

Dependent Interviewing in the American Housing Survey
Updated 6/14/2016

“Dependent interviewing” is the practice of using the results from previous surveys or other questions to improve the accuracy and reduce respondent burden of current surveys. Since the American Housing Survey is longitudinal, it provides numerous opportunities to practice dependent interviewing by using information collected about a housing unit in previous years. While a limited form of dependent interviewing was used from the very beginning of the AHS, this practice was expanded considerably after the survey instrument switched to a computer-assisted form in 1997. In the following national survey (1999), the instrument had access to the data recorded in 1997 and could thus supply the Field Representatives with the information needed for dependent interviewing.

Dependent interviewing takes a number of basic forms:

1. Do Not Re-ask. In its simplest form, data items which are unlikely to change can be skipped entirely, once a valid answer is obtained. Examples of this include the purchase price or a person’s gender or country of birth.
2. Probe. In cases where changes in response are possible but unlikely, the Field Representative can be prompted to probe a reported change, to make sure it is correct.
3. Verify. For data items which can change but either do so infrequently or in a predictable way (such as person age), the respondent can be asked to verify that the situation is as it was in the previous survey, supplying new information about any changes.
4. Bound. For infrequent events, such as remodeling or major repairs, the respondent can be asked whether an event is the same or different from one reported in the previous survey. This helps eliminate “telescoping,” the tendency of respondents to remember events as more recent than they actually were.
5. Fill. Some items are not asked because they are automatically filled by the answer to another question. For example, the ACCESS question asks if a housing unit has direct access from the outside or through a common hall. It is automatically filled as a 1 (yes) and not asked if the structure type variable was reported as single family detached in the previous survey year. Because this acts more like a conditional statement, these are not covered in the table below.

In some cases, whether a question uses a type of dependent interviewing depends on specified “trigger” conditions. For example, year built is generally “do not re-ask,” but it is verified if a unit changes from being renter-occupied to being owner-occupied, on the grounds that owners are more likely to know this information than renters.

The table below lists the variables in the AHS dataset that are subject to dependent interviewing and what type of dependent interviewing that was used in each survey year, if any. See the legend and notes at the end of the table for an explanation of the codes used.

Use of Dependent Interviewing in AHS National

| Variable | Survey Years | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1974 to 1983 | 1984 to 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 |
| ACCESSB | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| ACCESSC | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| ADDTNS | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ADJDPEND | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ADJDPNSP | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ADJFIX | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ADJRATEF | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ADJRATEO | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| AFUEL | | | | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s |
| AGE | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| AGERES | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| AIRSYS | | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| AMMORT | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| AMMORT1 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| AMMORT2 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| AMRTZ | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| AMRTZ2 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| AMRTZ3 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| AMTM | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ANCHOR | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| APPLY | | | | | | | | | | S-pn | S-pn |
| BALLNAMT | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| BALLNTRM | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| BANK | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| BEDRMS | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| BUILT | | DNR | DNR | V-t | V-t | V-t | V-t | V-t | V-t | V-t | V-t |
| BURNER | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| CASH | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| CELLAR ¹ | | | | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | | | | |
| CFUEL | | | | DNR | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s |
| CITSHP | | | | | | DNR-s | DNR-s | DNR-s | DNR-s | DNR-s | DNR-s |
| CLIMB | | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| COMMRECR ² | | | | | | | DNR-y | | | | |
| CONDO | | | | | | | | V | V | V | V |
| COOK | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| CPRICE | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| CUSHOM | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| DENS | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| DFUEL | | | | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s | V-s |

¹ CELLAR was not verified in 2007 and 2009, and was reasked in both years.

² Applies only to the golf course portion of the recode

| Variable | Survey Years | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1974 to 1983 | 1984 to 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 |
| DINING | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| DISH | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| DISPL | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| DOC | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| DRY | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| DWNPAY | | | | DNR |
| DOWNPCT | | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| EAPTBL | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| EBARCL1 | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| EBARCL2 | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| ECOM1 | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| ECOM2 | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| ELOW1 | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| EPRKG | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| ESFD | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| ETRANS | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| EWATER | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | | DNR |
| FAMRM | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| FLOODPLN | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | | |
| FLOORS | | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| FRSIT | | | DNR |
| FRSTHO | | | | DNR |
| FRSTOC | | | | DNR |
| FRSTTRM | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| GARAGE | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| GATED | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| GRAD | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| HALFB | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| HEBAL | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| HECR | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| HELUMC | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| HEQUIP | | | V-s,y |
| HFUEL | | | V-s |
| HOWVARY | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| HYBARM | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| HYBARMYR | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| KITCH | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| IMPROV | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| INTF | | | | | | | | | | | V-m |
| INTW | | | | | | | | | | | V-m |
| INUSYR | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| LAUNDY | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| LIVING | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| LNFNBR | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| LOT | | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| LPRICE | | | | DNR |
| MAR | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| MATBUY | | | | | | | | | | | V-m |

| Variable | Survey Years | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------|------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|
| | 1974 to 1983 | 1984 to 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 |
| MAXADJ | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MAXADJTM | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MAXINTF | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MAXINTW | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MGREAS1 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MGREAS2 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MGREASSP | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MGTYPE | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MHSETQ | | | | | | | | V | V | V | V |
| MNMOR | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| MORTIN | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| MOVE | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| MOVMM | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| NATVTY | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| NEWMOR | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| NOWIRE ³ | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | | | V-y |
| NUNIT2 | | | | | DNR-c | DNR-c | DNR-c, P | DNR-c | DNR-c | DNR-c | DNR-c |
| NUNITS | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| ORIGINTF | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| ORIGINTW | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| OTHFN | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| OTHPMT | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| OTHPMTSP | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| OTHRUN | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| OTRFSP | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| OVEN | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| OWNHERE | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| OWNLOT | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| PAR | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| PERUS1 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| PLUGS | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| PMIAMT | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| PMIPMT | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| PMT | | | | | | | | | | | V-m |
| PMTCHAMT | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| PMTCHYR | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| PMTF | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| PMTFSP | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| PMTINC | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| PMTPARTS | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| PORCH | | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |

³ NOWIRE reasked in 2009. The question was changed slightly in 2011 and so was reasked again 2011.

| Variable | Survey Years | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | 1974 to 1983 | 1984 to 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 |
| PREOCC | | | | DNR | DNR |
| PROJ | | | | | | | | | | S-pn, DNR- vs | S-pn, DNR-vs |
| PUBSEW | | | | V-y | V-y |
| RACE ⁴ | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| RAS | | | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B | B |
| RECRM | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| REFI | | | | | | | | | | | V-m |
| REFNREAS | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| REFR | | | | V-y | V-y |
| REL | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| RENEW | | | | | | | | | | S-pn | S-pn |
| SCHCLS | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| SELL | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| SEWDIS | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | V-y | V-y |
| SEX | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| SHOCK | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| SHPCLS | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | |
| SINK | | | DNR- y | V-y | V-y |
| SPAN | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| SPOUS | | | | | DNR | DNR | | | | | |
| STUDIO | | | | | | | | | | | V |
| SUBMOR | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| SUBRNT | | | | | | | | | | S-pn, DNR- v | S-pn, DNR-v |
| TADJ | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| TALWIR | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | | |
| TASB | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | | |
| TERM1 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| TERM2 | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| TPBPAI | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| TPBPIP | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| TPBSOL | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| TRADON | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | | |
| TRASH | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| TREP | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| TWATER | | | | | | | | DNR | DNR | | |
| UNITSF | | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR | DNR |
| UNPBAL | | | | | | | | | | | V-m |
| VARM | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| VARMSP | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| VARMSPE | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |

⁴ Race was re-asked in 2003 in order to allow answer of multiple races.

| Variable | Survey Years | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------------|
| | 1974 to 1983 | 1984 to 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 |
| VARY | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m |
| VCHER | | | | | | | | | | S-pn | S-pn |
| WASH | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| WATER | | | | V-s |
| WELDUS | | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| WELL | | | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| WFPROP | | | | | | | | V-y | V-y | | V-y |
| WFUEL | | | V-s |
| WHNGET | | | | DNR | V-m |
| WHYPMTCH | | | | | | | | | | | DNR-m, V-md |
| YRMOR | | | | | | | | | | | V |

LEGEND:

- V -- verify prior year response
- V-s – verify prior year response excluding answers of “other”
- V-t – verify if tenure changed from renter to owner-occupied
- V-y – verify if prior year response was “yes”
- V-m -- re-ask after verifying that payments are still being made on a previously recorded mortgage. Re-asked questions are used to determine if any changes have been made to the terms of the loan.
- V-md -- re-ask for a verified mortgage only if the terms of the loan have changed (payment, interest rate, etc.)
- DNR-m -- do not re-ask if a previously recorded mortgage has been verified and it has not been refinanced.
- DNR – do not re-ask (fill answer from prior year)
- DNR-c – do not re-ask if current year TYPE agrees with prior year NUNIT2
- DNR-s – do not re-ask if prior year citizen
- DNR-y – do not re-ask if prior year response was “yes”
- DNR-v – do not re-ask for vacants
- DNR-vs – do not ask if SUBRNT2 is “yes”
- P – probe if prior year value not equal to current year value
- B – bounding, verify that same job in successive surveys are not duplicates
- S-pn – setting specified value if national case and prior year value of PROJ was “yes”

Additional information on the use of dependent interviewing:

- Only prior respondent-provided, unedited data are eligible to be used in dependency comparisons.
- Based on the individual item, the eligibility for dependency may be further restricted. It must be the same housing unit being interviewed in the previous and current survey. For most items, the prior year must have been a regular, occupied interview. For items related to the acquisition of the home, the prior year household must be the same as the current year.
- Dependency formats may change from survey year to survey year.
- The 1997 AHS (the first automated instrument) incorporated dependency practices throughout the survey instrument. However, this was also a questionnaire redesign year and many questions were not identical to the format used in 1995. Therefore, prior year data were unavailable. So while many items appear (based on the instrument programming) to have had dependency applied in 1997, only those marked on the table actually were dependent in 1997.