



SOC Helpful Resources Tutorial Script

2019-20 Data Collection Cycle



This tutorial discusses helpful resources for categorizing employees according to the new HR/SOC guidelines.

Three of these resources include the SOC Classification Principles, SOC Coding Guidelines, and Direct Match Title File. The 9 Classification Principles form the basis on which the SOC system is structured, while the 6 SOC Coding Guidelines, assist users in consistently assigning SOC codes and titles. The Direct Match Title File allows data users to compare occupational information for titles across agencies. It is important to review all of these resources, this tutorial will discuss select items from these three resources.

Let's begin with the SOC classification principles. The principles state that the SOC covers all occupations in which work is performed for pay or profit, including work performed in family-operated enterprises by family members who are not directly compensated. It excludes occupations unique to volunteers. Each occupation is assigned to only one occupational category at the lowest level of the classification. Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education, and/or training needed to perform the work.

The SOC also has specific principles regarding supervisors. Workers primarily engaged in planning and directing of resources are classified in management occupations in SOC Major Group 11. Duties of these workers may include supervision.

Supervisors of workers in SOC major groups 13-29 usually have work experience and perform activities similar to those of the workers they supervise and therefore are classified with the workers they supervise.

Workers in SOC Major Group 31 (Healthcare Support Occupations) assist and are usually supervised by workers in SOC Major Group 29 (Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations). Therefore, there are no first-line supervisor occupations in SOC Major Group 31.

Also, workers in SOC Major Groups 33 through 53 whose primary duty is supervising are classified in the appropriate first-line supervisor category, because their work activities are distinct from those of the workers they supervise.

Finally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau are charged with collecting and reporting data on total U.S. employment across the full spectrum of SOC Major Groups. Thus, for a detailed occupation to be included in the SOC, either the Bureau of Labor Statistics or the Census Bureau must be able to collect and report data on that occupation.

The SOC Coding Guidelines are intended to assist users in consistently assigning SOC codes and titles to survey responses and in other coding activities. A worker should be assigned to an SOC occupation code based on work performed.

When workers in a single job could be coded in more than one occupation, they should be coded in the occupation that requires the highest level of skill. If there is no measurable difference in skill requirements, workers should be coded in the occupation in which they spend the most time.

Workers in Major Groups 33 through 53 who spend 80 percent or more of their time performing supervisory activities are coded in the appropriate first-line supervisor category in the SOC. In these same Major Groups, persons with supervisory duties who spend less than 80 percent of their time supervising are coded with the workers they supervise.

The 2018 SOC Direct Match Title File (DMTF) allows data users to compare occupational information for titles across agencies. It includes titles that can be coded to ONE and only ONE detailed SOC occupation. Therefore, each of the direct match titles is a direct match to a single detailed SOC occupation. For example, "criminal law professor" and "constitutional law professor" are direct matches to the SOC detailed occupation called "Law Teachers, Postsecondary" because they cannot be coded elsewhere. The DMTF includes all "illustrative examples" from the SOC manual, over 6,000 direct match titles, and is updated periodically.

For more information on the material presented in this tutorial, please contact the IPEDS Help Desk.