



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC 20240

## Memorandum

To: Regional Directors  
Attention: Agency Superintendents  
Regional Fire Management Officers  
Agency Fire Management Officers

Through: Deputy Bureau Director, Field Operations

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Bureau of Indian Affairs and Tribal Wildland Fire Unit Identifiers

Purpose: This memorandum provides policy to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Regional and Agency offices on the creation and management of Unit Identifiers (Unit ID) for BIA and Tribal fire and emergency response organizations that are participant in the interagency incident management community. The policy is in alignment with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Standards for Unit Identifiers (PMS 931) at <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pms931.pdf>.

Background: The BIA, along with other Federal, State, Tribal, and Municipal emergency response organizations utilize a standardized Unit ID process that associates with various emergency response applications and systems. The BIA and the members of the NWCG adopt the standards defined in PMS 931.

Unit IDs are a fundamental element for the incident management community and provide a common identification process. The Unit ID links to many wildland fire management systems such as but not limited to: Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC), Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD), Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS), Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules (InFORM), Integrated Reporting of Wildland Fire Information (IRWIN), FireCode System, Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards systems, Wildland Fire Application Information Portal (SIT-209), and many more. Unit IDs are also applied to wildland fire apparatus, equipment, and vehicles in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1906: Standard for Wildland Fire Apparatus.

In accordance with PMS 931, standards are defined for Unit ID creation, management, and use for each organization, which includes BIA and Tribal government emergency response organizations. The BIA currently utilizes Unit IDs that end in "A", and many Tribal fire and emergency response organizations use the BIA's Unit IDs that end in "A". Also, some Tribal fire and emergency response organizations have been approved to create and use Unit IDs that end in various letters which do not comply with PMS 931.

Policy: This memorandum directs the BIA Regional and Agency Offices to adhere to PMS 931 for Unit IDs and ensure Tribal fire and emergency response organizations adhere to PMS 931. The BIA Regional and Agency Offices shall restrict the use of Unit IDs that end in "A" to BIA use only and ensure that role identification in all applicable systems are corrected to adhere with PMS 931. All BIA Regional Offices will operate under the Non-Land-Based role except if the Regional Office has jurisdictional authority in

lieu of a BIA Agency Office in which case they would operate under the Incident Host, Jurisdictional Unit, and Protecting Unit roles at a minimum. A Regional Office that has jurisdictional authority may not operate under the Incident Host or Protecting Unit role if protection is formally delegated to another protecting entity. All BIA Agencies with Federal Trust Land jurisdiction will operate under the Incident Host, Jurisdictional Unit, and Protecting Unit roles at a minimum. Other roles may apply based on organizational responsibilities and operation. A BIA Agency may not operate under the Incident Host or Protecting Unit role if protection is formally delegated to another protecting entity. Incident Host and Protecting Unit references an organization that has response, management, and financial responsibility for incidents.

Effective January 1, 2025, Tribal fire and emergency response organizations will no longer utilize any Unit ID ending in any other letter except for "T". Exceptions are tribal caches that may end in "K" or Dispatch/Coordination Centers that may end in "C" if appropriately established in accordance with interagency standards. Tribal fire and emergency response organizations will need to follow appropriate protocol established in PMS 931 to correct or request new Unit IDs. Tribal fire and emergency response organizations will be required to ensure role identification in all applicable systems are corrected to adhere with PMS 931. Tribal fire and emergency response organizations that operate a wildland fire management program on behalf of the United States Government, and on Federal Trust Land will not have the Incident Host, Non-Land-Based, Jurisdictional Unit, or Protecting Unit roles. Those organizations will be considered a Resource Provider given they do not have jurisdictional authority on federal trust lands and are reimbursed and/or funded for their services, and the BIA ultimately maintains Inherent Federal Authority and Functions as defined in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations and other applicable BIA Policy documents. Tribal fire and emergency response organizations that operate a wildland fire management program not on behalf of the United States Government, are not funded by the BIA will operate under the roles that apply to their program, specifically Incident Host, Jurisdictional Unit, and/or Protecting Unit if the Tribe has formal authority in those roles such as but not limited to jurisdiction and protection of Tribal fee land or if protection is formally delegated to the tribal organization from another Jurisdictional Unit. Jurisdiction and Protection vary within each State, County, and Municipality regarding Fee Land and therefore needs to comply with those entities.

The BIA maintains a position on the NWCG Unit Identifier Board, which is responsible for the development of standards, management, and decision-making related to Unit IDs. Specifically, the BIA representative is the decision-making member for BIA and Tribal Unit IDs. The BIA representative will provide a list of Unit IDs for BIA and Tribal fire and emergency response organizations to the Regional Fire Management Officers by October 31, 2023. Any Unit IDs that are not in compliance with PMS 931 will be terminated by January 1, 2025. All new Unit ID creation or modification requests will be determined in accordance with PMS 931 and applicability to each organization's formal roles in interagency incident management.

If you have any questions, please contact Josh Simmons, Chief, Branch of Wildland Fire Operations, at (208) 387-5372 or Aaron Baldwin, Chief, Division of Wildland Fire Management, at (208) 387-5697.