Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Human Resource Management

Classifying with the SOC System

Introduction:

"SOC" refers to the Standard Occupational Classification system, a classification system developed by agencies of the federal government for identifying all legitimate, paid work performed in the United States. The SOC allows classification at differing levels of specificity:

- o Major group   E.g.: 13-0000 Business & Financial Operations
- o Minor group   E.g.: 13-2000 Financial Specialists
- o Broad occupation   E.g.: 13-2050 Financial Analysts and Advisors
- o Detailed occupation   E.g.: 13-2053 Insurance Underwriters

All positions in Virginia's public service should be assigned an SOC code at the detailed occupation level.

General Principle:

Jobs are classified according to the duties performed, not according to their titles.

General Instruction:

Every SOC detailed occupation has a descriptive definition. Jobs are classified by matching workers' duties against the definitions.

Contents of an Occupational Definition:

1. Code and Title.
       E.g.: "13-2053 Insurance Underwriters."

2. Core duties performed – should uniquely identify a single occupation.
       E.g.: "Review individual applications for insurance to evaluate degree of risk involved and determine acceptance of applications." [From: 13-2053 Insurance Underwriters.]

   Characteristics:
   a. Lists tasks that are essential to the occupation.
   b. Tasks that all workers in the class are expected to perform are listed first.
   c. Focuses on the main tasks performed which identify the work.

      d.   Does not list all possible tasks performed.

      e.   Omits tasks that are common to several occupations.

3. Optional tasks performed – may be provided for clarification. Not all workers in the class perform these tasks. Introduced by "may."
> E.g.: "May supervise computer programmers." [From 15-1051 Computer Systems Analysts]

Rule: Do not assign a worker to a class based solely on "may" statements. (The worker should perform at least some of the core duties to be assigned to the class.)
> E.g.: A person who supervises computer programmers, but does not perform at least some of the core duties of a Computer Systems Analyst, should not be assigned to the 15-1051 SOC.

4. May contain "include" or "exclude" statements.

    a.   Include statements say that certain workers belong in the class. E.g.: "Include agents who represent the buyer." [From: 41-9022 Real Estate Sales Agents]

    b.   Exclude statements say that certain work should not be in the classification. There are two kinds of exclude statements.

        i.   General – "Exclude individuals whose duties are primarily sales or repair." [From 43-4051 Customer Service Representatives]

        ii.   Specific – "Exclude 'Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services' (53-3033)." [From 43-5021 Couriers and Messengers.]

5. Licenses or certifications are cited **if** :

    a.   they are required of everyone in the occupation and

    b.   distinguish workers in one occupation from those in another.

6. Illustrative examples – when cited, highlight common job titles that occur within the occupation.
> E.g.: "Illustrative Examples: Garbage Collector; Scrap Metal Collector; Trash Collector" [From 53-7081 Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors.]

Classification or Coding Guidelines:

1. General – Each worker can be assigned to only one detailed occupation.

2. Performance and Qualification Principles:

    a. Work Performed – Classify based on what is actually done on the job, not on the title.

    b. Education – Classify based on the educational requirements needed to perform the job.
        E.g.: A surgeon is required to have a medical degree.

    c. Training – Classify based on special training required for the job.
        E.g.: Hazardous materials removal workers are generally required to have specialized training in hazardous materials handling.

    d. Licensing – Classify based on the licensed required to hold the occupation.
        E.g.: Registered nurses are required to be licensed.

3. Skill Principle – Used if the worker performs more than 1 job:
    Classify according to the job that requires a higher skill.
        E.g.: If the worker is both a bookkeeper and an accountant, classify as an accountant.
    If unable to determine a higher skill, classify according to how the worker spends the majority of time.

4. Supervisor Principles:

    a. <u>First line supervisors (and managers) of production, service and sales workers</u> – If workers spend more than 80% of their time in supervisory activities, then classify in the supervisory category because the work is distinct from that of those supervised.

    b. <u>Supervisors of professional and technical workers</u> – Classify with the workers supervised because the supervisors and workers often require similar skills, education, and training.

5. Manager Principle:
    To be classified as a manager there must be another level of supervision between the manager and the worker.

6. Apprentice Principle:
    Classify apprentices with the occupation for which being trained.

7. Helper Principle:

> Code helpers and aides separately from the occupation that they assist because they are not in training for the occupation which they help.

8. Residual Principle:

> If the work doesn't fit within a detailed occupation definition, assign it to the appropriate residual category. Never force workers into inappropriate codes. **But** to be assigned to an occupation, a worker does not have to match every detail of the occupation.
> o E.g.: **Do not** use the residual category for a person who only develops employee benefit programs. Code the person to 13-1072 Compensation, Befits, and Job Analysis Specialists.
> o E.g.: **Do** use the residual category for human resources generalists because their work is not in an HR specialty function. Code the job to 13-1079 Human Resources, Training, and Labor Relations Specialists, All Other.

[Source Note: The information above was taken from computer-based instruction modules developed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.]