# Discussion Paper – NWCG Data Standard
# EVENT KIND & EVENT CATEGORY

*November 17, 2003*

This document provides assumptions, rationale, clarifications, examples, or background related to this data standard. Refer to the "Event Kind & Event Category Standard Data Values" document for a listing of the draft standard data values.

*Event Kind* and *Event Category* are used to identify the types of incidents, projects, and planned events to which the wildland fire community responds. EVENT KIND provides a general, high-level description. EVENT CATEGORY breaks down the Event Kind into more specific event categories.

Many existing systems include a data field under names such as Incident Type, Incident Kind, Event Type, etc. There is no consistency in the way these fields are used. The Event Kind & Event Category data standard will provide a consistent data definition, business rules, and a formal change process. This data standard will identify logical kinds and categories for describing events to be used by all wildland fire systems for consistency in reporting.

This data standard proposal was developed by the Dispatch Efficiency Workgroup, members of the Intelligence Community, and members of the NWCG Data Administration Working Group.

## Assumptions:

1. Event Kind & Event Category are used by many of the business functional areas in the wildland fire community including: dispatch, planning, intelligence, resource qualifications, and fire management.
2. Event Kind & Event Category are needed to facilitate reporting by separating events into logical types.
3. Event Kinds & Categories must span the full-range of incidents (including all-risk) to which the wildland fire community responds in width and depth; therefore the Event Kinds & Event Categories should cover federal, state, county, and local needs.
4. "Homeland security" is not considered an Event Kind & Event Category -- it may be the reason for the event, but it does not describe the event. Existing generic kinds and categories should be used when identifying events related to homeland security.

## Business Rules:

1. Event Kinds & Event Categories should be representative of interagency, all-risk incidents, planned and unplanned projects and events.
2. All Event Categories must be mutually exclusive; no overlap between categories.
3. An Event Category must describe the Event; not an activity performed at the event, the cause, the type of resources needed, or who is responsible.

4. Event Categories and Event Kinds should be based on real-world needs. An Event Kind or Event Category should not be created if there will never be a need to produce reports for that category.
5. An Event may have only one Event Category and one Event Kind at a given time. However, over time, an event's category and kind may change. For example, an event may initially be reported with an Event Kind of "Prescribed Fire"; but could later become a "Wildfire" and then a "BAER" incident.
6. Event Categories and Event Kinds should be able to stand on their own; they should not be dependent upon information contained in other data fields. For example, changes to the fire cause or fiscal/budget codes should not require a change to the Event Category and Event Kind.

**Observations, Discussions, and Decisions:**

**Observation 1***:* The term 'Event' is not in line with current terminology. Many systems use the terms 'Incident Kind', or 'Incident Category'

Discussion:

The term 'incident' is defined as "an occurrence either human-caused or natural phenomenon, that requires action or support by emergency service personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or natural resources". An 'Event' is defined as "an occurrence of human-caused or natural phenomenon, planned or unplanned, that requires action by the wildland fire community." It is more appropriate to use the higher-level 'Event' term for this data item as it covers the full range of responses. In addition, the NWCG enterprise data model identifies this data entity as 'Event', which contains the sub-entities 'Incident' and 'Planned Event'.

The term 'type' is used in the wildland fire community to designate a certain level such as Type 1 Incident Management Team, Type 3 Engine. To maintain consistency, the usage of the word 'type' should be reserved for these designations.

*Decision:* The term 'Event" will be used as the generic description that includes both planned and unplanned events.

**Observation 2***:*  The Event Categories currently used by the various wildland fire systems contain a mixture of what happened, what type of response is needed, incident cause, and requesting organization.  This leads to ambiguous and confusing categories.  The team looked at the existing and proposed category names and asked the questions:  1) "What is the situation?"  If the category description didn't answer this question, the group determined whether the description was actually a cause, response, requesting organization, or other kind of descriptor.  The group then evaluated the description to identify the appropriate category. The following table provides the rationale and decision on certain topics:

| Category | Discussion | Decision |
|---|---|---|
| Agricultural | The 'Agricultural' description can be confusing when dealing with outbreaks that can affect humans, plants, and/or animals. When you ask the question, "What is the situation?" the answer may be:  "an outbreak of mad cow disease." which is a hazardous biological situation that affects both an agricultural livestock and humans. By keeping the event descriptor generic, the user will avoid placing the event into the wrong category.  To assist the user, we separated Hazardous Conditions into four sub-categories:  1) Biological or Toxic Conditions; 2) Flammable Gas, Oil, and other hazardous liquids; 3) Explosives or Electrical Danger; and 4) Radioactive Conditions.  These categories are aligned with FEMA's National Fire Administration incident categories. | • Use the 'Biological or Toxic Conditions' Event Category. |
| Law Enforcement | 'Law Enforcement' describes the activities to be performed or the requesting organization; not the type of event.  The 'Law Enforcement' category is ambiguous because a search and rescue event, medical, accident, or hazardous condition may all be initiated by law enforcement officials for which there are other event categories. | • Use the 'Public Assistance' Event Kind for events hosted by non-wildland fire agencies or general public that require resource support such as: incident management, security, or communications support.<br>• Use the 'Agency Program Support' Event Category for events hosted by a wildland fire agency's law enforcement program. |
| Mechanical Treatment | This is an activity or response, not a description of an event.  Mechanical treatment is an activity that could be performed on any of the wildland fire categories, except 'Wildland Fire Use'. | 'Mechanical Treatment' was excluded as an Event Category. |

| Category | Discussion | Decision |
|---|---|---|
| Medical | 'Medical' describes the type of response that is needed, not the type of event. This leads to confusion because natural disasters, fires, and hazardous conditions may also require medical response for which there are other event categories. | • Use the 'Accident' category for emergencies that require medical services. <br> • Use the 'Public Assistance" Event Kind for planned events requiring medical services, such as immunization events. |
| Mobilization, Preparedness, Preposition, Move Up and Cover | Although these are not really events, there is a need to identify activities that occur as a result of planned or existing event activity. The team merged these 'support activities' into one category. The group considered naming the category "Support Event", but it was decided that it would make more sense to the user community to use the more common terms. | • Use the 'Preparedness/Preposition/ Mobilization/Other Support' Event Category for all wildland fire support activities. |
| Multi-casualty | This is not an event – it describes the type of response needed. When you ask the question, "What happened?" it is probably some kind of accident. | • Use categories under the 'Accident' Event Kind. |
| Nuclear & Chemical | When you ask the question, "What is the situation?" the answer may be: "a nuclear blast" which is a hazardous condition caused by the release of radioactive particles into the environment for which the cause is a nuclear bomb. Another situation may be the release of dangerous chemicals; for which the cause is a tanker leak. To assist the user, we separated Hazardous Conditions into four sub-categories: 1) Biological or Toxic Conditions; 2) Flammable Gas, Oil, and other hazardous liquids; 3) Explosives or Electrical Danger; and 4) Radioactive Conditions. | • Use the 'Radioactive/Nuclear Conditions' Event Category. |
| Oil Spill | To assist the user, we separated Hazardous Conditions into four sub-categories: 1) Biological or Toxic Conditions; 2) Flammable Gas, Oil, and other hazardous liquids; 3) Explosives or Electrical Danger; and 4) Radioactive Conditions. These categories are aligned with FEMA's National Fire Administration incident categories. | • Use the 'Flammable Gas, Oil, and other Liquids Conditions' Event Category for oil spills. |
| Other | The analysis team did not want to include an 'Other' category. In the past, the 'Other' category caused errors in reporting because users used it as a catch-all instead of spending the time to place the event into the appropriate category. | • (No Event Kind or Category) |

| Category | Discussion | Decision |
|---|---|---|
| Planned Events | When you ask the question, "What is the situation?" 'Planned Event' indicates that the event is the result of a structured, planed approach to accomplishing a specific objective.  However, the term causes confusion because law enforcement and search & rescue events can also be planned events for which there are other event categories.  In addition, prescribed fires, prepositioning, and training events are planned events.  The team felt it was important to separate the planned events in support of an agency's mission from events hosted by external entities such as public service organizations or the general public. | • Use the 'Public Assistance' Event Kind for planned events hosted by non-wildland fire agencies or general public that require resource support such as: incident management, security, or communications.<br>• Use the 'Agency Program Support' Event Kind for planned events hosted by one of the wildland fire agency's other programs.<br>• Use 'Prescribed Fire' Event Category for management-ignited fires.<br>• Use 'Preparedness/Preposition/ Mobilization/Other Support' Event Category for planned events involving readiness activities. |
| Rehabilitation | There are three types of rehabilitative events:  1) emergency stabilization following a wildland fire, 2) non-emergency rehabilitation after a wildland fire; and 3) rehabilitation following another disaster other than wildland fire. | • Use the 'Emergency Stabilization/BAER' Event Category for emergency stabilization following a wildland fire.<br>• Use the 'Fire Rehabilitation' Event Category for rehabilitation after a wildland fire.<br>• Use the 'Agency Program Support' Event Kind for rehabilitation efforts in support of a wildland fire agency's non-fire programs (e.g. rehabilitation following a mudslide on Forest Service land).<br>• Use the 'Public Assistance' Event Kind for rehabilitation efforts, other than fire rehabilitation, that is hosted by a non-fire agency or a public service organization. |
| Transportation & Infrastructure | When you ask the question, "What is the situation?" the answer may be:  "a train collision" which belongs in the 'Accident' category.  Another example may be "a road blockage" which belongs in the 'Public Assistance' category. | • Use the 'Accident' Event Kind for any type of accident involving aircraft, automobile, trains, or watercraft.<br>• Use the 'Public Assistance' Event Kind for events requesting support for public roadways and infrastructure.<br>• Use the 'Search/Rescue/Recovery' Event Kind for missing aircraft or vessels. |

| Category | Discussion | Decision |
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| Wildland Fire | The NWCG definition for 'wildland fire' is: Any fire occurring on the wildlands, regardless of ignition source, damages or benefits.  The definition for 'wildfire' is: A fire occurring on wildland that is not meeting management objectives and thus requires a suppression response. | • Use the 'Wildfire' category for naturally ignited wildland fires that require emergency suppression response.<br>• Use the 'Wildland Fire Use' category for wildland fires that do not require emergency suppression response.<br>• Use the 'Prescribed Fire' category for management-ignited fires that do not require emergency suppression response. |
| Wildland Fire Budget Categories | It was suggested that budget categories such as Preparedness, suppression, fuels, and severity be used to describe wildland fire categories.  Use of budget categories is not advisable because:  1) these categories can change; 2) budget categories should be defined as a separate data element; 3) these categories do not describe "What is the situation?" and 4) these categories are used by the federal agencies and are not representative of the states' needs. | • Use the appropriate Event Category defined in the 'Fire' Event Kind. |