

Statistical Standard for Dwelling Occupancy Status

Rationale

Dwelling occupancy status provides information on whether dwellings are occupied or unoccupied, or are under construction. Dwelling occupancy status provides an indication of the housing stock available in New Zealand for habitation. Information on dwelling occupancy status can be used to evaluate, appraise, and predict urban infrastructure requirements, such as transport, sewerage, and water.

Definition

Dwelling occupancy status classifies all dwellings according to whether they are occupied, unoccupied, or under construction during the time period of the data collection.

Occupied dwelling

A dwelling is defined for the Census of Population and Dwellings (census) use as occupied if it is:

- occupied at midnight on the night of the data collection; or
- occupied at any time during the 12 hours following midnight on the night of the data collection unless the occupant(s) completed a questionnaire at another dwelling during this period.

This includes occupied dilapidated dwellings and occupied dwellings under construction.

Unoccupied dwelling

A dwelling is defined for census use as unoccupied if it is:

- unoccupied at midnight and at all times during the 12 hours following midnight on the night of the data collection.

Unoccupied dwellings may be classified as 'empty' or 'residents away'.

An unoccupied dwelling is classified as 'empty' if it clearly has no current occupants and new occupants are not expected to move in on or before census night. Unoccupied dwellings that are being repaired or renovated are defined as empty dwellings. Unoccupied baches or holiday homes are also defined as empty dwellings.

A dwelling is classified as having 'residents away', where occupants of a dwelling are known to be temporarily away and are not expected to return on or before census night.

Note: A dilapidated dwelling is not included as a dwelling, if it is unoccupied when the collection is undertaken.

Dwelling under construction

All houses, apartments, flats, groups or blocks of flats being built are defined as 'under construction'.

An existing dwelling that is being altered, repaired, or extended and is unoccupied is coded as an 'empty dwelling'.

A new dwelling that is under construction and is occupied is coded as 'occupied'.

'Dwelling' is a supporting concept and is defined in the Glossary.

Operational issues

The standard definition is constrained by:

- the ability of the collector/interviewer to identify the dwelling as fit for human habitation
- the appropriate identification of the dwelling occupancy status. This may require the collector to obtain information from neighbours on why a dwelling is unoccupied, make multiple visits to the dwelling at varying times, and/or make a close visual inspection of the dwelling for signs of recent occupancy and leave messages.

Unoccupied private dwellings (see the Statistical Standard for Occupied Dwelling Type) are classified for operational use by census.

Explanatory notes

Alternative names

Dwelling occupancy status has also been known as 'dwelling status' and 'dwelling stock'. The term dwelling occupancy status is preferred as it uniquely and meaningfully describes the output variable.

Classification criteria

The criterion used to place a dwelling into the first level of the classification is whether the dwelling is 'occupied', 'unoccupied' or 'under construction'. The criterion used to place a dwelling into the second level of the classification is whether the unoccupied dwelling is 'empty' or the residents are away (temporarily).

Classification

Dwelling occupancy status is a hierarchical classification with two levels. Level 1 of the classification has three categories (excluding residual categories), and level 2 of the classification has four categories. At level 2, the category 'unoccupied dwelling', is split into 'residents away' and 'empty dwelling'.

Dwelling occupancy status

Classification	Dwelling occupancy status – standard classification
Abbreviation	DWELSTAT95
Version	V2.0
Effective date	4 th March 1999

DWELSTAT95 V2.0

- 1 Occupied dwelling
 - 11 Occupied dwelling
- 2 Unoccupied dwelling
 - 21 Residents away
 - 22 Empty dwelling
- 3 Dwelling under construction
 - 31 Dwelling under construction
- 4 Don't know
 - 44 Don't know
- 5 Refused to answer
 - 55 Refused to answer
- 7 Response unidentifiable
 - 77 Response unidentifiable
- 8 Response outside scope
 - 88 Response outside of scope
- 9 Not stated
 - 99 Not stated

The residual categories are defined in the Glossary.

Coding process

Guidelines for adherence to the Standard

Guidance to support best practice in the collection and output of dwelling occupancy status.

What counts as a dwelling?

- Dilapidated buildings are not counted as dwellings if they are unoccupied. See Glossary for a detailed definition. If they are being used for shelter, and are therefore occupied during the time period of the data collection, they are counted as dwellings.
- Unoccupied non-private dwellings are not recorded as dwellings for census. For example, unoccupied seasonal group quarters (such as shearer's or fruit picker's quarters), camping grounds, and unoccupied trampers' huts are not counted as dwellings.
- Houseboats, barges, mobile homes, and caravans that are used as the principal residences of households are treated as dwellings and counted as dwellings whether occupied or unoccupied.

What counts as an empty dwelling?

- An unoccupied bach or holiday home is classified as an 'empty dwelling'.

Additional residences

- In the census, any identified additional residences that are unoccupied are classified as 'residents away'.
- In some cases, it may not be possible to identify dwellings as additional homes, for example, apartments in high rise buildings. Some of these dwellings may be classified as 'empty' or 'occupied' rather than as 'residents away'.

What counts as 'residents away'?

- An unoccupied dwelling that has been identified as an additional home, and has residents some of the time, is classified as 'residents away'.
- Unoccupied furnished dwellings are classified as 'residents away'.
- Unoccupied dwellings, where it is established there are usual residents, who are not present during the period of the data collection, are classified as 'residents away'.
- In some cases it may not be possible to establish if there are usual residents. Some of these dwellings may be classified as 'unoccupied' and 'empty', or as 'occupied'.

Questionnaire module Requirements

The questionnaire module(s) or collector field book should contain instructions that:

- allow the collector to classify and record, a dwelling's state of occupancy after external visual inspection
- allow the collector to make one response only
- direct the collector to make multiple visits to the dwelling at varying times, to make a close visual inspection of the dwelling for signs of recent occupancy, and leave messages as required.

Questionnaire field books may vary in format but should conform to the requirements contained in this statistical standard.

Example

Census collection

The census collector's field book is an example that meets the questionnaire requirements documented in this statistical standard.

Summary counts					
Dwelling type	Unoccupied dwelling status AEU	Forms collected		Forms outstanding	
		DF	IF	DF	IF

A = residents away, E = empty dwelling, U = under construction, DF = dwelling form, IF = individual form

Note: The collector's field book is under review for the 2011 Census. The new field book will be included in this standard once available.

Guidelines for enumerators

Residents away (A)

Where occupants of a dwelling are known to be temporarily away and are not expected to return by noon on the day after the data collection date, the dwelling is defined as 'residents away' or A. This is shown as an A in the unoccupied dwelling occupancy status section in the field book.

Empty dwelling (E)

Where a dwelling clearly has no current occupants, and new occupants are not expected to move in on (or before) the data collection date, the dwelling is defined as an 'empty dwelling' or E. Unoccupied dwellings being repaired or renovated are also defined as empty dwellings. This is shown as an E in the unoccupied dwelling occupancy status section in the field book.

Dwellings under construction (U)

All houses, apartments, flats, groups or blocks of flats being built at the time of the data collection are defined as under construction and their full address recorded in the field book. For the census collection, clearly record in the Remarks line the number of dwellings expected to be built on that site. This is especially important for apartment buildings and flats. It is not necessary to record each flat/apartment on a separate line. Dwellings under construction are indicated by the U in the unoccupied dwelling occupancy status section in the field book.

Standard output

Standard output

The standard output classification is the same classification as the input classification (DWELSTAT95 V2.0). The residual categories may be output separately or combined as one group. Where a combination item of residuals is to be used in an output, this item should be labelled 'not elsewhere included' and should have a footnote indicating its composition.

Alternative output classification

The alternative output classification is the same classification as the alternative input classification (DWELSTAT95 V2.1)

Related classifications and standards

New Zealand

Dwelling occupancy status is used to provide classification information for occupied dwelling type. Any changes to the Statistical Standard for Dwelling Occupancy Status (2009) may affect the Statistical Standard for Occupied Dwelling Type (2009)

International

The Statistical Standard for Dwelling Occupancy Status follows the basic guidelines as set out in the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2 (United Nations, 2008).

Glossary

Additional residences

In the census, any identified additional residences that are unoccupied, are classified as 'residents away'. In some cases, it may not be possible to identify dwellings as additional homes, for example, apartments in high rise buildings. Some of these dwellings may be classified as 'empty' or 'occupied' rather than as 'residents away'.

Dilapidated buildings

Dilapidated buildings are not counted as dwellings if they are unoccupied. If they are being used for shelter, and are therefore occupied during the time period of the data collection, they are counted as dwellings. Dilapidated buildings are defined as buildings that are in an advanced state of deterioration, to the point of being uninhabitable by current social norms. Indicators may include: surroundings unkempt or overgrown, extensive exterior deterioration, roof is not weather proof, doors/windows broken or not secure, essential services have been cut, interior is bare and deteriorating, evidence of vandalism. A dwelling may show some signs of neglect without being classed as dilapidated provided these signs are relatively minor, such as a lack of maintenance (paint flaking off), or repairs (for example boarded up windows), or other jobs that are overdue (untidy garden or section), and do not amount to severe overall deterioration.

Dwelling

A dwelling means any building or structure, or part thereof, that is used (or intended to be used) for the purpose of human habitation. It can be of a permanent or temporary nature and includes structures such as houses, motels, hotels, prisons, motor homes, huts, and tents. There can be more than one dwelling within a building, such as an apartment building, each apartment or unit is considered to be a separate dwelling.

Private dwelling

A private dwelling accommodates a person or a group of people. It is not generally available for public use. The main purpose of a private dwelling is as a place of habitation, and it is usually built (or converted) to function as a self-contained housing unit.

Non-private dwelling

A non-private dwelling provides short- or long-term communal or transitory type accommodation. Non-private dwellings are generally available to the public by virtue of employment, study, special need, legal requirement, or recreation.

Empty dwelling

An unoccupied bach or holiday home is classified as an 'empty dwelling'

Residents away

An unoccupied dwelling that has been identified as an additional home, and has residents some of the time, is classified as 'residents away'.

- Unoccupied furnished dwellings are classified as 'residents away'.
- Unoccupied dwellings, where it is established there are usual residents, who are not present during the period of the data collection, are classified as 'residents away'.
- In some cases, it may not be possible to establish if there are usual residents. Some of these dwellings may be classified as 'unoccupied' and 'empty', or as 'occupied'.

Residual categories

Don't know

Use of this category is discretionary. The use of a category capturing don't know responses is most applicable to household surveys where don't know may be a legitimate response to certain questions.

Refused to answer

This category is **only** used when it is known that the respondent has purposefully chosen not to respond to the question. Use of this residual category in processing is optional. Its use is most applicable in face-to-face or telephone interviews, but may be used in self-completed questionnaires if the respondent has clearly indicated they refuse or object to answering the question.

Response unidentifiable

This category is used when there is a response given, but:

- the response is illegible, or
- it is unclear what the meaning or intent of the response is – this most commonly occurs when the response being classified contains insufficient detail, is ambiguous or is vague, or
- the response is contradictory, for example, both the yes and no tick boxes have been ticked, or
- the response is clear and seemingly within the scope of the classification, but can not be coded because no suitable option (particularly other residual category options such as 'not elsewhere classified' or 'not further defined') exists in the classification or codefile.

Response outside scope

This category is used for responses that are positively identified (that is, the meaning and the intent are clear) but which clearly fall outside the scope of the classification/topic as defined in the standard.

Not stated

This category is **only** used where a respondent has not given any response to the question asked, that is, it is solely for non-response.

References

United Nations (1993). "*System of National Accounts 1993*", Brussels.

United Nations (2008). "*Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*", (Revision 2), Brussels.