Data quality statement

Usual occupation coding

The NCIS contains two data fields that provide information on the usual occupation of the deceased person at the time of death:

- *Usual occupation text* – a free text field that provides the usual occupation of the deceased
- *Usual occupation code* – a coded field that is populated according to Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (2013) – Version 1.3
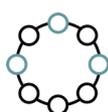
Occupation data is particularly pertinent when examining work-related and intentional self-harm deaths, which are frequently the subject of NCIS fact sheets and data reports and third-party research projects. These fields therefore have implications for the reliability and comprehensiveness of occupation information in the NCIS.

Why are there two data fields for usual occupation data in the NCIS?

Two data fields provide greater coverage, as the coded and free text fields each provide different benefits in the collection of data about the occupation of the deceased.

Table 1. Comparison of Usual occupation text and Usual occupation code fields

Comparison of data fields	*Usual occupation* text	*Usual occupation* code
Definition	Free text description of the usual occupation (job) or duties in which the deceased was principally engaged	Coded description of the usual occupation (job) or duties in which the deceased was principally engaged
Reporting status	Mandatory for closed cases	Optional for closed cases
Source organisation	Coroners Courts in each contributing jurisdiction	Coroners Courts in each contributing jurisdiction
Variables	Free text field	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (2013) – Version 1.3
Coverage	All jurisdictions	All jurisdictions
Time span	- From 1 July 2000: ACT, NSW, NT, SA, TAS, VIC and WA - From 1 January 2001: QLD - From 1 July 2007: NZ	- From 1 July 2000: ACT, NSW, NT, SA, TAS, VIC and WA - From 1 January 2001: QLD - From 1 July 2007: NZ
Collection method	Collected during the death investigation process. May be collected via: the police report of death	Collected during the death investigation process. May be collected via: the police report of death

Comparison of data fields	*Usual occupation* text	*Usual occupation* code
	• statements made to the coroner through police briefs, witness statements or next of kin communications	• statements made to the coroner through police briefs, witness statements or next of kin communications
Method of provision to the NCIS	Data entered into local court systems or NCIS directly by coders	Data entered into local court systems or NCIS directly by coders. Appropriate occupation is selected from ANZSCO-based reference file using a search option
Frequency of provision	• Nightly: NSW, NT, SA, TAS, VIC QLD and WA • Weekly: ACT and NZ	• Nightly: NSW, NT, SA, TAS, VIC QLD and WA • Weekly: ACT and NZ
Completeness **Conditions**: *Case status = closed* *Employment status = employed*	As a mandatory data field, the *Usual occupation text* data field is completed in 100% of applicable cases, across all nine jurisdictions.	As an optional data field, the *Usual occupation code* data field is not completed for all applicable cases. As at 1 June 2022, 25.2 per cent of applicable cases have a value in the *Usual occupation code* data field. Completion of the *Usual occupation code* data field varies considerably across the jurisdictions as outlined below: • NSW – 6.1% • VIC – 3.8% • QLD – 1.6% • SA – 2.0% • WA – 54.3% • TAS – 3.1% • NT – 48.9% • ACT – 5.4% • NZ – 99.9%
Accuracy	Although at least some text must be provided for all closed cases, the accuracy of the entered data is dependent on the appropriate information being collected or ascertained during the coroners' investigation. While most occupation descriptions included are meaningful, there are cases where the text indicates the occupation is either unknown (or equivalent) or generic such as	The accuracy of the *Usual occupation code data field* is not reviewed during the NCIS QA program as it is not a mandatory field.

Comparison of data fields	*Usual occupation* text	*Usual occupation* code
	manager, self-employed, sales or consultant.	
Quality assurance (QA) processes	The NCIS Unit verifies the information contained in this field as part of the QA program for cases which meet the QA criteria.[1] During the quality assurance program, the *Usual occupation text* field is checked to ensure it accurately represents the information contained within the attached coronial reports, where such information is available.	No quality assurance is undertaken by the NCIS Unit on this data field.
Strengths	• Mandatory for all closed cases • Allows for specific descriptions of usual occupation which may be more informative than the closest ANZSCO code • Allows for additional information to be included as needed • Verified during quality review	• Optional for all closed cases • Based on the coder selecting the appropriate code • Easy to search and extract data
Limitations	• Impacted by spelling • Impacted by terminology • Quality review reliant on attached reports containing information about usual occupation • Content varies between cases and jurisdictions • Difficult to standardise and compare data	• Not coded for all cases • ANZSCO does not include all applicable occupations (best fit option required) • Does not allow for non-occupation data. For example, *retired*, *student*, *child* • Not currently included in quality review process

Are previous occupations captured in the NCIS coding?

The NCIS does not contain any data fields to collect data about previous occupations. References to previous occupations may be noted in the coroner's findings if relevant to the case, however, it is not mandatory and is included at the discretion of the coroner.

Where can I find further information?

More information on the occupation data fields and coding guidance can be found in the NCIS Data dictionary and the Coding manual.

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[1] Only cases which have a non-natural case type (or are natural deaths with specific terms in the medical cause of death) are manually reviewed through the NCIS quality assurance program