NWCG Standards for Unit Identifiers

PMS 931 APRIL 2022
The NWCG Standards for Unit Identifiers details standardized processes and outlines business rules and practices for developing and utilizing NWCG Unit Identifiers. Within this publication, users can find instruction regarding appropriate creation, maintenance, and application of wildland fire Unit Identifiers and associated information for incident management as it relates to land-based and non-land-based record creation, cooperator resource providers and incident support functions, i.e., dispatch, equipment/radio cache and training centers. Additionally, the publication describes interdependencies between Unit Identifiers and interagency wildland fire IT integrated applications.

The NWCG Standards for Unit Identifiers applies to member agencies, organizations, and individuals who utilize Unit Identifiers and/or associated information. Ultimately, the intent of these standards is to assist the user in understanding all things encompassing Unit Identifiers and associated information. This publication will be continually updated as business rules evolve.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local partners. NWCG operations standards are interagency by design; they are developed with the intent of universal adoption by the member agencies. However, the decision to adopt and utilize them is made independently by the individual member agencies and communicated through their respective directives systems.
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Part 1

Introduction

Unit Identifiers and associated information are fundamental elements for the interagency incident management community because they provide a common interagency identification of participating organizations and the roles they play.

Unit Identifiers are created by the interagency incident management community, and together with their associated information are the standard way organizational units communicate who they are, report the incidents they are hosting, and account for the resources they provide. From the markings on a wildland fire engine, to every incident on the Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR), the Unit Identifier and its associated information is an integral piece of information.

Due to the significance of Unit Identifiers and associated information, NWCG took responsibility to manage Unit Identifier data under their authority, via the Data Management Committee (DMC) and specifically the Unit Identifier Board (UIB). Information regarding Unit Identifiers is conveyed to the users through these standards.

Geographic Area Unit Identifier Data Custodians

Geographic Area Unit Identifier Data Custodians (GACC Custodians) will be appointed by each Geographic Area Coordination Center’s center manager. Upon receipt of written requests, GACC Custodians are responsible for timely entries of modifications of Unit Identifiers and associated information in the System of Record (SOR). Refer to the National Interagency Mobilization Guide for additional information. Current GACC Custodians can be found on the UIB website: https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/unit-identifier-board.

Unit Identifier and Associated Information

Unit Identifier Code (NWCG Data Standard for Unit Identifiers)

Unit Identifier (Unit ID) is a code used within the interagency incident management community to uniquely identify a particular governmental or non-government organizational unit recognized by NWCG as a wildland fire cooperator.

An organizational unit represents the smallest area or lowest level of an entity’s organization responsible for either:

- Managing land-based NWCG events (e.g., incidents or projects) based on jurisdiction.
  - Example: wildfire, RX burn.
- Managing non-land-based NWCG events (e.g., incidents or projects) supported by the wildland fire and all-risk community.
  - Example: Support, NWCG Event Kind Public Assistance, Natural Disasters, Agency Program Support, WO/Regional/State Severity
- Providing resources to the wildland fire or all-risk community.
  - Example: Overhead, Equipment, Aircraft etc.
- Providing Incident Support Services for incident management. (Three subsections)
  - Example: Dispatch Center, Equipment/Radio Cache, Training Center.

Not every level within an organization has a business requirement or business need for a Unit Identifier.
Wildland fire organizational reference data includes agency specific organization codes and hierarchies regardless of Unit ID assignment. Unit IDs are only necessary if an official agency organizational unit will be functioning in one of the four roles defined above. Correct, consistent use of Unit IDs is critical for interagency IT applications to create update and share data for planning, response, decision-making, and reporting.

Go to Wildland Role section of this document for additional clarification.

Business Rules

- The Unit Identifier must be unique.
- There will be one Unit Identifier per organizational unit.
- Unit Identifiers are/will be designated for 1) government (federal, state, tribe, and local) entities and 2) non-government organizations approved by NWCG, i.e., The Nature Conservancy, Alaska Native Corporation. Non-government organizations must meet the following criteria:
  - Are a wildland fire cooperator with land-based jurisdictional responsibilities.
  - Provide nationally available pool of resources to wildland fire efforts.
  - Unit Identifiers must be associated with an official name of the unit within an organization and found on official documents and websites.
  - A unit must have at least one Wildland Role to receive a Unit ID. A unit may have more than one role associated with a single Unit Identifier.
  - A Unit ID will be assigned to one Geographic Area or Geographic Area Coordination Center in the Unit ID SOR.
  - The Unit ID’s country subdivision code (State) is assigned based upon the state the unit resides within. If the organizational unit’s jurisdictional boundary spans multiple states or the administrative offices are located in another state than the unit’s perimeter, the country subdivision code will be based upon the physical location of the administrative offices.

See the Organizational Unit Requirements section of this document for additional business rules specific to associated information.

Associated Business Rules for Incident Record Creation

- Incidents will be created using appropriate Unit Identifier. Per NWCG direction, incident records will be created by the dispatch center with delegated authority for the benefiting agency and associated Protecting Unit based on the point of origin (POO) of the incident. Unique Incident Identifiers are the concatenation of the Year from the Fire Discovery Date Time, the POO Protecting Unit and the Local Incident Identifier. In terms of Unit Identifiers this relates to the Incident Host Geographic Wildland Role.

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1 Unit, Protecting - The entity responsible for providing direct incident management and services to a given area pursuant to its jurisdictional responsibility or as specified by law, contract, or agreement.

Definition Extension: 1) Protection can be re-assigned by agreement; 2) The nature and extent of the incident determines protection (for example - Wildfire vs. All Hazard.)
• Typically, the Jurisdictional Unit 23 is also the Protecting Unit for an incident record, however it is common for protection responsibilities to be designated to another unit through an agreement with another agency. Agencies and bureaus review, update, and develop agreements that clarify the jurisdictional inter-relationships and define the roles and responsibilities among local, state, tribal, and federal fire protection entities. Additional information can be found in the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*.

• For non-land-based incidents, records will be created using the Unit ID with the non-land-based incident host wildland value.

### Architecture

The Unit Identifier is a concatenation of an approved country code, country subdivision code, (e.g., state), and organizational unit code resulting in a unique identifier distinct to that organizational unit.

- ISO publication 3166-2 contains the standard for Country Subdivision code (State).
- The organizational unit code is a three to four alpha-numeric character code. It is specific to an existing unit within a government or NWCG approved non-government administrative organization.

Figure 1: An example showing Yosemite National Park’s Unit Identifier code and how three data elements, when combined, create a Unit Identifier code for a given unit.

#### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Organizational Unit Codes

State specific FEMA identifiers are the exception to Unit Identifiers being tied to the physical location of the Unit's Administrative Offices. They provide a clear incident numbering mechanism that synchronizes with FEMA mission assignments, which are currently issued for a particular state/territory after a formal request for assistance by state/territory has been made through the FEMA Region. Using state specific FEMA identifiers affords the incident business a mechanism to easily track cost by state and by mission assignment to ensure expenditure oversight, adherence to cost share agreements and simplified billing. Additionally, state specific FEMA identifiers provide clarity of GACC jurisdiction in cases where the FEMA regional office falls in one GACC and the affected state/territory in another.

3 Unit, Jurisdictional -The governmental entity having overall land and resource management responsibility for a specific geographical area as provided by law.

**Definition Extension:** 1) Ultimately responsible for the fire report to account for statistical fire occurrence; 2) Responsible for setting fire management objectives; 3) Jurisdiction cannot be re-assigned by agreement; 4) The nature and extent of the incident determines jurisdiction (for example, Wildfire vs. All Hazard); 5) Responsible for signing a Delegation of Authority to the Incident Commander.
Regional FEMA identifiers will continue to be used for region-wide incidents or Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) staffing mission assignments as needed.

All proposed FEMA Unit Identifiers will be created with:

- CCSSRegion# example: USWAFE10.
- Naming convention = FEMA Region Number and the respective state example: FEMA Region VI New Mexico USNMFE6.
- Each state’s respective FEMA Regional Office address will be used, with the notable exception of the state field. The specific state will be entered to ensure the Unit ID reflects accurately.

All proposed State Emergency Management Unit Identifiers will be created with:

- CCSSSEMA example: USMSSEM
- Naming Convention – use the official name from the unit’s website or official documents example: New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Figure 3: An example showing New Mexico Homeland Security & Emergency Management’s Unit Identifier code and how three data elements, when combined, create a Unit Identifier code state specific Office of Emergency Services.
Organizational Unit Requirements

Unit Identifier Requestor Requirements

Requestor must be an NWCG member agency

- Within the Department of Agriculture.
- Within the Department of the Interior.
- Recognized by NWCG as a cooperator.

Associated Information Required to Request a Unit ID Includes:

- Name (Org Unit Name)
- Organizational Unit Type (Unit Type)
- Tier 1 (Dept)
- Tier 2 (Agency)
- Wildland Role (Org Unit Role)
- Organizational Unit Code
- Geographic Area
- GACC
- Address
- Country
- Latitude/Longitude
- Phone
- Email

1. Organizational Unit Name

The full name of the organization found on official documents or web sites. Organizational unit names will not be abbreviated.

2. Organizational Unit Type (Unit Type)

The type of organizational unit within the interagency incident management community represented by the Unit Identifier.

- Interagency
- International National
- International Country Subdivision
- Sovereign Nations
- US Federal
- US State
- US County and Local
- Non-government. (NWCG recognized)
### 3. Tier 1 (Organizational Unit Department)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All States and Their Two Letter ID</th>
<th>IA/GC – Non-Departmental Agencies {i.e., NASA, EPA, FCC}</th>
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<td>AS – American Samoa</td>
<td>MH – Marshall Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS – Department of Homeland Security</td>
<td>MP – Northern Mariana Islands</td>
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<td>GU – Guam</td>
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### 4. Tier 2 (Organizational Unit Agency)

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5. Wildland Role (Organizational Unit Role)

Requesting organizations must specify their need for the Unit Identifier within the following categories. If the requested Unit ID meets the requirement at the highest-level Wildland Role i.e., Incident Host, they will inherently meet the data entry guidelines as a resource provider. It is important to note that with the publication of this publication and completion of a refresh of the technical tool used to manage Unit IDs, wildland fire IT applications will transition to hard validation.

1. Incident Host (formally known as Incident Host Geographic)
   - An organizational unit with either jurisdictional authority or protection responsibility for interagency incident management.
   - An organizational unit with this role may also provide resources.

2. Non-Land-Based Event (formally known as Incident Host Functional)
   - An organizational unit that may be used for other incident types such as severity or support records.
   - Non-land-based organizational units will not be used as Jurisdictional Unit or Protecting Unit for a wildland fire (wildfire or prescribed fire) or all-risk incident within any fire application.
   - Examples of non-land-based organizational units are Regional or State Offices.
   - An organizational unit with this role may also provide resources.

3. Resource Provider (Only)
   - An organizational unit with no jurisdictional authority or responsibilities but has resources to support the interagency incident management community.
   - To be assigned this role, the organizational unit must not fit into an Incident Host Role.

4. Incident Support Organization Function
   - **Dispatch/Coordination Center**
     - An organizational unit responsible for initial attack dispatching, coordination of communications, intelligence gathering and dissemination, and logistical support for local incidents and field operations for their respective organizational unit e.g., Local Dispatch or Command Center.
     - OR
     - An organizational unit responsible for managing the effective coordination, mobilization, and demobilization of emergency management resources for their respective organizational unit e.g., Geographic Area Coordination Center.
   - **Training Facility**
     - An organizational unit limited to a training center that coordinates the delivery of national or geographic area/regional training.
       - Local area organizations e.g., Ranger Districts or Field Offices will not be issued a Unit ID for the sole purpose of hosting a training. Those will likely be captured in another system i.e., OIS.
       - Training facilities support an interagency effort; however, their organizational unit will be associated to the agency they are funded by.
   - **Incident Supply Cache (Fire/Radio Cache)**
     - An organizational unit representing a facility where tools, equipment, and/or supplies are stored and made available for incident use through the national ordering system.
       - Local area’s organizations, i.e., Ranger Districts or Field Offices local caches will not be issued a Unit ID unless other units can order from them.
       - Incident supply/radio caches support an interagency effort; however, their organizational unit will be associated to the agency they are funded by.
6. **Organizational Unit Code**

The organizational unit code is three to four alpha-numeric characters specific to a unit existing within the agency’s official organizational structure. The organizational unit code identifies the unit within the interagency incident management community in a common manner.

The organizational unit code should be assigned in a manner that makes it generally recognizable and applicable as an abbreviation of the unit’s name. For land-based protection or jurisdictional units:

- All proposed Tribal Sovereign Nation Unit Identifiers should end with a T.
- All proposed DOI BIA Unit Identifiers should end with an A.
- All proposed DOI BLM Unit Identifiers should end with a D.
- All proposed DOI NPS Unit Identifiers should end with a P.
- All proposed DOI FWS Unit Identifiers should end with a R.
- All proposed DOI BOR Unit Identifiers should end with a L.
- All proposed USDA USFS Unit Identifiers should end with a F.
- All proposed Department of Defense Unit Identifiers should end with a Q.
- All proposed State Unit Identifiers should end with an S or a U.
- All proposed County and Local Government Unit Identifiers shall strive to end with an X, M, or an N.
- All proposed Caches should end with a K.
- All proposed dispatch centers/coordination centers should end a C.

7. **Geographic Area (Name)**

The organizational unit’s geographic area name that identifies a boundary designated by governmental agencies (wildland fire protection agencies) within which they work together for the interagency, intergovernmental planning, coordination, and operations leadership for the effective utilization of emergency management resources within their area.

8. **Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC)**

The organizational unit’s GACC is the physical location of an interagency, regional operation center for the effective coordination, mobilization, and demobilization of emergency management resources. A coordination center serves federal, state, and local wildland fire agencies through logistical coordination of resources throughout the geographic area, and with other geographic areas, as well.

9. **Address**

The organizational unit’s address will reflect the physical location of the headquarters. Headquarters is defined as the center of operations for the unit.

Required Fields:

- Street – not post-office box
- City
- State/Province/Territory – this field determines the Country Subdivision Code
- Zip Code
- Country
10. Latitude/Longitude
The organizational unit Latitude/Longitude will reflect the geometry of the physical location of the headquarters. Data can be entered in any format (Decimal Degrees, Degrees/Minutes, Degrees/Minute/Seconds, etc.)

11. Organizational Unit Phone (Phone)
The organizational unit phone will reflect the phone number for the main line of the physical location of the headquarters.

12. Organizational Unit Email (Email)
The organizational unit email is optional; however, if organizational unit email is included, the agency will use an appropriate email which reflects the administrative individual with responsibility over the Unit Identifier and associated information.

Processes for Maintaining Unit Identifiers

Creating, Modifying, and Deactivating a Unit Identifier
At the unit level, a user submits a written request for a new, modification, or deactivation of a Unit Identifier to their GACC Custodian representative for consideration. Some agencies may have additional specific processes outlined where the unit level must seek agency approval prior to submitting a request to the GACC Custodian. Agency specific supplements can be found on NWCG UIB website at https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/unit-identifier-board.

GACC Custodians have the responsibility to ensure respective agency internal decision-making processes have been adhered to prior to acting within the SOR. The GACC Custodian is also responsible for entering the requests into the SOR in advance of the UIB monthly meeting the third week of every month.

Prior to deactivating a Unit Identifier, organizations shall contact the UIB Chair or Co-Chair. There may be resources associated to the Unit ID in Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) or the qualification systems which need to be distributed to an alternate new or existing Unit ID prior to deactivation. Deactivating a dispatch center Unit Identifier requires additional considerations and notifications to address Virtual Incident Procurement (ViPR) resources because the awards will need to be relocated. The process can take several months and communication with the UIB should be initiated well in advance of the proposed deactivation date.

The chair and co-chair have the responsibility to publish decisions from the UIB in a timely manner. Upon completion, the chair/co-chair will notify the GACC Custodian and extended community of the approvals/rejections or additional conversations needed. UIB chair and co-chair have final approval authority. They will refer any proposals in opposition to established business rules and practices to the DMC chair and co-chair for their assessment. In these circumstances, business rules may be reevaluated, updated, and documented if deemed necessary.

Deleting a Unit Identifier and Associated Information
The Unit Identifier System provides an historical record of all Unit Identifiers. Organizational units that no longer exist are archived, and rarely deleted. The rationale is to maintain historical integrity of Unit Identifiers. Although the unit no longer exists, there is a need to maintain the Unit Identifier for
historical reporting and records management purposes. If the incorrect Unit Identifier and/or associated information is published in error, the chair and co-chair possess the roles to delete.

**Unit Identifiers and Integrated Applications**

Wildland fire applications utilize Unit Identifiers and/or associated information. They are required to utilize the most current, approved, published Unit Identifiers reflected in the SOR’s Rest API Reports. At a minimum, applications should update the Unit Identifiers in their system once a month to ensure they have the most current list. A best practice is to update Unit Identifiers at the beginning of a month to catch any changes made at the UIB meeting. This is especially important for applications in the Integrated Reporting of Wildland Fire Information (IRWIN) data exchange environment.

Contact the chair or co-chair if an issue with a specific Unit Identifier and/or associated information is identified. They will advise the UIB of the situation and solicit consensus with a quorum before action is taken within the SOR. Depending on urgency, this may be accomplished during the monthly meeting, by convening a special session or email correspondence. Once action is taken, the chair/co-chair will notify the user/application and the GACC Custodians. Unit Identifier Points of Contact are located on the UIB website at [https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/unit-identifier-board](https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/unit-identifier-board).

**Access Unit Identifiers**

To access Unit Identifiers, go to [https://unitid.nifc.gov/](https://unitid.nifc.gov/), select Agree to accept the Terms of Service Statement and Application Terms of Use.
The *NWCG Standards for Unit Identifiers*, PMS 931, is developed and maintained by the Unit Identifier Board (UIB), under the direction of the Data Management Committee (DMC), an entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

Previous editions: None.

While they may still contain current or useful information, previous editions are obsolete. The user of this information is responsible for confirming that they have the most up-to-date version. NWCG is the sole source for the publication. Prior to 2022, the PMS 931 was used for the NWCG Unit Identifier Report.

This publication is available electronically at https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/931.

Submit comments, questions, and recommendations to the appropriate agency program manager assigned to the UIB using the NWCG Publication Review Form, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/publication-review-form. View the complete roster at https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/unit-identifier-board/roster.

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