

Social Security

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Disability Insurance

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POLICY INTERPRETATION RULING

SSR 00-4p: TITLES II AND XVI: USE OF VOCATIONAL EXPERT AND VOCATIONAL SPECIALIST EVIDENCE, AND OTHER RELIABLE OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION IN DISABILITY DECISIONS

PURPOSE:

This Ruling clarifies our standards for the use of vocational experts (VEs) who provide evidence at hearings before administrative law judges (ALJs), vocational specialists (VSs) who provide evidence to disability determination services (DDS) adjudicators, and other reliable sources of occupational information in the evaluation of disability claims. In particular, this ruling emphasizes that before relying on VE or VS evidence to support a disability determination or decision, our adjudicators must:

- Identify and obtain a reasonable explanation for any conflicts between occupational evidence provided by VEs or VSs and information in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT), including its companion publication, the *Selected Characteristics of Occupations Defined in the Revised Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (SCO), published by the Department of Labor, and
- Explain in the determination or decision how any conflict that has been identified was resolved.

CITATIONS (AUTHORITY):

Sections 216(i), 223(d)(2)(A), and 1614(a)(3)(B) of the Social Security Act, as amended;
20 CFR Part 404, sections 404.1566-404.1569, 20 CFR Part 404, subpart P, appendix 2, § 200.00(b), and 20 CFR Part 416, sections 416.966-416.969.

PERTINENT HISTORY:

To determine whether an individual applying for disability benefits (except for a child applying for Supplement Security Income) is disabled, we follow a 5-step sequential evaluation process as follows:

1. Is the individual engaging in substantial gainful activity? If the individual is working and the work is substantial gainful activity, we find that he or she is not disabled.
2. Does the individual have an impairment or combination of impairments that is severe? If the individual does not have an impairment or combination of impairments that is severe, we will find that he or she is not disabled. If the individual has an impairment or combination of impairments that is severe, we

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