

## Job Aid 14. Creating a PocketCard

### Introduction

This Job Aid describes the process for creating a PocketCard. It does not describe the analysis needed prior to creating the card.

### Information Needed for a PocketCard

Prior to creating a PocketCard, obtain the following information.

- **Fire season:** PocketCards are created for the fire season. Some areas may have two cards representing two different seasons, such as spring and fall.
- **Two years to remember:** Select relatively recent years with large fires or a lot of fires. Make sure these years are relevant to current firefighters.
- **Two or three notable fires:** Select fires that relate well to the fire danger on the PocketCard graphs. They may or may not be the largest fires.
- **Fuel model/NFDRS output:** Base your selection on a Fires Analysis (Job Aid 10).
- **Critical percentile:** This value denotes a fire danger threshold for this fuel model/NFDRS output combination that is particularly meaningful for firefighters working in the area.
- **Local thresholds for 20' Wind Speed, Relative Humidity, Temperature, and optionally, one additional threshold:** These values correspond to a likelihood of significantly increased fire behavior in the area.
- **Past experience:** This section provides supplemental information about unique local events that influence fire danger or large fire potential. Include why you selected the years and the fires. Include any hazards or risk factors that influence fire danger or large fire potential (e.g., abnormal fuel loading, unusual hazards, sundowners, east winds, or other risk factors). Include weather station names if using a SIG.

### Generate a PocketCard

1. Confirm that the Working Set matches your fire season and that the correct fuel model is selected.
2. On the FireFamilyPlus toolbar, click on **Weather > Pocket Card** or the PocketCard icon (PC, below) to open the PocketCard window. **Tip:** *You cannot create a PocketCard within Interactive Batch.*



3. Select an **Area Locator Bitmap**. Click **Browse** and select a bitmap image file. It can be a map of the area location, a logo, or even a photograph.
4. Enter the name of the **Fire Danger Area**.
5. Determine the **Fire Danger Index** from the Fires Analysis; select the appropriate one from the drop-down menu.
6. Enter the **Critical Percentile**.
7. Select the one or two **Years to Remember**.
8. If desired, click on the **Graph Background** button to edit the graph background and change the ratio of red-yellow-green.

9. To enter the notable fires, click **Find** in the first row of the **Fires** list. ***Tip:** The fire occurrence date must be within your Working Set.*
  - Sort fires by Discovery Date (default), Name, or Acres (most common) in the bottom left-hand corner of the **Select a Fire** dialog box.
10. Enter three **Area Locator Bullets**, which provide useful information about the fire danger rating area represented by the card. The three lines should include the following information.
  - **Line 1:** FDRA/Site Description
  - **Line 2:** Number and name of NWS Fire Weather Forecast Zone(s) in the area
  - **Line 3:** The RAWs (and WIMS ID) or SIG used to create the PocketCard  
***Tip:** If you use a SIG, specify the weather stations in the **Past Experience** section of the PocketCard. This enables firefighters to know which RAWs represent this area well.*
11. Enter **Local Thresholds** (20' Wind Speed, Relative Humidity, Temperature and one optional).  
***Tip:** Local Thresholds are NOT retained with the rest of the information on the PocketCard. Make sure they are correct each time you edit the card.*
12. Enter **Past Experience** for the FDRA.
13. Enter the **Responsible Agency**. This is the agency that “owns” the card and is, thereby, accountable for its accuracy and responsible for updating it.
14. Check the box in the lower left-hand corner if the weather station meets [NWCG Weather Station Standards](#). ***Tip:** If a station does not meet the station standards, the PocketCard cannot be approved by the NWCG Fire Danger Subcommittee.*
15. Generate the PocketCard by clicking **OK** in the upper right-hand corner. Click **Cancel** to close the PocketCard window without saving it.
16. Use the [Standards Checklist](#) to ensure your PocketCard meets NWCG standards.
17. If desired, save the card by clicking on **File > Save As** or use the shortcut icon (below). The card is saved as an image. We recommend saving it as a **PNG file**.





## **Appendix A. S491 NWCG Standard: Fire Danger PocketCard for Firefighter Safety Standards Checklist**

Approved February 2011; Reformatted April 2022

### **Authority:**

PocketCards are intended for local wildland fire agency use. If an agency with the fire protection authority elects to implement the PocketCard on its jurisdiction, it is responsible for producing the cards. For the purposes of this document such agencies will be referred to as the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

### **Compliance:**

Compliance with this standard, including content quality, currency, and application of the PocketCard, is the responsibility of the Authority Having Jurisdiction. The minimum skill level for the individual producing the PocketCard is successful completion of the S491 course.

### **Area:**

The PocketCard applies to an area of uniform fire danger rating, known as a Fire Danger Rating Area (FDRA). If FDRA's have not been determined, the following may be used: administrative unit, sub-geographical region, watershed, fire weather forecast zone, protection zone, fire climate zone, or predictive service area.

Text or a map depicts the area represented by the card.

At least one responsible Authority Having Jurisdiction is identified.

### **Weather Station(s) and Data**

The number of weather stations depends on the size of the area represented by the PocketCard, the length and quality of the station record, and operational constraints at the local unit. [Weather Station\(s\) must comply with the Interagency Wildland Fire Weather Station Standards and Guidelines \(PMS 426-3\)](#).

At least one representative weather station is listed by name (and/or number).

- The data for the selected station(s) have received a thorough quality control and data consistency check.
- The selected station(s) are used in daily NFDRS operations and the NFDRS outputs are readily available (announced via radio, posted on the intranet/internet) at the local unit.
- Only active stations are included on the PocketCard.

For each station, the number of years of weather data is disclosed. If multiple weather stations are used, the PocketCard uses the same range of years for all the stations.

At least 10 years of data are used. If less than 10 years of data, the card contains text stating that the card is based on limited years of data and may not represent the most serious conditions the area could experience.

Text on card states that "station(s) comply with NWCG weather station standards."

## NFDRS Fuel Model and Index/Component

FireFamilyPlus should be used to determine the appropriate fuel model and index or component to use on the PocketCard. This is done through analyses of weather, fuel, and fire occurrence data for the area. The fuel model and the fire danger rating index or component must be the same as what is referred to in routine daily local briefings and communications of fire weather/fire danger.

The selection of the appropriate fuel model should be linked back to the Fire Danger Rating Operating Plan, Agency Fire Management Plan, or similar local operating plans. The selected fuel model is used for daily operational NFDRS processes such as the setting of “staffing levels” or “dispatch response levels”.

A brief explanation of the fuel model appears on the PocketCard.

A brief explanation of the index or component appears on the PocketCard.

- The selected NFDRS component/index is utilized in the daily operational NFDRS process(s) such as the setting of “staffing levels” or “dispatch response levels.”

## Seasonal Trends:

Graph of the average value for the chosen index or component through the typical local fire season(s).

Graph of the all-time worst (usually the maximum) value for the index or component through the typical fire season(s).

Graph of the index during one or two recent fire seasons.

A description appears on the card referencing the timing and NFDRS value(s) for one or two significant fire events that happened in the area.

Graph describes a NFDRS value corresponding to either a fire business threshold or agency specific critical percentile (80th and 95th or 90th and 97th).

A brief explanation is provided for average, worst, specific fire seasons, and the critical percentile or fire business threshold.

## Fire Danger Interpretation

One successful method utilizes bands of color displayed in the background of each graph. These colors serve to interpret what type of burning conditions are generally possible given a value of the fire danger index within that band. The meaning of each color is briefly explained. Other methods may also be useful for this purpose.

The PocketCard displays an interpretation of burning conditions that are generally possible, given a value of the fire danger index.

## Critical Threshold Values

Critical threshold values (for measures such as wind speed, relative humidity, temperature, live fuel moisture) are related to what? Firefighter safety? Large Fires? Problematic Fires? Related to particular fuel types? Needs to be stated. Should be determined through analysis of each observation with fire occurrence data using FireFamilyPlus.

Critical threshold values for temperature, relative humidity, wind, and fuel moisture conditions are displayed on the PocketCard.

## Supplemental Information

This text entry is a very important part of the card. The intent of this section is to supplement information shown on “Years to Remember” chart and to highlight unique local events that influence fire danger and large fire potential (sundowners, east winds, etc.).

Information (in text format) is provided about significant fire events described above.

Information (in text format) is provided about unique local events that influence fire danger and large fire potential (e.g., sundowners, east winds).

## Currency

Cards can be updated as frequently as needed by downloading the additional weather observations, updating the FireFamilyPlus database, and updating existing cards. PocketCards based on stations with a dataset of 10 years or less should be updated annually, while cards with more data (10 years or more) should be updated every other year.

The date when the PocketCard was developed/approved is clearly visible.

PocketCard is current (see above).