



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.
 - 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
Program Management Unit (PMU)
Budget Advisory Unit (BAU) Chair
Roy Johnson, OWFC Deputy Director
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Effects to Consider When Incidents Complex, Merge or Split
NWCG#014-2011 Memorandum - Attachment A

#	Scenario	Issue	Effect					
			ROSS	I-Suite	FireCode	IMT	ICBS-R	ICS-209
1	Multiple IMTs Managing one Incident	Have one incident and FireCode number being shared by two IMTs	Minimal effect - can block resource order numbers and select specific delivery location	Two separate databases with same incident number - can create duplicate invoices	No effect	Creates extra step for resource ordering and the ROSS import process	One instance of incident in database with multiple delivery locations. All financial transactions will be to one incident order and one fire code.	One 209 created.
2	One IMT managing multiple incidents	The incidents are complexed	Utilize complex function, not merge. This creates a complex incident with subordinate incidents. The subordinate incidents maintain their integrity.	One database with parent complex code and multiple incidents being managed one	When establishing the complex code, need to associate incidents within that complex	Simplifies ordering and reporting (if ordering by complex). Complicates separating costs per incident.	Supply resources will have to be ordered and tracked per incident. Or all supply resources are ordered with the complex incident and fire code.	1) Create separate 209 for each incident within the complex. 2) One 209 for the complex may be created. Incidents with individual 209s should finalize those 209s. IMT may elect to use one pre-existing incident 209 (and the same incident number), or create a new one (with new incident number).
3	One IMT managing multiple incidents	The incidents were not complexed	Resources need to be ordered on specific incident	(1) If handle under one database, difficult to manually separate out (2) Issue of managing multiple databases	One FireCode for each incident	Required to separate resources	Minimal effect if ordering is kept separate	Create a separate 209 for each incident.
4	One IMT managing multiple incidents - Two or more incidents have merged (burned together)	Handle merged fires as separate fires	No effect	No effect	No effect - separate codes maintained	No effect - challenge is managing the acreage split & costs	Supply resources will have to be ordered and tracked per incident.	Continue to report separate on individual 209s.
5	One IMT managing multiple incidents - Two or more incidents have merged (burned together)	Handle merged fires as single fire	Merge fires in system: Choose primary incident, other incident(s) merge into primary - Generates new resource order numbers to non-primary incident resources. Cannot electronically split back out once merged.	Demob resources from non-primary fires and add to primary fire with new resource numbers. If merged in database, cannot split back out without a lot of manual work.	No effect - code from primary fire utilized	Accommodate for new resource order numbers and may still track fires individually	No effect as long as ROSS has merged the incidents and passed information to ICBS	Aggregate merged fires on one 209. If each fire has an existing 209, finalize one 209 and use the other for the new merged fire (indicate merge in Remarks on both 209 for cross referencing).

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#	Scenario	Issue	Effect					
			ROSS	I-Suite	FireCode	IMT	ICBS-R	ICS-209
6	Multiple incidents managed by one IMT to now be managed by multiple IMTs - maintaining integrity of individual fires	Not complexed - same FireCode and Incident Numbers are maintained	No effect	If fires are in one database, very difficult to split into separate databases.	No effect	No effect	No effect	IMTs continue process of 209 submission for each fire without interruption.
7	Reorganization or split of a complex or incident, multiple IMTs	Various options and combinations of data management (Issue: Lose the integrity of individual fires and creates issues through all the systems)	Can accommodate moving an incident in or out of another complex or incident	If fires are in one database, very difficult to split into separate databases. Difficult to keep historic integrity once the database is separated out.	If a new FireCode is created, should document the updates. Any changes to complexes and associated fires.	Not difficult	Will need individual incident number and fire code to process supply requests.	Complicated for 209 reporting. A split of one fire under multiple IMTs: initiate new 209 for one of the fires (assuming a 209 already exists for the pre-split fire). Indicate split on both 209s. A split of a complex, multiple IMTs: fires that previously had individual 209s should reactivate those 209s under their original incident numbers. Or initiate new 209s under new incident numbers if none existed previously.
8	Loaning resources among IMTs	Various options and combinations of resource and data management (Issue: Communication between teams on reporting time and costs - tracking costs)	Should be reassigned	Demob resource. If resource is not reassigned, setup the correct incident in existing database and report costs to other IMT.	No effect	Reluctant to reassign due to losing direct control of resource	Will be unable to credit or charge for refurb of items that were loaned to another incident using the 'loaned' incidents financial code. Would be better to reassign or transfer	Add and subtract resources from among the sharing fires on the 209 for each incident.
9	Incident(s) or Complex(s) crossing geographic areas	Multiple dispatch centers (Issue: Which geographic area and dispatch center is hosting the incident)	Assign to one geographic center and expanded dispatch - When the incident is returned to local jurisdiction make sure it is returned to original dispatch center	No effect	Do not create a new FireCode when fire crosses jurisdictional boundaries - One FireCode per incident	No effect	No effect as long as the incident order and fire code does not change.	Two GA's may agree to split the incident between them. The IMT must submit a new 209 to the new GACC (will require a new incident number, but not necessarily a new incident name). Acres, resources, costs, etc., must also be split accordingly. <i>The two geographic areas need to coordinate reporting burned acres by ownership on each GA's respective Situation Reports (done by the local dispatch centers).</i>