

Social Security

Emergency Message

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Intended Audience: All RCs/ARCs/ADs/FOs/TSCs/PSCs/OCO/OCO-CSTs/OHO/OARO/ DDSs/DPBs/DPU

Originating Office: ORDP ODP

Title: Guidance Regarding the Citation of Certain Occupations at Step Five of the Sequential Evaluation Process

Type: EM - Emergency Messages

Program: Disability

Link To Reference: See References at the end of this EM.

Retention Date: 05/28/2026

A. Purpose

This emergency message (EM) clarifies and consolidates guidance related to evidentiary support for certain “not disabled” determinations and decisions that use the medical-vocational guidelines (20 CFR Part 404, Subpart P, Appendix 2) as a framework for decision making. It explains heightened evidentiary and articulation requirements about certain Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) occupations whose continued widespread existence multiple courts have questioned.

B. Background

At step five in the sequential evaluation process for adult disability claims (and at the corresponding step in the medical improvement review standard used in continuing disability reviews), we must determine whether an individual can adjust to other work, given their residual functional capacity (RFC) along with their age, education, and work experience. In determinations and decisions in which the medical-vocational guidelines do not direct an outcome under our rules, we use the medical-vocational guidelines as a framework for decision making. When we use the medical-vocational guidelines as a framework and make a finding of “not disabled,” we must support the finding with evidence that an individual can adjust to work that exists in significant numbers in the national economy.

In the medical-vocational guidelines and our other rules, we take administrative notice of the DOT and its companion publication, the Selected Characteristics of Occupations Defined in the Revised

Dictionary of Occupational Titles (SCO), as reliable sources of occupational information. We may also use vocational experts (VEs) or vocational specialists (VSs) as sources of job-related information. When providing evidence, VEs and VSs may use any reliable source of job-related information that is commonly used by vocational professionals and is relevant under our rules, along with their professional knowledge, training and experience. However, Social Security Ruling (SSR) 24-3p explains that a VE or VS must identify if they use a data source that defines exertion, education, or skill level differently than our regulations and explain the difference.

Descriptions of occupations in the DOT may refer to job materials or processes that have been replaced by more modern materials or processes. Some courts have therefore questioned whether some occupations continue to be performed in the manner in which they are described in the DOT. To ensure that our decisions are adequately supported, we are clarifying the evidence needed to support a finding of “not disabled” with respect to the occupations listed below.

C. Policy

An adjudicator may not cite any of the DOT occupations listed below to support a framework “not disabled” determination or decision without additional evidence from a VS or VE supporting the adjudicator’s conclusion that, as the occupation is currently performed:

- Its requirements are consistent with the individual’s RFC, and
- It exists in the national economy in numbers that alone, or in combination with work in other cited occupations, are significant.

The determination or decision must include or summarize the VS or VE’s evidence that supports such a conclusion. This requirement applies if the adjudicator intends to rely on any of the following occupations as support for a framework finding of “not disabled”:

DOT Code	Title
209.587-010	Addresser
249.587-018	Document Preparer, Microfilming
249.587-014	Cutter-and-Paster, Press Clippings
239.687-014	Tube Operator
318.687-018	Silver Wrapper
349.667-010	Host/Hostess, Dance Hall
349.667-014	Host/Hostess, Head
379.367-010	Surveillance-System Monitor

521.687-010	Almond Blancher, Hand
521.687-086	Nut Sorter
726.685-010	Magnetic-Tape Winder
782.687-030	Puller-Through
976.385-010	Microfilm Processor

NOTE: Alternatively, adjudicators may support the determination or decision with other occupation(s) appropriate to the facts of the claim. This approach may be the most efficient way to ensure our burden at step five of the sequential evaluation process is met and that the record contains the necessary evidence to support the “not disabled” finding.

D. Questions

Disability Determination Services (DDS) personnel should direct all other program-related and technical questions to their Regional Office (RO) support staff using vHelp or Program Service Center (PSC) Operations Analysis (OA) staff. RO support staff or PSC OA staff may refer questions, concerns, or problems to their Central Office contacts.

Office of Hearings Operations personnel should direct questions through their office’s management chain. Regional staff may direct questions about this matter to the Division of Field Procedures in the Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

Office of Appellate Operations personnel should direct questions through their management chain. Managers may direct further questions to the Executive Director’s Office.

References:

- 20 CFR [404.1560](#), [404.1566](#), [416.960](#), and [416.966](#)
- [SSR 24-3p](#): Titles II and XVI: Use of Occupational Information and Vocational Specialist and Vocational Expert Evidence in Disability Determinations and Decisions
- [DI 25025.030](#) Support for a Framework “Not Disabled” Determination
- [HALLEX I-2-5-48](#) Vocational Experts - General
- [HALLEX I-2-5-57](#) Obtaining Vocational Expert Testimony Through Interrogatories
- [HALLEX I-2-6-74](#) Testimony of a Vocational Expert

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