



The National Map Standards

Chapter XX: Standards for Content of Governmental Unit and Legal Entity Boundaries

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**U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey**

The National Map Standards
Standards for Content of Governmental Unit and Legal Entity Boundaries

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1 **1 Standards for Content of Governmental Unit and Legal Entity Boundaries**

2 **1.1 Objective**

3 The purpose of this standard is to establish content of geospatial base data that are consistent for all
4 governmental unit and legal entity boundaries maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey for the
5 Boundaries data theme of *The National Map*. It establishes content requirements for collection and
6 archival, and facilitates exchange and maintenance of geospatial boundary data.

7 **1.2 Scope**

8 This standard describes the base geographic content maintained in a national database of boundary data
9 for the United States and its Outlying Areas for *The National Map*.

10 **1.3 Applicability**

11 This standard is applicable to the data stored and maintained by the U.S Geological Survey, Geography
12 Discipline, as the Boundaries data theme of *The National Map*.

13 **1.4 References and Related Publications**

14 The following references and related publications were used to prepare this standard. At the time of
15 publication, these editions were valid:

16 National Spatial Data Infrastructure, Geospatial One-Stop, 2003, Geographic Information Framework
17 Data Content Standard, Part NNN: *Governmental Unit Boundary Data Exchange Standard (draft)*,
18 <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/standards/scdd/gubh1.html>.

19 U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1987, Federal
20 Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Publication 5-2: *Codes for the Identification of the States,*
21 *the District of Columbia and the Outlying Areas of the United States and Associated Areas,*
22 <http://www.itl.nist.gov/fipspubs/fip5-2.htm>.

23 U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1990, Federal
24 Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Publication 6-4: *Counties and Equivalent Entities of the*
25 *United States, Its Possessions, and Associated Areas,* <http://www.itl.nist.gov/fipspubs/fip6-4.htm>.

26 U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1995, Federal
27 Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Publication 10-4: *Countries, Dependencies, Areas of*
28 *Special Sovereignty, and Their Principal Administrative Divisions,* [http://earth-](http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/fips10-4.html)
29 [info.nga.mil/gns/html/fips10-4.html](http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/fips10-4.html).

30 U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1994, Federal
31 Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Publication 55-3: *Codes for Named Populated Places,*
32 *Primary County Divisions, and Other Locational Entities of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the*
33 *Outlying Areas,* <http://www.itl.nist.gov/fipspubs/fip55-3.htm>.

34 U.S. Geological Survey, 1996, *Standards for 1:24,000-scale Digital Line Graphs and Quadrangle Maps,*
35 *Part 4: Boundaries,* <http://rockyweb.cr.usgs.gov/nmpstds/acrodcs/dlgqmap/4dqm0401.pdf>.

36 U.S. Geological Survey, 2004, *Standards for Preparing The National Map Standards (draft)*.
37

1 **1.5 Standards Development Process**

2 The Standards for Content of Governmental Unit and Legal Entity Boundaries were prepared according
3 to the Standards for Preparing *The National Map Standards* (draft).

4 **1.6 Publishing Authority**

5 The Associate Director for Geospatial Information of the USGS has authorized this publication.

6 **1.7 Maintenance Authority**

7 *The National Map* Boundaries Design Team is the technical maintenance authority for the Standards for
8 Content of Governmental Unit and Legal Entity Boundaries. Questions concerning this standard should
9 be sent to nationalmap@usgs.gov.

10 **1.8 Definitions**

11 The following definitions apply to this standard:

12 **Governmental Unit** – A legally bounded geographic entity that has the authority of a government. A
13 legal government is one established under Federal, State, tribal, or local law with the authority to elect or
14 appoint officials and raise revenues through taxes.

15 **Legal Entity** – A geographic unit with legally defined boundaries established under Federal, State, tribal,
16 or local law as an area for the administration of a governmental function.

17

1 **2 Boundary Data Content**

2 The features on the following pages compose content of the geospatial base data for all governmental unit
3 and legal entity boundaries maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey for the Boundaries data theme of
4 *The National Map*.

5

1 **ALASKA NATIVE AREA**

2 A legal entity, administered by Alaska Native Regional Corporations (ANRCs) and recognized by the
3 Federal Government, to conduct business and nonprofit affairs of Alaska Natives and their communities
4 pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-203, as amended by Public
5 Law 94-204). ANRCs are legal corporate entities with boundaries determined in the Alaska Native
6 Claims Settlement Act. Twelve ANRCs are geographic entities that cover most of the State of Alaska.
7 The Annette Islands Reserve, which is an American Indian Reservation, is excluded from any ANRC.

8 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

9	Feature ID	Unique identifier
10	Numeric	Length value: 10
11	Name	Official name as listed in <i>The National Gazetteer</i>
12	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

13 **Capture Conditions**

14 Capture all.

15 **Attribute Information**

16

1 **AMERICAN INDIAN AREA**

- 2 a) A legal entity with specific boundaries established by treaty, statute, and/or executive order, over
3 which a Federally recognized American Indian tribe has jurisdiction. This area is called an American
4 Indian reservation, but includes entities with other designations such as pueblo, colony, and community;
5 b) A legal entity for which lands are held in trust by the Federal Government for the use and benefit of a
6 tribe or individual member of a tribe. This area is called Indian trust land, either tribal or individual; or c)
7 A legal entity with specific boundaries established by State statute for a State-recognized American tribe.
8 This area is called a State American Indian reservation.

9 The exterior boundaries of American Indian areas are defined in final tribal treaties, agreements,
10 executive orders, Federal statutes, secretarial orders, or judicial determinations. These entities are known
11 as colonies, communities, pueblos, rancherias, ranches, reservations, reserves, villages, Indian
12 communities, and Indian villages. The Bureau of Indian Affairs maintains a list of Federally recognized
13 tribal governments.

14 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

15	Administrative Status	The managing authority
16	Federal	
17	State	
18	Feature ID	Unique identifier
19	Numeric	Length value: 10
20	Name	Official name as listed in <i>The National Gazetteer</i>
21	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

22 **Capture Conditions**

23 Capture all.

24 **Attribute Information**

25

1 **BOUNDARY LINE**

2 A bounding limit line of jurisdictional authority for various levels of government. Although not listed
3 with each governmental unit or legal entity, an areal boundary feature has a relationship with a line
4 defining its limit and may include information about that line.

5 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

6	Boundary Line Status	The acceptability of a boundary line. A boundary line is
7		considered approved or accepted by the governing or
8		administering legal entity unless otherwise specified
9	Disputed	The description of the boundary line has not been
10		approved or accepted by the governing or administering
11		entity because of conflicting or unclear legal definitions
12	Historical	Feature is historically significant
13	Feature ID	Unique identifier
14	Numeric	Length value: 10
15	Name	Official name if applicable as listed in <i>The National</i>
16		<i>Gazetteer</i>
17	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99
18	Positional Accuracy	The accuracy within which a feature can be confidently
19		positioned. The positional accuracy of a boundary line
20		is considered to be definite unless otherwise specified
21	Indefinite	Conditions prevent the feature from being confidently
22		positioned. Horizontal data cannot be confidently
23		positioned within 0.02", at map scale, of the true ground
24		position. Vertical data cannot be confidently positioned
25		within one-half contour interval of the true ground
26		position

27 **Capture Conditions**

28 If BOUNDARY LINE is Disputed or Indefinite,
29 Or
30 If BOUNDARY LINE is the Mason and Dixon Line of Delaware/Maryland/Pennsylvania/West Virginia
31 or the Von Schmidt Line of California/Nevada,
32 Then capture.

33 **Attribute Information**

34 If a Boundary Line is the Mason and Dixon Line or the Von Schmidt Line, the Boundary Line Status is
35 Historical.

36

1 **BOUNDARY POINT MONUMENT OR REFERENCE POINT**

2 An identified monument or reference point that marks location on or near a boundary line.

3 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

4	Boundary Point Monument Identifier	Name or designation of boundary point monument
5	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99
6	Feature ID	Unique identifier
7	Numeric	Length value: 10
8	Type	Function or purpose of boundary point monument
9	Actual	Point is on the boundary line
10	Reference	Point is used as a reference to triangulate a point on the
11		boundary line

12 **Capture Conditions**

13 If BOUNDARY POINT MONUMENT or REFERENCE POINT is officially accepted by a governmental
14 unit or legal entity,
15 Then capture.

16 **Attribute Information**

17

1 **COUNTRY**

2 A basic geopolitical entity of the world, including the following categories: (a) Independent States; (b)
3 Dependent Areas; (c) Areas of quasi-independence, non-contiguous territories, Possessions without
4 populations, Areas with special sovereignty associations, or Areas without sovereignty; (d) Political
5 regimes not recognized by the United States; and (e) Outlying Areas of the United States. The list of
6 basic entities in FIPS PUB 10-4 provides complete coverage of the land areas of the world without
7 overlap or duplication.

8 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

9	Feature ID	Unique identifier
10	Numeric	Length value: 10
11	FIPS Code Identifier (FIPS PUB 10-4)	Country Code
12	Alphabetic	Length value: 2
13	Name	Official name as listed in FIPS PUB 10-4
14	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

15 **Capture Conditions**

16 Capture all.

17 **Attribute Information**

18

1 **COUNTY**

2 The first-order subdivisions of each State or equivalent entity, including the parishes of Louisiana; the
3 boroughs and census areas of Alaska; the independent cities of Alaska, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, and
4 Virginia; and the portion of Yellowstone National Park in Montana. In the U.S. possessions, entities
5 regarded as first-order subdivisions are as follows: American Samoa: districts and islands (the areas
6 legally designated as “counties” in American Samoa are second-order subdivisions); Northern Mariana
7 Islands: municipalities; Palau: states; Puerto Rico: municipios; and Virgin Islands: islands (comprising
8 the three major islands of St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas). First-order subdivisions of the Federated
9 States of Micronesia are states; and of the Marshall Islands, municipalities. The District of Columbia and
10 Guam have no first-order subdivisions, and therefore these same areas serve as both State and county
11 equivalents.

12 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

13	Feature ID	Unique identifier
14	Numeric	Length value: 10
15	FIPS Code Identifier (FIPS PUB 6-4)	County Code
16	Numeric	Length value: 5
17	Name	Official name as listed in FIPS PUB 6-4
18	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

19 **Capture Conditions**

20 Capture all.

21 **Attribute Information**

22

1 **INCORPORATED PLACE**

2 A populated place that is a legal entity having defined boundaries and legally constituted governmental
3 functions and powers. Incorporated places are established in each State, under the laws of their respective
4 States. They may also serve as primary county divisions in some States. Examples of incorporated
5 places are boroughs (in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), cities (in 49 States and the District
6 of Columbia), municipalities, city, and boroughs (in Alaska), towns (in 30 States and the Virgin Islands),
7 and villages (in 20 States and American Samoa).

8
9 Incorporated place also includes:

- 10
- 11 • **Consolidated City:** An incorporated place that has consolidated its governmental function with
12 another level of government, such as city-county or city-town/township consolidations. Examples
13 are: the City and County of Denver in Colorado; the City of Athens and Clarke County in Georgia;
14 the City of Columbus and Muscogee County in Georgia; the City of Indianapolis and Marion County
15 in Indiana; the City of Butte and Silver Bow County in Montana; and the City of Nashville and
16 Davidson County in Tennessee.
17
 - 18 • **Independent City:** An incorporated place that is not legally part of another county and, therefore,
19 also serves as a county equivalent. In Alaska, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, and Virginia, there are
20 one or more incorporated places known as “independent cities” that are primary subdivisions of a
21 State. Examples are: Anchorage, Alaska; Baltimore, Maryland; St. Louis, Missouri; Carson City,
22 Nevada; and 39 independent cities in Virginia, ranging from Alexandria to Winchester.
23
 - 24 • **Independent Place:** An incorporated place that is also a primary (or first-order) division of a county.
25 Primary country divisions that are not incorporated places are Minor Civil Divisions.

26 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

27 Feature ID	Unique identifier
28 Numeric	Length value: 10
29 Name	Official name as listed in <i>The National Gazetteer</i>
30 Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

31 **Capture Conditions**

32 Capture all.

33 **Attribute Information**

34

1 **MINOR CIVIL DIVISION**

2 A legal entity that is a subdivision of a county or county equivalent, other than an incorporated place,
3 established by appropriate State or local governmental authorities. Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs) are the
4 primary governmental or administrative divisions of a county in many States. Examples are barrios,
5 boroughs (in each of the five counties that comprise the City of New York), magisterial districts (in
6 Virginia and West Virginia), precincts, townships, and towns (in New England States, New York, and
7 Wisconsin).

8 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

9	Feature ID	Unique identifier
10	Numeric	Length value: 10
11	Name	Official name as listed in <i>The National Gazetteer</i>
12	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

13 **Capture Conditions**

14 Capture all.

15 **Attribute Information**

16

1 **RESERVATION**

2 Bounded land set aside for a particular purpose, generally having certain use restrictions.

3 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

4	Administrative Status	The managing authority
5	County	
6	Federal	
7	Incorporated Place	
8	Regional	Group of State, county, and/or city governments
9	State	
10	Feature ID	Unique identifier
11	Numeric	Length value: 10
12	Name	Official name as listed in <i>The National Gazetteer</i>
13	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99
14	Reservation Type	Function or purpose
15	Ahupuaa	As defined by the State of Hawaii, Ahupuaas reflect historical land ownership patterns. Hawaii is divided into five counties. Four of the counties are subdivided into minor civil divisions called districts. Districts are subdivided into smaller areas called Ahupuaas
16		
17		
18		
19		
20	Forest	Area primarily for the management of forest resources
21	Grassland	Area primarily for the management of native grasses
22	Hawaiian Homestead or Home Land	As defined by the State of Hawaii, Homesteads or Home Lands reflect historical land ownership patterns.
23		Hawaiian Homesteads or Home Lands are much smaller than Ahupuaas, generally less than a square mile (or 2.6 square kilometers)
24		
25		
26		
27	Military	Area for carrying out military activities; includes the following areas: airfield, ammunition depot, arsenal, base, bombing and gunnery range, coast guard station, fort, national guard, naval air station, or weapons station
28		
29		
30		
31	Park	Area for public recreation and preservation of a cultural or natural resource; includes the following areas: battlefield, historical site, lakeshore, memorial, monument, parkway, or seashore
32		
33		
34		
35	Prison	Area for housing persons convicted and sentenced for crimes; includes correctional institution, detention center, and penitentiary
36		
37		

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1	Reserve	Area primarily for wildlife management or preservation;
2		includes the following areas: animal farm, conservation,
3		estuarine sanctuary, fish hatchery, game, hunting and
4		fishing, preserve, watershed district, or other "wildlife"
5		designation
6	Wilderness	Area virtually unsettled and uncultivated (natural);
7		includes areas designated by an administrative group as
8		primitive, riverway, wild and scenic, or other
9		"wilderness" designation

10 **Capture Conditions**

11 Capture all.

12 **Attribute Information**

13 If the Reservation Type is an Ahupuaa in Hawaii, then the Administrative Status is State.

14 If the Reservation Type is a Forest or Grassland, then the Name is Alphanumeric.

15 If the Reservation Type is a Hawaiian Homestead or Home Land, then the Administrative Status is State.

16

1 **STATE**

2 A State or equivalent entity of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Outlying Areas of the
3 U.S. and its Associated Areas, including American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam,
4 Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and U.S. Minor Outlying
5 Islands (Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Islands,
6 Navassa Island, Palmyra Atoll, and Wake Island).

7 **Attribute/Attribute Value List**

8	Feature ID	Unique identifier
9	Numeric	Length value: 10
10	FIPS Code Identifier (FIPS PUB 5-2)	State Code
11	Alphabetic	Length value: 2
12	Numeric	Length value: 2
13	Name	Official name as listed in FIPS PUB 5-2
14	Alphanumeric	Length value: 99

15 **Capture Conditions**

16 Capture all.

17 **Attribute Information**