

## What is NAICS and how is it used?

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS, pronounced Nakes) was developed as the standard for use by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business [establishments](#) for the collection, analysis, and publication of statistical data related to the business economy of the U.S. NAICS was developed under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and adopted in 1997 to replace the old Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. It was also developed in cooperation with the statistical agencies of Canada and Mexico to establish a 3-country standard that allows for a high level of comparability in business statistics among the three countries. NAICS is the first economic classification system to be constructed based on a single economic concept. To learn more about the background, the development and the difference between NAICS and the SIC, see [www.census.gov/epcd/www/naicsdev.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naicsdev.htm).

### 2. What is an establishment?

An establishment is generally a business or industrial unit at a single, physical location that produces or distributes goods or performs services (e.g., store, factory, farm, etc.). An enterprise, on the other hand, may consist of more than one location performing the same or different types of economic activities. Each establishment of that enterprise is assigned a NAICS code based on its own primary activity.

### 3. Is the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system still being used? Where can I find information about the SIC?

The Federal statistical agencies use NAICS for the collection, analysis, and publication of economic statistics. They no longer use the SIC, for the purposes of statistical data collection, which was replaced by NAICS in 1997. There will be no further revisions of the SIC. It is possible that other organizations and state and local agencies are continuing to use the old SIC for their own purposes, but this is outside the purview of the Federal economic statistical programs.

To learn more about the differences between NAICS and the SIC, see [www.census.gov/epcd/www/naicsdev.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naicsdev.htm).

To find the old 1987 SIC codes and their descriptions, go to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) website, which maintains an SIC Manual at [www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic\\_manual.html](http://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic_manual.html), and perform a search on an SIC code or a key word.

To see a statistical data comparison between the SIC and NAICS, see the "[Bridge Between NAICS and SIC](#)", which shows the 1997 Economic Census data tabulated on both a SIC and a 1997 NAICS basis. Go to the Economic Census website at [www.census.gov/epcd/ec97brdg/](http://www.census.gov/epcd/ec97brdg/).

To download a file containing a detailed conversion (concordance) between the SIC and 2002 NAICS, download Table 4 at [www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/).

### 4. How can I determine the correct NAICS code for my business?

NAICS was designed and documented in such a way to allow business establishments to self-code. There are a number of tools and references available to help you to determine the most appropriate NAICS code for your business:

1. You can use the search feature at [www.census.gov/naics](http://www.census.gov/naics). In the 'NAICS Search' box on the left side of that page, enter a keyword that describes your kind of business. A list of primary business activities containing that keyword and the corresponding NAICS codes will appear. Choose the one that most closely corresponds to your primary business activity, or refine your search to obtain other choices.
2. Rather than searching through a list of primary business activities you may also view the complete 2002 NAICS structure with codes and titles at [www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm). Click on the codes to see the corresponding definition, cross-reference, and index item. With the hypertext version, you can select the category that applies to your business, and drill down through the more detailed levels until you find the appropriate 6-digit code.
3. If you know your old SIC code, you can use the 'NAICS Search' box to locate the corresponding NAICS code. Enter the SIC code in the form "SIC 1234" in the NAICS search box, and click on the 'NAICS Search' button. The corresponding NAICS code(s) will appear.
4. If you know your old SIC code, you can also find the appropriate 2002 NAICS code by using table 4, 1987 SIC matched to 2002 NAICS at [www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/S87TON02.HTM](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/S87TON02.HTM).

## 5. Who assigns NAICS codes to businesses and how?

There is no central government agency with the role of assigning, monitoring, or approving NAICS codes for establishments. Individual establishments are assigned NAICS codes by various agencies for various purposes using a variety of methods. The U.S. Census Bureau has no formal role as an arbitrator of NAICS classification.

The U.S. Census Bureau assigns one NAICS code to each establishment based on its primary activity (the activity that generates the most revenue for the establishment) to collect, tabulate, analyze, and disseminate statistical data describing the economy of the United States. Generally, the U.S. Census Bureau's NAICS classification codes are derived from information that the business establishment provided on administrative, survey, or census reports. (e.g. when a company applies for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), information about the type of activity in which that business is engaged is requested in order to assign a NAICS code).

Various other government agencies, trade associations, and regulation boards adopted the NAICS classification system to assign codes to their own lists of establishments for their own programmatic needs. If you question the SIC or NAICS code contained on a form received from an agency other than the U.S. Census Bureau, you should contact that agency directly.

## 6. How can I have my company's NAICS code changed?

There is no "official" way to have a company's SIC or NAICS code changed. Various Federal government agencies maintain their own lists of business establishments, and assign classification codes based on their own programmatic needs. Generally, the classification codes are derived from information that the business establishment has provided on administrative, survey, or census reports. For this reason, we recommend that you contact the agency that has assigned the code that you believe should be changed. For example, if you question the SIC or NAICS code contained on a form received from OSHA, you should contact the Department of Labor. For access to a list of Federal government agencies, visit [www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All\\_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml).

## **7. How can I get a new NAICS code created for my type of business?**

NAICS is scheduled to be reviewed every 5 years for potential revisions, so that the classification system can keep pace with the changing economy. This is the only time that new NAICS codes can be considered. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), through its Economic Classification Policy Committee (ECPC), will solicit public comments regarding changes to NAICS through a notice published in the Federal Register. The notice will provide details of the format in which comments should be submitted, how and to whom they should be submitted, and the deadline for submission. Generally, the comment period will close 90 days after publication of the notice. During that time, suggestions for new and emerging industries can be submitted to the ECPC. This committee will review each comment submitted to determine its feasibility and adherence to the underlying principles of NAICS, consult with the NAICS counterparts in Canada and Mexico to determine if they can accept the proposed changes that would impact 3-country comparability, and then make final recommendations to OMB for additions and changes to the NAICS manual. This process is now completed for the 2007 revision to NAICS. The next scheduled review of NAICS will be for a potential 2012 revision. OMB will publish a Federal Register notice soliciting comments for that revision in late 2008 or early 2009.

## **8. How do the NAICS codes affect federal procurement and regulatory activities, such as those carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency, OSHA, the Department of Defense, and the General Service Administration?**

NAICS was developed specifically for the collection and publication of statistical data to show the economic status of the United States. The NAICS categories and definitions were not developed to meet the needs of procurement and/or regulatory applications. However, other federal agencies trade associations, and regulation boards have adopted NAICS to use for procurement and regulatory purposes even though it does not entirely fit their specific needs. The U.S. Census Bureau has no formal role as an arbitrator of statistical classification. For questions regarding other agencies' use of the NAICS system, contact the specific agency. For access to a list of Federal government agencies, visit [www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All\\_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml).

## **9. Will U.S. international trade data be available on a NAICS basis?**

Data on international trade in goods are necessarily collected on a commodity basis, whereas NAICS and SIC, data are on an establishment basis. Commodity groups approximating the NAICS categories were developed, however, and published for the years 1997 through 1999. (These overlap with series for groups using SIC commodity group classifications in the year 1997.) It should be noted that some of the kinds of distinctions made in NAICS and other industry classifications cannot be made in commodity trade data. A notable example is printing and publishing. NAICS places publishing in the new Information industry and retains only printing in manufacturing. In commodity trade data, however, the entire value of imported and exported publications is included in the goods classification "Printing, publishing and similar products." For additional information, please visit the Foreign Trade Statistics website at [www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/](http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/).

## 10. How does NAICS handle market-based rather than production-based statistical classifications?

A new North American Product Classification System (NAPCS) is under development, starting in nine service sectors. Whereas NAICS focuses on the input and production processes of industries, NAPCS will classify all the output of the industries of NAICS.

The long-term objective of NAPCS is to develop a market-oriented, or demand-based, classification system for products that (a) is not industry-of-origin based but can be linked to the NAICS industry structure, (b) is consistent across the three NAICS countries, and (c) promotes improvements in the identification and classification of service products across international classification systems, such as the Central Product Classification System of the United Nations.

For more information, visit [www.census.gov/epcd/naics/concordances/index.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics/concordances/index.html).

## 11. How does NAICS 2002 differ from NAICS 1997?

Only six of the twenty NAICS sectors had changes during the 2002 revision of NAICS, and only two with substantial changes that included complete revisions of codes. The sectors with changes in 2002 are listed below, in order of significance of changes:

- Sector 23, Construction- Major changes were made in the Construction sector, including new industries for Operative Builders and for Residential Remodelers, as well as some restructuring in the Specialty Trade area. All codes are revised for this sector in 2002.
- Sector 42, Wholesale- The Wholesale Trade sector underwent substantial restructuring to reflect wholesale markets and commerce over the Internet. All codes are revised for this sector in 2002.
- Sector 51, Information- A new industry was created for establishments publishing or broadcasting exclusively on the Internet. Also, the 1997 subsector for Broadcasting and Telecommunications was split into two separate subsectors with some industry changes, to reflect changes in the Telecommunications area as well as to further distinguish between production processes of creating and/or acquiring content (Broadcasting) versus transmitting content (Telecommunications).
- Sector 44-45, Retail Trade- Two existing 5-digit industries were split into detailed 6-digit industries. The first split the 1997 Department Stores industry into discount department stores and department stores (except discount), and the second split the 1997 industry for Electronic Shipping and Mail-Order Houses into three separate industries for Electronic Shopping, Electronic Auctions, and Mail-Order Houses.
- Sector 21, Mining- A very minor change moved Site Preparation Contractors, from the Mining sector into the Construction sector.
- Sector 56, Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services - A very minor change moved establishments that primarily clean buildings during and immediately after construction from this sector to the Construction sector.

## 12. Where can I get a complete list of 2002 NAICS codes?

To view a complete list of 2002 NAICS hierarchy including codes and titles, visit the Census website [www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm). To view a list containing only the 6-digit NAICS codes, visit [www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naico602.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naico602.htm). Click on the codes to see the corresponding definitions, cross-references, and index terms. You may search by keyword using the search engine at the top of the page, or you may scroll through the entire list of NAICS codes.

### **13. Can I get a NAICS code or other statistical data for a specific company?**

[Title 13](#), U.S. Code, Section 9 (a) prohibits the U.S. Census Bureau from releasing information on a specific business including NAICS and SIC codes. More information on Title 13 can be found at [www.census.gov/main/www/policies.html#confidential](http://www.census.gov/main/www/policies.html#confidential). There are a number of private research firms that provide SIC or NAICS codes and data for specific companies, often for a fee. The U.S. Census Bureau cannot verify the accuracy of the codes provided by these companies, and the codes provided by these companies may or may not agree with the codes assigned by the U.S. Census Bureau or other government agencies.

The following are some of the private research firms:

- Dun & Bradstreet - [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)
- HarrisInfoSource - [www.HarrisInfo.com](http://www.HarrisInfo.com)
- Hoovers - [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com)
- InfoUSA - [www.infousa.com](http://www.infousa.com)
- Manta.com - [www.manta.com](http://www.manta.com)
- Moody's Investors Service - [www.moodys.com](http://www.moodys.com)
- Standard & Poor's - [www.standardandpoors.com](http://www.standardandpoors.com)

### **14. What is the relationship between NAICS and the Small Business Administration's (SBA) size standards?**

NAICS categories do not distinguish between small and large business, or between for-profit and non-profit. The Small Business Administration (SBA) developed size standards for each NAICS category. To find more information about the SBA size standards, visit the SBA website; [www.sba.gov/size/indexsize.html](http://www.sba.gov/size/indexsize.html). You may also contact SBA's Office of Size Standards on 202-205-6618 or via email to [sizestandards@sba.gov](mailto:sizestandards@sba.gov). To learn more about the size statistics the Census Bureau collects, visit [www.census.gov/epcd/www/smallbus.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/smallbus.html).

### **15. What NAICS code do I need on the INS Form?**

The INS form I-129W asks for both the industry, the activity/industry of the sponsoring organization (NAICS code), and the occupation of the person (Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code). The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code provides the classification of the industry of the employing organization, whereas, the Department of Labor provides the occupation code. For a better understanding and an example, visit the Census Bureau website; [www.census.gov/epcd/www/ins129w.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/ins129w.htm). To view a complete list of 2002 NAICS codes and titles, visit the Census website, [www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm).

### **16. How can I find an occupational NAICS code?**

The NAICS system is used to classify establishments according to their primary industrial activity. It is not a system for classifying occupations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics maintains the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. For information on that system, go to [www.bls.gov/soc/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/soc/home.htm).

## 17. How can I find data (payroll, establishment, sales receipts, etc.) for a specific NAICS industry?

You can obtain data for a specific NAICS industry by going to the 2002 Economic Census website, [www.census.gov/econ/census02/](http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/). This website provides data at the sector level. You may also click on the down arrow, under the heading "More data", and get data at the subsector and industry levels. You may also get data by state, or selected metro area by using the pull-down menus in the upper right hand corner of the page. You may also obtain data from the American Fact Finder website [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov). In this site, look under the Economic Census tab at the bottom of the page. You can obtain a quick report by either industry or geography by clicking on the links listed. Beginning with the 1998 data year, the annual County Business Patterns reports provide employment, payroll, number of establishments (but not sales/receipts). The CBP data can be found at [www.census.gov/epcd/cbp/view/cbpview.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/cbp/view/cbpview.html).

## 18. Why are some NAICS codes only 5-digits long?

NAICS is a two- through six-digit hierarchical classification code system, offering five levels of detail. Each digit in the code is part of a series of progressively narrower categories, and the more digits in the code signify greater classification detail. The first two digits designate the economic sector, the third digit designates the subsector, the fourth digit designates the industry group, the fifth digit designates the NAICS industry, and the sixth digit designates the national industry. A complete and valid NAICS code contains six digits.

In developing NAICS, the United States, Canada, and Mexico agreed that the 5-digit codes would represent the level at which the system is comparable among the three countries. The sixth digit allows for each of the countries to have additional detail (i.e., subdivisions of a 5-digit category). In cases where the U.S. did not choose to create additional detail, the 5- and 6-digit categories within U.S. NAICS are the same, and the 6-digit US NAICS code ends in zero. In some hierarchical presentations, the 6-digit code is omitted where it is the same as the 5-digit category.

Example:

33992 Sporting and Athletic Goods Manufacturing  
    339920 Sporting and Athletic Goods Manufacturing  
33993 Doll, Toy, and Game Manufacturing  
    339931 Doll and Stuffed Toy Manufacturing  
    339932 Game, Toy, and Children's Vehicle Manufacturing

Because NAICS 33993 is subdivided into two 6-digit industries, "339930" is not a valid code. A complete list of 6-digit codes is available for reference (ASCII) (spreadsheet).

## 19. I have seen NAICS codes with more than 6 digits. What are these, and how can I get a list of them?

Industries in the United States are identified by a six-digit code. Each manufacturing and mining product or service is identified by a ten-digit product code. The product coding structure represents an extension, by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, of the six-digit industry classification of the manufacturing and mining sectors. The product classification system operates so that the industrial coverage is progressively narrower with the successive addition of digits. To view the product codes from the Numerical List of Manufactured and Mineral Products visit the Census website:

[www.census.gov/prod/ec02/02numlist/02numlist.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/02numlist/02numlist.html)

## **20. Do NAICS codes change over time?**

NAICS will be reviewed every five years (in the years ending in '2' or '7') for potential revisions so that the classification system can keep pace with the changing economy. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), through its Economic Classification Policy Committee (ECPC), will solicit public comments through a notice published in the Federal Register. The notice will provide details of the format in which comments should be submitted, to whom they should be submitted, and the deadline for submission. Generally, the comment period will close 90 days after publication of the notice. During that time, suggestions for new and emerging industries can be submitted to the ECPC. This committee will review each comment submitted to determine its feasibility and adherence to the underlying principles of NAICS, consult with the NAICS counterparts in Canada and Mexico to determine if they can accept the proposed changes that would impact 3-country comparability, and then make final recommendations to OMB for additions and changes to the NAICS manual. This process is now completed for the 2007 revision of NAICS. The next scheduled review of NAICS will be for a potential 2012 revision. OMB will publish a Federal Register notice soliciting comments for that revision in late 2008 or early 2009. Future revisions of NAICS will continue to strive for greater global comparability.

## **21. Can a business have more than one NAICS code?**

The U.S. Census Bureau assigns and maintains only one NAICS code for each establishment based on its primary activity (generally the activity that generates the most revenue for the establishment). Since other federal government agencies, trade associations, and regulation boards maintain their own lists of business establishments and assign classification codes based on their own programmatic needs, this will vary by agency. Yes, some agencies assign more than one NAICS codes to one establishment. For instance, the Central Contractors Registration (CCR), where businesses register to become federal contractors, will accept up to 5 or 10 classification codes per establishment. You will need to contact the other agencies to find out what their policies are. For access to a list of federal government agencies, visit [www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All\\_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml).

## **22. What is Title 13?**

Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9 (a) prohibits the U.S. Census Bureau from disclosing individual company activities including NAICS and SIC codes. More information on Title 13 can be found at [www.census.gov/main/www/policies.html#confidential](http://www.census.gov/main/www/policies.html#confidential).

## **23. How can I purchase a copy of the NAICS manual?**

The 2002 NAICS manual is available through National Technical Information Service (NTIS). You may purchase a hardcover or softcover printed version or a CD-ROM version. To obtain more information about purchasing the NAICS manuals or CD-ROM, visit NTIS website; [www.ntis.gov/product/naics.htm](http://www.ntis.gov/product/naics.htm).

## **24. How NAICS codes relate to other classification systems?**

NAICS has been correlated to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) from the United Nations and to the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities with the European Communities (NACE). To see or download these correlations, go to [www.census.gov/epcd/naics/concordances/index.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics/concordances/index.html).

## **25. My company is overseas. What is my NAICS code?**

NAICS was developed to classify the domestic activities of business establishments within the United States, Canada, and Mexico to allow for statistical comparability among the three North American countries. It is not within the purview of NAICS to classify operations overseas. However, if an overseas establishment has a headquarters office in the United States, the establishment's NAICS code is based on its primary activity. In general, establishments importing products into the United States are classified in Wholesale trade.

## **If my question isn't here or I still need more information, what should I do?**

If your question isn't listed here, send an email to [naics@census.gov](mailto:naics@census.gov). Please include your telephone number in your email message in case we need to call you for more information.