

Discussion Paper - NWCG Data Standard
FIRECODE
August 9, 2004

This document provides assumptions, rationale, clarifications, examples, or background related to this data standard.

Why do we have FireCodes?

In the past, it was difficult to calculate the total cost of large multi-jurisdictional wildfires. One reason for the difficulty was that each participating agency used one or more accounting codes for each fire; sometimes resulting in fire costs being tracked in 10 or more accounts. Because each agency was independently issuing accounting codes, there was no common code for which costs for a particular incident could be traced.

In 2002, the House Appropriations Subcommittee directed the National Fire Plan Agencies to develop a method to standardize fire incident financial coding for fire suppression incidents and subsequent emergency stabilization efforts. A group of interagency financial managers agreed that for each wildfire, a common 4-character code could be imbedded into the existing agency accounting code structures. This change to wildland fire accounting practices could be implemented without affecting agency financial procedures and systems.

A project team, headed by the DOI Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, was tasked with implementing the new FireCode in a national automated system. In 2003, the FireCode System was deployed.

What is a FireCode?

The FireCode is a four-character code used to track and compile cost information for a particular wildfire emergency suppression incident. The purpose of the FireCode is to provide a common code for each large wildfire to be used in the accounting code structure of all federal wildland fire agencies. The FireCode is included in the accounting code structure of each federal agency that wants to account for expenditures for that incident. By applying consistent business rules to the FireCode, the federal wildland fire agencies are able to track costs for multi-jurisdictional fire suppression incidents.

Example:

The Snoopy Dogg Fire is assigned the Firecode "K12Z". Each participating agency will embed this FireCode into their agency accounting code structure as follows:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Accounting Code</u>
Bureau of Land Management	XX-XXX-XXXX-XX- K12Z
Bureau of Indian Affairs	XXXXXX-XXXX-XXXXX- K12Z
National Park Service	XXXX- K12Z -XXX
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	X-X-XXX-XXXX- K12Z
U. S. Forest Service	PX K12Z

Is the FireCode the Fire/Incident Number?

A Fire/Incident Number is needed to uniquely identify incidents. It has been suggested that the FireCode should be used as the Fire/Incident Number.

There are two reasons why the FireCode cannot be used as the Fire/Incident Number:

1. At the present time, FireCodes are assigned for emergency suppression incidents only. Therefore, other kinds of events supported by the wildland fire community such as prescribed fire, natural disasters, and search/rescue incidents are not assigned a FireCode.
2. A unique Fire Number must be assigned for each fire occurrence. Because some agencies have chosen to group smaller fires under a single FireCode, it is not possible to establish a one-to-one relationship between the Fire Code and an individual fire.

It is because of this limited scope the FireCode cannot be used as the Fire Number or the Incident Number. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) is chartering a team to assess the requirements for a Fire Reporting/Statistics system. It is expected that this team will establish a standard for uniquely identifying the various incidents supported by the wildland fire agencies.

How are FireCodes Issued?

FireCodes are assigned and tracked via the web-based FireCode System. Dispatch personnel enter the incident information and the Fire Code System generates a FireCode. Once the FireCode is assigned, the respective agency financial personnel ensure that the appropriate agency accounting code structure is used with the FireCode. These accounting codes are then manually entered into other systems such as the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) and agency financial systems.

Information regarding the FireCode System is available at <http://www.firecode.gov>.