# BLM Guidance on Creation and Use of Fire Codes

This document provides guidance for the proper use of fire codes at all levels of the BLM fire organization. There are four general types of fire codes used in the BLM for wildland fire management: incident-specific codes, multiple incident support codes, severity codes, and special use codes.

## A. Incident-Specific Codes

Dispatch offices should generate a fire code for each BLM fire within their jurisdiction. Dispatch offices generate four-digit alpha-numeric fire codes for wildland fires using the FireCode web application. As fire codes are generated, they are uploaded nightly into the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) creating a suppression work breakdown structure (WBS). There are no additional requirements for BLM finance offices to enter these codes into the financial system.

The dispatch office generating a fire code will provide the code to resources responding to the fire and to other dispatch units providing resources, and will include the code on all resource orders generated for that fire. If a BLM unit receives a request from another federal wildland fire agency or dispatch office to provide initial attack resources to a fire, the code will be provided by the requesting agency or dispatch office.

If a dispatch office receives a request from a non-federal entity to provide support to a non-federal fire covered by an approved Annual Operating Plan, the dispatch office will access FireCode to assign a code to the fire. This code will be used by all federal wildland fire agencies that provide support to that fire. However, if no federal resources are being utilized and no federal lands are affected, a FireCode should not be generated.

For BLM, each false alarm will be assigned a separate fire code.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) generally assigns one fire code per forest for all fires smaller than 300 acres and all false alarms. The BLM will use that code rather than generate a separate fire code for each separate USFS incident.

### Appropriate Use of Incident-Specific Codes
Incident-specific fire codes are appropriately used under the following circumstances:

- Resources and personnel working on an incident, directly supporting an incident (e.g. expanded dispatch), or repairing damage resulting from fire management activities.
- Resources and personnel ordered because of anticipated need for the incident (including extension at the end of shift).
- Resources and personnel refurbishing equipment after returning from an incident (e.g. fire personnel washing hose, cleaning equipment, sharpening tools).

**Do not use an incident-specific code to backfill behind a resource or personnel sent to a fire.**

**B. Multiple-Incident Support Codes**

During fire season, when fire activity is high, some fire management personnel can be called upon to perform work that supports multiple fires simultaneously.  Support codes are fire codes set up at the local or geographic area level for use by resources and personnel supporting multiple existing incidents, when it is difficult to identify a specific incident to charge against. Support codes must only be used for suppression-appropriate charges, and must not be used for charges appropriately charged to specific incidents, to severity, or to preparedness.

BLM state offices will maintain lists of authorized codes in use in their states and monitor expenditures charged to these authorized codes. Review of support code expenditures will become part of national preparedness reviews. Use of support codes should be limited to the following:

**Appropriate Use of Multiple-Incident Support Codes**

Multiple-incident support codes are appropriately used under the following circumstances, only if it is not feasible to charge expenditures to a specific incident:

- Resources and personnel working in support of multiple existing incidents (e.g. dispatchers, managers, staging area managers, caches, and aircraft).
- Resources and personnel ordered in anticipation of being used on any of a series of existing incidents (including extensions at the end of shift) with the understanding that they will be moved to an actual fire as soon as they are assigned.  This is a very short term option.
- Personnel time for dispatchers, warehouse/cache workers, support staff, and Administratively Determined (AD/casual) employees should be broken into blocks and charged to specific fire codes when practical, even when supporting multiple fires.  When hours cannot be broken out and charged to specific fire codes, a support code may be used.
- Utility costs (telephones, sewer, water, electricity, fuel, etc.) *above normally occurring costs* that are incurred in direct suppression support should be charged to specific fire codes.
- Emergency equipment, rental vehicles (i.e., forklifts, rental cars), and government-owned or leased vehicle mileage in support of multiple fires may be charged to a support code. Vehicle costs associated with deliveries to specific fires should be charged to the incident-specific fire code.
- Flight detection over multiple fires intended to monitor the need to place resources can be charged to a support code.
- Cell phone costs above the monthly or annual recurring costs when they are identifiable.

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- Expenses may be temporarily obligated to a support code when insufficient time or information exists to determine the correct specific fire code. These expenses must be de-obligated and charged to specific fire codes when the payment is processed.
- States must coordinate with the FAD Budget and Evaluation Staff prior to obligating or making payment for any support code expenditure over $100,000.

**Do Not use a support code for:**

- Backfill behind a resource sent to a fire.
- Expenses not directly related to suppression.
- Expenses that should be charged to severity.
- Expenses related to the pre-positioning of resources (when no fires currently exist).
- Billable fire expenses (any fire BLM will need to track separately to seek reimbursement of costs).
- Normal default cost structure for any government employee charge card or any vehicle charge card. Charge cards should default to the normal funding code of the individual's program.
- Monthly/annual cell or satellite phone base costs.
- Lease/Rental of government facilities that are used for regular government business (i.e., dispatch center, warehouses, etc.).
- Exclusive use aircraft daily availability. Daily availability for call-when-needed (CWN) aircraft and flight hour costs in direct support of multiple fires is to be broken out for individual legs between fires.
- Monthly charges for government owned or leased vehicles.
- Funding fire investigation costs. If fire investigation costs will be incurred beyond the two year period for charging to the fire code, a request for extension should be made through the National Operations Center (NOC).
- Base funding for BLM employees whose base 8 hours are covered by preparedness funds.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has its own policy regarding creating and use of support codes. If BLM resources are ordered using a support code from another agency, we will honor that code and use it as they request it to be used.

**Review of Support Code Use**

State offices are responsible for monitoring support code charges in FBMS for their set of authorized support codes. To ensure compliance with BLM direction on support code use, state offices and the Fire and Aviation Directorate (FAD), Budget and Evaluation office will annually review support code expenditures.

## C. National and State Director Severity

Severity is the preferred method to move and support resources in advance of fire activity. By definition, incident-specific or multiple-incident support codes require the expenditures are going against an existing fire or multiple existing fires. Severity funds are used to move and support resources and personnel because of general fire conditions, as supported by a severity request to the national office, or by a short term event.

**National Severity**

National agency fire directors or their delegates are authorized to allocate fire severity funding under specific conditions, tied to anticipated fire activity that will exceed the capabilities of local resources, fire seasons that start earlier or last longer than normal, or abnormal increases in fire potential or danger not planned for in existing preparedness plans. The BLM will use fire code numbers for all severity activities. The FAD will assign codes for BLM severity activities.

When the BLM assists other DOI agencies, BLM will use the fire code provided by the requesting DOI agency. BLM will not assign a new fire code. Because the USFS does not use FireCode to assign severity numbers, the FAD has created one fire code (LFSRD0YY0000) for all severity assistance BLM provides to the USFS.

**State Director Severity**

Each fiscal year, FAD provides each state with funding and a severity code for state level short-term severity needs (e.g. wind events, cold dry front passage, lightning events, and unexpected events such as off-road rallies) that are expected to last less than one week. Expenditure of these funds is authorized by the state director at the written request of the agency administrator. State directors are responsible and accountable for ensuring these funds are used only to meet severity funding objectives and that amounts are not exceeded.

## D. Pre-Positioning Funds

Units may request national preposition funding to acquire supplemental fire operations assets. National preposition funding may be used to mobilize resources when BLM units:

- Do not have available preparedness funding
- Do not have available short-term severity funding; or
- Do not meet the criteria for use of national severity funding

Approved national preposition funding may be used only for aviation, travel and per diem costs for the duration of the assignment, and overtime labor costs associated with the original move. FAD will assign the funding code for prepositioning activities.

The National Pre-Positioning request process can be found at
http://web.blm.gov/internal/fire/fire_ops/toolbox_preposition.htm

## E. Special Use Codes

The FAD has set up several special WBS's for use with the suppression account. These codes have specific uses and restrictions, set forth in IM's and IB's.

**LF.SP.99990000**

The use of this code is authorized under the following circumstances:

- Caches may use LF.SP.99990000 to procure generic boxes and packing materials intended for multiple fire support.

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- Fire support re-supply for local (non-stores) caches should be charged to specific fire codes. When this is not feasible, LF.SP.99990000 may be used.
- Refurbishment costs for fire returns should be charged to the specific fire code of the original incident.
- Shipping costs between caches should be charged to the ordering cache using specific fire codes. When this is not feasible, LF.SP.99990000 may be used.
- Offices may consolidate LF2000000.HU0000 charges on the fiscal year-end obligation for Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) charges and use LF.SP.99990000 with the individual office code. Individual OAS payment documents will be paid against the specific fire number shown.
- States must coordinate with the Fire and Aviation Budget and Evaluation Staff prior to obligating or making payment for any LF.SP.99990000 expenditures over $100,000.

### LF.SP.44440000

A unique WBS, LF.SP.44440000, has been established to help states and units manage their fire travel expenditures. LF.SP.44440000 can be used as a default code for personnel on Incident Management Teams and/or whose travel is at least 80 percent in response to wildland fire incidents. This does not eliminate the need to adjudicate credit card charges from the default code to the actual fire code. FAD monitors this account as the year comes to a close and will notify offices if charges are not adjusted out of the default. Any default codes changed to utilize the coding above must be returned to the Preparedness default by October 31.

### LF.SP.77770000

Fire support, re-supply and shipping costs for the caches at NIFC, Alaska Fire Service, and Billings, MT should be charged to the fire stores account LF.SP.77770000. The caches should charge National Fire Equipment System (NFES) numbered cartons to the fire stores account as well. These three caches are the only units in the BLM authorized to charge to the fire stores account.

### LF.SP.AZA10000

Training of Casual Hires (ADs): Suppression operation funds are to be used for operational costs directly associated with the preparation, delivery or support of emergency incident related training for emergency firefighter crews and support personnel (single resource casual). Allowable operational costs are limited to:

1. Casual wages for attending emergency incident training.
2. Training materials.
3. Transportation of casual and regular government personnel including commercial transportation, contract transportation, government aircraft.
4. Regular government employee overtime when training is predominantly for casuals.

5. Casual travel expenses (per diem) and regular government employee travel expenses (only when the purpose of the training is predominantly put on for casuals.) Regular government employees using AZA1 and suppression funds for travel expenses should be documented and forwarded to the state incident business lead when it occurs.

Regular government employees cannot charge base salary to LF2000000.HT000 LF.SP.AZA10000, but may use project number LF.SP.AZA10000 with their normal base funding code (i.e., LF1000000.HT000 LF.SP.AZA10000) to facilitate tracking casual training costs.

## F. Backfill

Backfill is defined as utilizing suppression funding to compensate for lack of resources at a station/district/duty location as a result of fire activity, either on the unit or off the unit. Charging backfill to a local or off-unit fire code is not permitted. Pre-positioning of resources and shift extensions are not considered backfill if these actions are taken because of anticipated need on an existing local incident, whether they eventually are used on the incident or not.

If local conditions are such that replacement personnel are needed to cover preparedness or suppression workload because employees are on fire assignment, these replacement personnel must charge to an appropriate account, not to the fire the original personnel responded to. A person should only charge to a fire if the individual is working directly on or in support of the fire.

## G. Appropriate Timeframes for Charging to a Fire Code (Excluding Fire Trespass Expenses and State Assist Fire Expenses)

If a person is no longer working on a fire, in support of a fire, or refurbishing after a fire, they generally should not be coding to that incident's fire code. On occasion, expenditures to a fire code could occur well after the incident is controlled, such as when staff makes fire-related payments or warehouse personnel refurbish equipment long after the fire is deemed out. Replacement of fire-damage items, based on an S#, can also occur long after a fire is controlled. In such cases, the S# authorization should be utilized within 6 months after the incident is declared out. If circumstances arise where this time frame cannot be met, approval must be received by the state incident business lead prior to using the S#.