

Occupational Requirements Survey

Watching Work: The 2015 Job Observation Test



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What is the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS)?

The ORS is a survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) National Compensation Survey (NCS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The ORS seeks to provide data regarding current job characteristics to aid the SSA in their disability determination process. Specifically, the ORS collects information about the physical demands, environmental conditions, specific vocational preparation, and cognitive demands of jobs in today's economy. The new ORS survey has been in development for three years and is now in its final stage of testing.

Why is the BLS conducting this observation test?

As part of the BLS' continuing efforts to improve collection procedures, it is investigating whether direct observation of the work provides useful information for the ORS.

How will the BLS conduct the test?

Two BLS economists will observe one worker in a selected occupation for one hour and note which physical demands the worker performs. They will also record environmental conditions and the amount of time the employee is exposed to them. They will only *observe* the work—not *interview* or *collect any data* from the worker.

Does the BLS report their findings to other government agencies?

No. These observations are for internal research purposes to ensure we are using effective and efficient collection procedures. The BLS uses the information for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347) and other applicable Federal laws, the BLS' findings will not be disclosed in identifiable form without the informed consent of the business establishment.

What kind of businesses will be included?

All businesses—regardless of size, industry, or location—count! It is important for our observation test to represent the broad economy, not just a portion of it. Occupational requirements in large businesses may differ from those found in small businesses. Manufacturing occupations may vary from occupations found in information technology businesses. The geographic location of businesses may even result in similar occupations having different requirements. If differences do not exist, it is important to know that, too. The participation of all types of employers will help the BLS further refine collection methodology for the ORS.

How can I learn more about the ORS?

Visit our website or contact us using the information at the bottom of this page.