

# SIC Codes: A Brief Guide

## What are industry codes and how do they help me?

Industry codes are used to group together similar companies based on the types of products or services they offer to make it easier to collect statistical data. Searching by industry codes enables you to retrieve targeted information, thus making it easier to research and analyze industries and the companies that operate within them. Many of the databases you have access to at Saint Mary's allow you to search by industry codes, so knowing how to use these codes will make you a more effective researcher.

## Types of Industry Codes

In North America, we typically use SIC and NAICS codes that have been developed by government statistical agencies. However, it is important to note that there are many different industry classification systems used by other governments and database providers. Below is a list of some classification systems you may come across while researching:

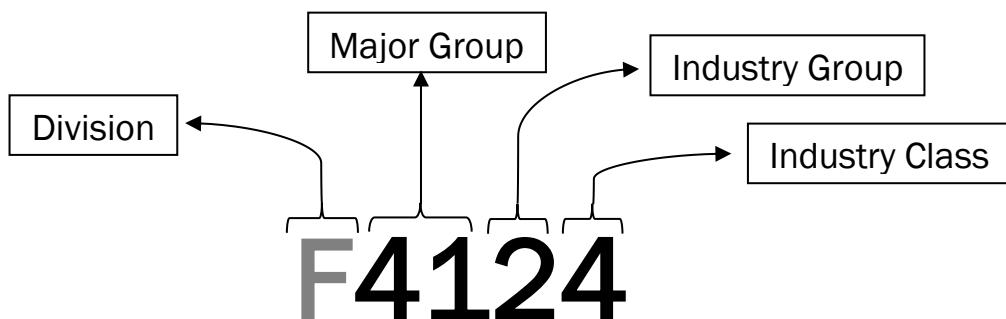
- FTSE's [Industry Classification Benchmark](#) (ICB)
- S&P and MSCI's [Global Industry Classification Standard](#) (GICS)
- [Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community](#) (NACE)
- United Kingdom's [Standard Industrial Classification](#) (UK SIC 2007)
- United Nations' [International Standard Industrial Classification](#) (ISIC, rev. 4)

Also, see the United Nations' list of [national classifications](#).

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## SIC Codes

Several of the databases Saint Mary's subscribes to allow you to search by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes to find information on industries and companies. Both the U.S. and Canada have maintained separate Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes, so be sure to verify with each resource which country's system it uses.



The first component of the SIC code does not usually appear in the number itself. The *Division* is denoted by a letter which you may see in an index of SIC codes (or a concordance as shown below). The first number is two digits (some begin with 0 as the first digit) and denotes the *Major Group*. The third digit denotes the *Industry Group* and the fourth digit denotes the *Industry Class*.

While the four-digit number is the most specific, in some instances you may find it helpful to search based on a two or three digit code. Some databases will require you to use an asterisk to replace these missing digits when searching (e.g., 41\* or

412\*) or to simply omit these digits (e.g., 41 or 412). Others will only allow searching by the full code. Use the **Help** feature of the database to determine the proper search technique.

## How to Find SIC Codes

To find U.S. government SIC codes:

- Go to the US Department of Labor website: <https://www.osha.gov/data/sic-search>
- You can also type the name of the company into the EDGAR Company Search (<http://www.sec.gov/edgar/searchedgar/companysearch.html>) on the US Securities and Exchange Commission website.

You can find codes by starting with a company (or a few) that you know are in the industry you are researching and seeing what SIC codes are associated with the records. For example, **Mergent Online** gives the primary SIC in company search results and on the overview page for each.

Note:

- A company may have more than one SIC code if they are engaged in multiple industries.
- SIC code(s) assigned to a company may differ from one database to the next.

The Canadian government has almost phased out the use of SIC codes, but you may still find Canadian SIC codes useful for historical research. You can find Canadian SIC codes at:

- Statistics Canada website:
  - [Standard Industrial Classification – Establishments \(SIC-E 1980\)](#)
  - [Standard Industrial Classification – Companies and Enterprises \(SIC-C 1980\)](#)

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## NAICS and SIC Codes

North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes were introduced in 1997 to replace SIC codes. Both codes serve the same function, but NAICS codes allow for greater specificity. NAICS codes also allow for a higher degree of comparability within the North American economy because they were developed jointly between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The Statistics Canada website and the US Census Bureau website both offer concordances which will allow you to cross-reference NAICS codes with SIC codes and vice versa.

Statistics Canada Concordances

<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/concepts/concordances-classifications>

Example:

SIC-E 1980		NAICS 2002	
A0115	Sheep and Goat Farms	112410	Sheep Farming
		112420	Goat Farming
A0119	Livestock Combination Farms	112991	Animal Combination Farming

Statistics Canada. (2006, July 3). Concordance: Standard Industrial Classification - Establishments (SIC-E) 1980 to North American Industry Classification (NAICS) 2002.  
Retrieved from [https://www.statcan.gc.ca/subjects-sujets/standard-norme/concordances/sice-ctie80\\_naics-scian02-eng.htm](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/subjects-sujets/standard-norme/concordances/sice-ctie80_naics-scian02-eng.htm)

US Census Bureau Concordances

<https://www.census.gov/naics/?68967>

Example:

SIC (U.S.)	NAICS 2002
0273 Animal Aquaculture (shellfish farms)	112512 Shellfish Farming
0919 Miscellaneous Marine Products (cultured pearl production)	
0921 Fish Hatcheries and Preserves (shellfish hatcheries)	

United States Census Bureau. North American Industry Classification System. Reference Files. Concordances. 2002 NAICS to 1987 SIC. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/naics/?68967>

## Selected Resources That Use SIC Codes

\* indicates codes having some variances from U.S. government SIC

Canadian Key Business Directory*	Library Reference collection (call number: HF 3223 C24)
Dun & Bradstreet Key Business Ratios*	Library's A to Z Databases list ( <a href="https://libguides.smu.ca/az.php">https://libguides.smu.ca/az.php</a> )
EDGAR (SEC Filings)	Website for the US Securities and Exchange Commission: <a href="https://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml">https://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml</a>
Mergent Online & Mergent Intellect	Library's A to Z Databases list ( <a href="https://libguides.smu.ca/az.php">https://libguides.smu.ca/az.php</a> )
Market Share Reporter	Library's A to Z Databases list ( <a href="https://libguides.smu.ca/az.php">https://libguides.smu.ca/az.php</a> )

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