

Job Aid 10. Import Custom Fire Data

Introduction

To import custom fire data into FireFamilyPlus, you must know the exact format of the data. You need to identify the order in which the data appear in the file. This is true for weather data and for fire data. In addition, the date must be formatted exactly as FireFamilyPlus expects, or the import will fail. The following steps will guide you through importing custom fire data.

Determine Data Format

FireFamilyPlus allows you to import custom fire data. The following variables are **required**: Discovery Date, Fire Number, Statistical Cause, Total Acres, and Region ID. The variables Fire Name, Latitude, Longitude, Unit ID and Subunit ID are commonly included.

Data must be imported in the exact order that they appear in the file. There is no standard format, so the order of the fields can be different each time. If you do not know the order, you need to open the file in Notepad or WordPad to see the order of the fields.

1. Write down the variables in your fire occurrence file **in the order they appear**.
2. Verify the **Field Delimiter** used in your file. This Field Delimiter is the important component when importing files. The data may be comma-, tab-, or semicolon-delimited. The file extension is most often either .csv or .txt, but you may occasionally see other file extensions as well.

***Tip:** We recommend using comma-delimited files. Ensure that there are no other commas in the file (e.g., in the Fire Name) when using this format.*

3. Ensure data are formatted as **MM/DD/YYYY**. If there is a different format, you need to change it.

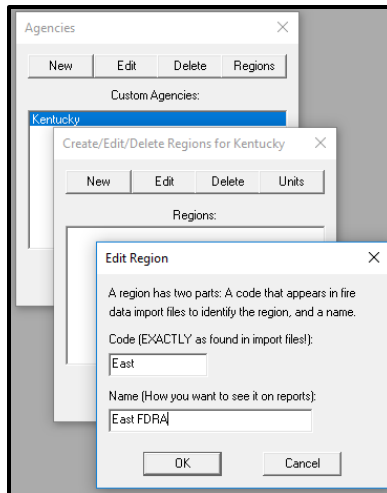
***Tip:** You can also enter the date as MMDDYYYY or YYYYMMDD, but these are rarely used.*

***Tip:** If you open the file in Excel, it will usually change the date format to M/D/YY. You will need to correct this **before** you save the file again.*

Create Agency, Region, Unit, and Subunit

Each Region, Unit, and Subunit is identified by a code inside the data file. A **Code** is limited to 6 characters. This is the **only** way that FireFamilyPlus can connect the data to the correct Agency, Region, Unit, and Subunit.

4. Identify every Region, Unit, and Subunit in the data file (only Region is required) using a **Code**.
***Tip:** Ensure you know which Units belong to each Region and which Subunits belong to each Unit.*
5. Write the **Codes** down. These are used in FireFamilyPlus as Region ID, Unit ID, and Subunit ID.
6. Open the database in FireFamilyPlus.
7. Create a custom **Agency**, along with its associated **Regions**, **Units**, and **Subunits** in as follows.
 - a. Go to **Data > Agencies** and select **New**.
 - b. Enter an **Agency Name** and click **OK**.
 - c. Highlight the **Agency** and click on **Regions**.
 - d. Select **New** and type in both the **Code** and a Name.
 - The **Code** must be typed exactly as it is shown in the file.
 - The **Name** can be anything descriptive. The name is shown on FireFamilyPlus graphs.
 - Repeat this process until all Regions are identified.



- e. If **Units** are identified in your fire occurrence file, select the correct **Region** and click on **Regions > New**. Type in a **Code** and **Name** for each **Unit** associated with this Region. You must identify Regions before you can add Units.
- f. If **Subunits** are identified in your fire occurrence file, select the correct **Unit** and click on **Units > New**. Type in a **Code** and **Name** for each **Subunit** associated with this Unit. You must identify Units before you can add Subunits.
- g. When you are finished, close all windows and return to the FireFamilyPlus database.

Import Custom Fire Data

8. Click on **Data > Import....**
9. Under Fires, select the custom **Agency** that you created.
10. Click on **Generic Fire Import**.
11. Navigate to your file and **Open** it.
12. If necessary, click on **Remove All** to remove all fields from the **Selected Fields** box.
13. Based on the information you obtained earlier, import the fire occurrence data into your database.
 - a. Move fields from the **Available Fields** box to the **Selected Fields** box.
 - b. Change the **Field Delimiter** to the correct format (commonly Comma).
 - c. Change the **Date Format** as appropriate (commonly MM/DD/YYYY).
 - d. Click on the button at the bottom of the screen that starts with **Import Fires From:**
 - e. Be patient; this can take a few minutes.
 - f. **View** the error log to determine how many errors were encountered as well as how many fires were appended, updated, or rejected. If all fires imported correctly, there will be two errors (header line and last [empty] row of the file).

Common Errors

There are several issues that can cause errors on import. The following ones are the most common.

- **Date Format:** The date format must contain a 4-digit year (MM/DD/YYYY). If data are exported from Excel, they are often exported with a 2-digit year. To fix this error, open the file in Excel, right-click on the date column, and select **Format Cells....** Change the date format to **Custom**. In the box under Type, enter **MM/DD/YYYY**. Click **OK**. Save the file as a "CSV (Comma delimited (*.csv))" file.

***Tip:** Any time you save the CSV file, you must change the date format.*

- **Fire Number:** Fire numbers are limited to 10 numbers (no letters or other characters). Each fire requires a separate, unique number. In Excel, you can number the fires from 1 to N (N = total number of fires). Use this numbering scheme as the **Fire Number**.
- **Region ID, Unit ID, or Subunit ID:** Each fire must contain a **Code** for Region ID. Unit ID and Subunit ID are **Codes**, and they are optional. A code is a 6-character identifier consisting of letters and numbers. There can be no spaces or special characters. Enter the **Code** when you specify the Region so that FireFamilyPlus can associate the fires with the correct Region, and if specified, Unit and Subunit. Enter a meaningful **Name** that you want to see on reports and graphs.
- **Statistical Code:** FireFamilyPlus can only accept USFS Statistical Cause Codes 1-9. Causes 10-13 are not recognized. You have two options: ignore these fires or change the Cause Code to 9 (Miscellaneous). DOI Statistical Cause Codes are stored with the database, and a crosswalk is used to convert them to the USFS codes. When InFORM is finalized and in use, FireFamilyPlus will be updated to accept the appropriate Cause Codes.
- **Fire Name:** Older fire names may include commas, apostrophes, or quotes in the name. These must be removed prior to import.