

Information for Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Interviewers

**How to Capture High Quality
Industry and Occupation Responses
2022**

The BRFSS Interviewer's Role in Collecting Industry and Occupation Data

- Interviewers are responsible for asking questions and recording responses provided by the respondent.
 - Interviewers are key to getting a respondent to provide a clear answer about the type of work the respondent does (occupation) and the type of business the respondent works in (industry).
 - Interviewers often must ask (“probe”) for response clarity and to obtain the appropriate level of detail.
- The information gathered by interviewers enables researchers to examine how work impacts health.

Impact of Employment Status on the Industry and Occupation Module

In the core/demographics section, respondents are asked the following industry and occupation screening question about their employment status:

Are you currently?

- 1 **Employed for wages**
- 2 **Self-employed**
- 3 Out of work for more than 1 year
- 4 **Out of work for less than 1 year**
- 5 A homemaker
- 6 A student
- 7 Retired

- The industry and occupation module is administered only to respondents who report being:
 - employed for wages
 - self-employed
 - out of work for less than 1 year
- The employment question refers to the **current job** or, if out of work for less than one year, the **main job done in the past year**.

Current vs. Longest-Held Job

- The employment status question asks for **current** employment.
 - To match the employment status question, the industry and occupation module captures the job the respondent has been doing **most recently**.
- If additional information is given for employment, such as a job held previously, ask, **“What is your current job?”**
 - *Do not record information on “longest-held job” or “usual job” if those differ from current job.*

Issues with Employment Status

- There may be times a person answers “employed” for the employment status question, but when asked about industry or occupation, they respond that they are a homemaker, student, retired, or out of work for more than 1 year.
- If a respondent is currently or recently working, homemaker, student, retired, or out of work for more than 1 year are not valid answers for industry or occupation.
- You will need to probe to find out their actual employment status.

Resolving Issues with Employment Status

Ask if they **are currently or recently working?**

- **If yes**, record their current or most recent industry and occupation (without words like homemaker, student, or retired).
- **If no**,
 1. If possible, change their response to the employment status question in the Core/Demographics section.
 2. If you can't change their employment status, then record homemaker, student, retired, or unemployed for **both** industry and occupation.

Out of Work for Less than 1 Year

- We do collect job information for respondents who have been out of work for **less** than 1 year. We want to know their most recent job.
- These respondents are more likely to require probing for specific answers. They may have a difficult time remembering their previous industry and occupation.
- It is necessary to ask the questions in the past tense.
 - Occupation should be asked as “What kind of work did you do?”
 - Industry should be asked as “What kind of business or industry did you work in?”

More than One Job

- If the respondent reports more than one job, ask, **“What is your main job?”**
- By “main job,” we mean the job where they work the most hours.



Occupation Question

“What kind of work do you do?”



Occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living.
For example: registered nurse, janitor, cashier, auto mechanic.

- Job title is often an adequate response for occupation.
- It's important for the interviewer to understand the difference between occupation and industry.

Avoid Recording Industries as Occupations

When in doubt about occupation ask, *“What is your job title?”*

These are industries, <u>NOT</u> occupations	Examples of acceptable occupation entries
Transportation	Flight attendant, bus driver, taxi driver, pilot, sailor
Retail	Salesperson, stocker, manager, cashier
Education	Elementary school teacher, secretary, counselor, school principal
Restaurant	Cook, chef, waiter, host, bartender
Banking	Bank teller, loan officer, accountant

Industry Question



“What kind of business or industry do you work in?”

Industry is defined by the main kind of activity at a person’s place of work.

For example: hospital, elementary school, automobile manufacturing, restaurant.

How to Record Industry and Occupation

- Avoid complete sentences like “I work in...” or “I’m a...”
- Keep entries short. Most only require a few words, though some industries and occupations will require more words to be specific enough.
- If a respondent is reluctant to share their industry or occupation, reassure them that their individual data is kept private and the information they provide helps researchers understand how a person’s work may affect their health.

Keep It Short (but Probe When Needed)

Some responses will need additional words to be specific. To get to a specific occupation, you may need to probe for more detail.

Ask, “What type?” For example, the following occupation responses could be more specific:

- Engineer: electrical engineer, civil engineer, computer engineer
- Agent: insurance agent, real estate agent, FBI agent
- Manager: office manager, construction manager



Keep It Short (but Probe When Needed, Continued)

Examples of industry responses that need more specifics:



- Retail: **Ask, “What type of store?”** (example: Department store)
- Wholesale: **Ask, “What is the product?”** (example: Wholesale medical equipment)
- Appliances: **Ask, “What does the company do with appliances?”** (example: Repair, manufacture, transport, sell)

Be Specific

- The main reason why responses cannot be coded to a specific industry or occupation is that they are too vague.
- The following slides show responses that are not specific enough, and provide better, more specific entries.



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Occupation Entries Need to be Specific

Non-specific occupations	Specific occupations
Nursing	Registered nurse, LPN, nursing assistant
Accounting work	Certified public accountant, bookkeeper
Clerical work	Data entry clerk, file clerk, secretary
Laborer	Construction laborer, farm laborer, warehouse laborer
Manager	Warehouse manager, insurance office manager
Consultant	Financial consultant, marketing consultant
Contractor	Construction contractor, painting contractor
Caregiver	Home health aide, housekeeper, babysitter

Industry Entries Need to be Specific

Non-specific industries	Specific industries
Mining	Coal mine, phosphate mine, gold mine, gravel pit
Transportation	Airlines, taxi, trucking industry
Manufacturing	Clothing manufacturing, automobile manufacturing
Automotive	Auto sales, automobile manufacturing, auto repair
Healthcare	Hospital, nursing home, dentist's office, home healthcare
Services	Hair salon, car wash, funeral home, labor union
Hospitality	Hotel, restaurant, travel agency
Utilities	Gas and electric, water utilities, electric utilities

What Makes Some Text Entries Unusable?

- Unusable entries are treated as missing data and cannot be analyzed to examine how work impacts health.
- The entries cannot be used if there are:
 - Vague industries
 - Vague occupations
 - Misspellings
 - Responses that are too long (such as full sentences)
 - Responses that are not an industry or occupation (For example: business name, business address, “self-employed”)

Examples of Occupation Entries that are Unusable

Occupation entry	Why is this unusable?
Administrative	The type of administrative occupation is needed (e.g., administrative assistant, file clerk, data entry, order clerk, secretary)
Computer	The type of computer-related occupation is needed (e.g., computer programmer, software engineer, computer repair technician, computer scientist)
Technician	The type of technician is needed (e.g., engineering technician, dental lab technician, chemical technician, computer repair technician, automobile service technician)

Examples of Industry Entries that are Unusable

Industry entry	Why is this unusable?
Business	The type of business is needed
Office	The kind of business/organization is needed
Food	The type of food company is needed (e.g., food manufacturing, beverage manufacturing, wholesale food, grocery store, restaurant)
Healthcare	The type of healthcare workplace is needed (e.g., hospital, nursing home, dentist office, home health)
Technology	The type of technology company is needed (e.g., computer manufacturing, computer repair, web design, computer sales, computer systems developer)

Summary for Recording Industry and Occupation

Remember:

- Adequate responses are usually a few words, not complete sentences.
- Vague responses may need a follow-up question for more specific information.
- Try to spell responses correctly, but don't ask for specific spelling unless you don't understand the answer.

Most Common Industry and Occupation Problems



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Self-Employed

“Self-employed” is not an actual occupation or industry.

- For occupation, ask, “***What type of work do you do?***”
- For industry, ask, “***What type of business are you self-employed in?***”

Examples:

Occupation: Self-employed plumber

Industry: Plumbing

Occupation: Self-employed political activist

Industry: Politics



Company Names

Do not enter a company name as the industry.

If they say:

- ▶ *Joe's Repair Shop*

Ask, "What does the business make or do?"



Specific responses: lawn mower repair, automobile repair, shoe repair, computer repair

Government Work

If the respondent says they work for the government:

➤ For industry, ask, “***Which government agency or department?***”

- Example: city police department, county health department, U.S. State Department

➤ For occupation, ask, “***What is your job title?***”

- Example: police officer, environmental health specialist, foreign affairs officer

Military Work – Uniformed (Active Duty) vs. Civilian Industry and Occupation

If the respondent says they work for the military,
ask: “Are you uniformed or civilian?”

For uniformed/active duty military:

- Industry: enter branch of the military.
- Occupation: enter “military personnel.”

Example:

- Industry: U.S. Army
- Occupation: military personnel

For civilian military:

- Industry: enter the agency name.
- Occupation: enter their specific occupation, such as aerospace engineer.

Example:

- Industry: Department of Defense
- Occupation: aerospace engineer

Marines vs. Marine

- For the branch of the military, enter “U.S. Marine Corps” in the industry field.
- For a marine-related industry, specify the type, such as:
 - Ship building
 - Shipping or marine transportation
 - Marine construction

Summary of Most Common Problems (and How to Avoid Them)

- Self-employed is NOT an industry or occupation.
 - Ask, “What type of work do you do?” or “What type of business are you self-employed in?”
- Do not enter a company name or address as an industry or occupation.
 - Ask, “What does the business make or do?”
- Indicate the difference between uniformed (active duty) and civilian military.

Thank you

For additional resources:

➤ Visit this link: Tips for BRFSS Interviewers

www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/surveillance/brfss/tips.html

➤ Watch the video Collecting Current Occupation and Industry

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXDWJxKAG3A

➤ Please email brfssio@cdc.gov if you have any questions related to the BRFSS industry and occupation module.