



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
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MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#014-2011

To: NWCG Committee Chairs
Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) Chairs
National IC/AC Council Chair

From: NWCG Chair *William Raage*

Date: September 14, 2011

Subject: Wildland Fire Data and Fiscal Management for Complexes, Mergers, and Splits

Wildland fire emergency expenditures have grown over the past decade. This has affected the operating budgets of the federal wildland fire management agencies and has led to increased scrutiny by Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and other oversight agencies. As expenditures have grown over time, so has the requirement for fiscal efficiency and accountability. As a result, requirements for increased accountability for individual incident expenditures and measures for assessing performance have been developed.

In some cases, multiple incidents within close physical proximity are managed as a single incident. When this occurs, it is not uncommon for incidents to be merged, added to a complex, or split from a complex. This makes maintaining the data and fiscal integrity of an individual incident challenging. The Incident Business Committee (IBC) evaluated methods for complexes, mergers, and splits (CMS) to provide a framework for managing incident data and monitoring expenditures associated with CMS.

The guidelines for data management and monitoring of expenditures for CMS are as follows:

1. Maintain the data and financial integrity of individual incidents:
 - a. When complexing incidents, maintain individual FireCodes and ROSS incidents for each incident within the complex.

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- b. If a new code for a complex is created in FireCode, associate the individual incident codes to the complex code. Note: Complex codes are typically used only for mobilization of resources until they are assigned to a specific incident in the complex.
 - c. If fires burn together, associate the fires in FireCode and utilize the “merge” function in ROSS and I-Suite. Note: Once incidents are merged in I-Suite and ROSS, the process of splitting these incidents back out may result in the loss of data integrity and history.
 - d. If the need arises, a fire can be split from a complex if the recommendations in 1a, 1b, and 1c are followed.
 - e. In I-Suite, enter only one incident per database. This will facilitate separating incidents into different databases later if the need arises.
 - f. Agencies should follow individual agency fire reporting policies.
2. Deciding to complex, merge, or split:
- a. The Agency Administrator (AA) should consider consequences outlined in Attachment A when deciding to complex, merge, or split incidents. This decision should be coordinated between the AA, affected Incident Commander(s), Dispatch Center Manager(s), and State/Regional Incident Business Specialist(s).
 - b. The AA should document the decisions, including the acreage and cost of affected incidents at the point when data integrity is in jeopardy.

Attachment A provides several scenarios, issues, and effects to assist Agency Administrators with decisions related to CMS.

These guidelines will ensure that wildland fire emergency expenditures can be monitored, performance can be measured, and the integrity of incident data can be preserved.

For more information, contact: Ann Marie Carlson, Chair of the Incident Business Committee, (916) 978-4446 or by e-mail at acarlson@blm.gov.

Attachment A: CMS Scenarios, Issues, and Effects

cc: NWCG Executive Board
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