

## MEMORANDUM

To: Nina Hatfield  
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Budget and Finance, Department of the Interior

Dale Bosworth  
Chief, USDA Forest Service

From: Tim Hartzell  
Director, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, Department of the Interior

Corbin Newman  
National Fire Plan Coordinator, USDA Forest Service

Subject: Standardizing Fire Incident Project Codes

This memorandum outlines results of an interagency effort to standardize Forest Service and Department of the Interior fire incident management financial management codes. The effort resulted in a number of recommendations. We request your approval of the recommendations, as outlined in this memorandum.

### Background

As a result of the interagency efforts to respond to Congressional direction to standardize fire incident financial coding across all Federal National Fire Plan agencies. A work group of fire operations and budget and finance representatives from the Forest Service and the four Interior firefighting bureaus (Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service), chaired by the OWFC, met in November to respond to direction from the House Appropriations Subcommittee. The House language, to which the Senate is expected to recede, follows.

*“...the Committee directs the agencies to establish standard coding practices and procedures for fire suppression activities beginning in fiscal year 2003. The Committee expects the agencies to develop a protocol that would work in each financial system and be followed by each agency. The protocol should provide clear, standard instructions for assigning cost codes to be used for each fire event. The protocol should be well understood and uniformly used by fire management and finance officers in each agency. The agencies will be expected to produce reports promptly when requested by the Committee.”*

Currently, each of the four Interior firefighting bureaus and the Forest Service use a different cost coding protocol in their respective financial systems to identify the costs of fire suppression incidents. This has caused significant difficulty in determining the full costs of multi-jurisdictional fires. The mission of the work group was to settle all of the FFS and other issues related to adoption of a common coding protocol. The group has succeeded in designing a system that will work with each financial system and facilitate the collection of obligated costs for individual or multi-jurisdictional fires. The system can be fully implemented in all five finance systems beginning in fiscal year 2004. The interagency group makes the following recommendations.

#### Recommendations

- A four character alpha-numeric code will be established for every fire incident that is to incur costs. This centrally managed Fire Incident Financial Project/Job Code will be the universal financial project/job code used to code all fire suppression activity. Each code will have at least one letter and up to three numbers. This is necessary to avoid conflicts with all-alpha and all-numeric project codes used by some of the agencies.
- The same code will be used by all five agencies for their costs related to a specific fire. For example, a fire may be designated as K14B; every agency would use that same project code in their finance systems to record costs associated with that fire.
- The same project/job codes will be used for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation costs related to each fire incident.
- An internet website will be created for the assignment of project/job codes. Designated individuals (e.g. dispatch officers) will request codes using a simple online form. The system will automatically generate a code for the incident.
- The website will host a searchable database so that others will be able to find the code for any given incident.
- A contractor, under the auspices of the OWFC and the Forest Service national fire program office, will design the system by March 31, 2003.
- The website and system will be maintained at a central location.
- All Interior Bureaus and the Forest Service will fully implement this standard protocol on October 1, 2003, the beginning of FY 2004. Each agency and bureau finance system will be modified as necessary to accommodate the new project/job coding protocol.
- The fire incident financial project/job code will not replace the fire incident order number assigned by the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).
- The fire project/job code system will be compatible with ROSS, with the eventual goal of being incorporated as a component of ROSS.
- An implementation team representing all affected functional areas and systems will oversee the deployment and training.
- Each bureau/agency will tailor training the needs of their employee users.

The points of contact for the development and implementation of the protocol will be:  
Forest Service - Harry Croft, Deputy, State and Private Forestry, 202-205-1657  
Interior - Scott Dalzell, Budget Officer, OS-OWFC, 202-606-0509  
IT Project Manager - Elyse Turkeltaub, Interior OS-OWFC, 202-606-0518

The other contributing participants of the work group who will continue on as members of the implementation team are:

Michael Brionez, FS Regional Office Budget, 707-562-9020  
Dave Curry, BLM Alaska GACC, 907-356-5677  
Mary B. Goode, FS NIFC Incident Business Advisor, 208-387-5608  
Gary Grimstvedt, BLM Finance Center, 303-236-6347  
Sally Hampton, Interior OS-OWFC, 202-6-6-3206  
Mike Honnick, FWS National Finance Center, 303-984-6817  
Paul Head, NPS Fire Management Officer, 617-223-5067  
Tory Majors, FS NIFC, Incident Business Advisor, 208-387-5608  
Jonathan Manski, BLM, BICC Center Manager, 541-573-4546  
Maggie Moran, NIFC-BIA, 208-387-5370  
Dallas Murray, FS Boise National Forest, 208-387-4119  
Terry O'Connell, BLM Fire Specialist 208-387-5883  
Rick Squires, NICC, 208-387-5400  
Mike Wallace, BIA Fire Specialist, 208-387-5576  
Bill Webber, Interior OS-PFM, 202-208-5684  
Kathy Winship, FWS Region 2 Regional Office, 505-248-7486

Please indicate your approval or disapproval of the recommendations by signing below. Questions and comments regarding these proposals may be directed to the points of contact or to either of us.

Department of the Interior:

<u>Nina Rose Hatfield /s/ 1-10-03</u>	_____	_____	_____
Approval	Date	Disapproval	Date

USDA Forest Service:

<u>Dale Bosworth /s/ 1-09-03</u>	_____	_____	_____
Approval	Date	Disapproval	Date

Forest Service Addendum - The Forest Service will aggregate A, B, C, D fires by National Forest where there are no claims or reimbursements involved, and assign all larger fires an individual Job Code. Other code prefixes such as P, W, H remain in place. This memo will be replaced by an Interim Directive as soon as possible.

cc: Mary Sally Matiella, CFO, USDA Forest Service  
John Trezise, Director of Budget, Department of the Interior



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fire Suppressions Operations Project Coding  
Results**

November 20-21, 2002

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- Fire Project Code Scheme Standardized
  - All Bureau's will have a standard fire project code scheme
    - For any multi-jurisdictional fire in which federal firefighting resources are involved, a single, unique code will be used by all agencies.
  - Codes will be easily tabulated and summarized among DOI Bureau's and the USDA Forest Service
    - By merging DOI project codes and FS' P-codes, a total fire cost will be determined.

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• Project/Job Codes for each Bureau or USDA Forest Service

Bureau	Organization	Activity/ Subactivity	Program/ Work Element	Project Code/ Job Code
BLM	XX-XXX State-Orig	XXXX Subactivity	XX Prog Element	XXXX Proj Code
NPS	XXXX	XX-XX Fund-Activity	XXX Work Element	XXXX Proj Code
FWS	X-X-XXX Reg-Prog-Station	XXXX Subactivity		XXXX Proj Code
BIA	XXXXXX Organization Code	XXXXX Program		XXXXXXXX Alpha Code-CY- Incident #
USDA Forest Service	XX-XX-XXXX FS-State-RegUnit	XXXX Fund Code	XXXX Program	X-X-XXXX P-Region-Forest Job Code

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- 4 character FFS project/job codes for fire incidents will be assigned centrally, with an additional 4 available for individual agency use for fires of all sizes
  - Codes will be alpha-numeric
    - There needs to be a protocol for assignment of the alpha-numeric codes
    - All codes must have at least one (up to three numeric) (cannot be all alpha – BLM constraints)
  - Codes will be centrally managed
    - NICC (National Interagency Coordination Center) will be responsible for centrally assigning the codes and interfacing with program personnel
    - Office of Wildland Fire Coordination will work with NICC to develop the web page and data management of codes(Elyse)
  - Access
    - There needs to be a protocol for:
      - website access to request project codes
      - website access to review the data (not change)
      - Access when website is unavailable.

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FY2003 Implementation Considerations:

- Mismatch of numbers during FY03
- Training for Fire employees
  - Dispatch Offices for code assignment
- Reconcile with other reporting systems?
- Forest Service: Financial folks want to reduce the number of codes used.
  - Within the FS, person picking the code will enter it into the the FFS.

•Suppression: Code for Miscellaneous & Other select costs (9999) that cannot be assigned to a fire

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•Suppression: Code for Miscellaneous & Other select costs (999\*) that cannot be assigned to a fire will be determined in advance.

- Codes will be taken off of the "pick list"
  - All codes will start with 999\* (\* = alpha)

Potentially Covers:

- Mobilization (non-aviation)
- Dispatch
- Stores
- Labor
- Payment Centers
- AD Training
- Aviation
- Other for individual Bureaus

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- Implementation date to go live: October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 (FY2004)
- Memo to announce results of this working group sent by December 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - Keep same working group
    - Add Elyse Turkeltaub
    - Add IT Specialists (including ROSS Tm Members) and keep current Team Members
  - Recommendations of this group
  - Assistant Secretaries Signatures
- Congressional & OMB Notification
- Systems Integration & Set-up
  - Identify Team Members by December 15, 2002 (Fire Directors & Chiefs, Bureau Directors assign)
    - Impact on existing reporting systems
  - Access to system (security)
- Develop Pick List
  - Identify Codes and conflicts by February 28, 2003
  - Protocol for assigning numbers into each FFS is the prerogative of individual Bureau/Agency

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### Training

- Communication Plan to announce changes
  - National Fire Plan Coordination meeting in January
- Generic Instructions from Secretarial level finalized by March 31, 2003
- Training responsibility of Bureaus & Agencies
  - Each will tailor training to their needs
  - Prior to FY2004

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### •Automatic Date/Time

Reporting or Data Entry

Incident Name (optional entry) and/or

Incident Location (optional entry) and/or

Incident Order Number (optional entry)

State

Unit ID

Fire Incident Financial Project/Job Code (will appear)

X Click here to accept and obtain printable screen

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- Decision to use the *Fire Incident Financial Project/Job Code* for Suppression & Rehabilitation
  - Preparedness (use of code is up to individual Bureaus)
  - Could later be expanded for other incidents (floods, spills, etc.)
- Data needs to be searchable. From the same screen
- Requires one or more of the optional fields (name, location and incident #) must be entered
- Editable fields for incident name, location and number at future time.
  - Editing can only be performed by originating organization

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