Collecting Occupation & Industry Data

Occupation and Industry are important factors for determining many possible health risks. Collecting data on these factors is essential for effective interventions. Collecting an individual’s Occupation and Industry information from the RELEVANT time period for developing the disease informs disease prevention. (For example 14 days for COVID-19 versus up to 20 years ago for cancer.)

**CURRENT OCCUPATION**
The most recent job that the person has been doing.

**CURRENT INDUSTRY**
The kind of business or industry the person currently works in. This is different than the employer’s name.

For example, a man works 20 hours a week in a restaurant:

**OCCUPATION = WAITER**
**INDUSTRY = RESTAURANT**

What if “Retired” → Occupation = Previous job
What if “A home maker” → Occupation = Unemployed

**USUAL OCCUPATION** - The job that the person had been doing for the longest amount of time. It is not necessarily the current job, the highest paid job, nor the job considered the most prestigious, but the one that accounted for the greatest number of working years.

For example:

5 YEARS as a server at a fast-food restaurant 25 YEARS as a secretary for a car dealership 10 YEARS as a care assistant at a retirement home

**USUAL OCCUPATION = SECRETARY**  Though she had three long-term jobs, her job as a secretary at the car dealership was the longest held (25 years)

Some people may work more than one job at a time. Ideally, you want to collect information on each of their jobs, including any volunteer work, and the related industry(s).

Source: Adapted from National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (2021). Things to consider when collecting industry and occupation data.