

Understanding the Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) call number classification system for U.S. Government Publications

What is the Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) classification system?

The Superintendent of Documents numbering system is a classification system for publications produced by the United States Government. It was designed to group together publications by the same government author (i.e., Justice Department, Labor Department) and is based on the organizational structure of the federal government. SuDocs numbers are grouped by agency, not subject.

How to Read SuDocs numbers?

The SuDocs classification number begins with a capital letter or letters representing a **government department or agency**. The letters and numbers up to the colon constitute the **class stem**. The numbers after the colon represent individual publications in the series and their dates of publication (997 = 1997).

Some of the most common agencies:

A	Agriculture Department	J	Justice
C3	Census Bureau	Ju	Judiciary
D	Defense	L	Labor
E	Energy	LC	Library of Congress
ED	Education	NAS	NASA
GA	General Accounting Office	S	State Department
GS	General Services Administration	SI	Smithsonian Institution
HE	Health & Human Services	T22	Internal Revenue Service
I	Interior	X, Y	Congress
I19	U.S. Geological Survey	Y4.	Congressional Committees

The numbers that directly follow these letters (before the decimal point) represent the specific office of a particular department. A number after the decimal point but before the colon represents *subordinate* level offices or bureaus of the agency.

Examples:

- Health and Human Services Department = HE
- Health Care Financing Administration = HE 22.
- Health Education Bureau = HE 20.7200:

Documents are shelved alphabetically by agency letter. After the agency letter, documents are ordered numerically.

The numbers after the decimal point are treated as whole numbers – they are not treated as decimals.

Examples (in order):

- D 1.2:
- D 1.16:
- D 1.23:
- D 1.23/2:

If the call number is the same to a certain point, then varies, the order is:
Years, Letters, Numbers.

Examples (in order):

A 1.35:993	Year
A 1.35:R 42	Letter
A 1.35:R 42/995	Letter
A 1.35:R42/2	Letter
A 1.35:321	Number

If the part of the call number before the colon has numbers with slashes, the base number comes first, followed by the slashed numbers in order. The same rule applies to numbers that are dashed.

Examples (in order):

- C 3.186:
- C 3.186/2:
- C 3.186/7:
- C 3.186/7-3:
- C 3.186/9:

*****If you have trouble finding a government publication ask a librarian for help.*****

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Some of the information was taken from SuDocs Basics guide from Michigan State University Library government documents department.
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