordinating Team. Email: cosca.theresa@bls.gov or emmel.alissa@bls.gov

ABSTRACT

The Standard Occupational Classification system, recently revised for 2010, assists Federal statistical agencies in organizing the occupational data they collect, analyze, and disseminate; agencies have begun using the new system for data that will be published with a reference year of 2010.

▶ [Download full article in PDF](#)

EXCERPT

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used for classifying all occupations in the U.S. economy, including private, public, and military occupations, in order to provide a means to organize occupational data. This article describes the process used to revise the 2000 SOC system for 2010, the scope and nature of changes incorporated, new and improved features, and plans for implementation and future revisions.

Statistical classification systems describe complex groups of interrelated items in a rational manner in order to promote consistent data collection. An optimal system would allow sharing and merging of data and information to support decision making across organizations with disparate missions. With this goal in mind, occupational classification schemes such as the SOC system examine the millions of jobs in the economy and organize them into occupations on the basis of their similarities as determined by the schemes' classification principles.

Almost every job is similar to a number of other jobs, even though the exact group of tasks is often, but not always, unique to each worker. Workers in an establishment perform specific sets of tasks that are largely dependent on factors such as the size of the establishment, its industry classification, and the tasks performed by other workers in the

same establishment. Under both the 2000 and 2010 SOC systems, jobs are grouped into occupations on the basis of classification principles—the tenets forming the basis on which the system is structured. To fill the need for enhanced guidance on assigning codes and titles to survey responses and other coding activities, the 2010 SOC system augmented the classification principles with precise coding guidelines. (See the box on page 33.)

This excerpt is from an article published in the August 2010 issue of the *Monthly Labor Review*. The full text of the article is available in Adobe Acrobat's Portable Document Format (PDF). See [How to view a PDF file](#) for more information.

▶ [Download full article in PDF](#)

Related BLS programs

[Occupational Employment Statistics](#)
[Standard Occupational Classification](#)

Related *Monthly Labor Review* articles

[Revising the Standard Occupational Classification system—May 1999.](#)

Within *Monthly Labor Review Online*:

[Welcome](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Index](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Archives](#)

Exit *Monthly Labor Review Online*:

[BLS Home](#) | [Publications & Research Papers](#)