

Data Exchange Standard – Postal Code

Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer, Strategy and Governance Branch

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Standard Statement

Data exchange standards are required to ensure the clarity and the accuracy of data exchanged between Government of Alberta (GoA) applications.

The standard below describes the GoA data standard for a postal code identified in an address, shared between GoA applications. This standard defines the required components of a postal code information and applies to the exchange of the postal code information. It is also recommended for storage and the display of a postal code.

Authority

Internal use only.

Scope

This standard applies to all Ministries within the GoA.

Standard Specification

The GoA postal code standard follows the Data Exchange Standard – Character Set (UTF-8) with the exceptions noted below and aligns with the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

Postal Code	
Description	A series of letters and/or numbers used as part of a postal address to expedite the processing of machine-sorted mail.
Format	C15 Acceptable Formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canada: X9X 9X9• United States: 99999, 99999-9999• International: C15

	Postal Code	C15	<p>A maximum of 15 characters.</p> <p>The following characters are allowed in this field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upper and lower case letters • numbers 0 to 9 • space and hyphen (-) <p>Canada</p> <p>A seven alphanumeric code in the format of “X9X 9X9”, where “X” represents an alphabetic character and “9” represents a numeric character.</p> <p>The first three characters are separated from the last three characters by a space.</p> <p>United States of America</p> <p>Up to ten character code in the format of 99999-9999. A minimum of 5 characters must be entered.</p> <p>ZIP codes may be either a five or nine digit code. If the nine-digit code is used it must be separated by a hyphen between the fifth and sixth digits.</p> <p>International</p> <p>A maximum 15 character code.</p> <p>Some countries do not have postal codes. International postal codes use various formats.</p> <p>Examples of postal code formats where a postal code is required;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia – 9999 • Bermuda – XX 99 • Iran – 9999999999 • Latvia – XX-9999 • Poland – 99-999
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References and Supporting Resources

Canada Post

- Canada Post – Addressing Guidelines.
Section 5 Postal Code and Section 3.2 United States of America Addresses.
<http://www.canadapost.ca/tools/pg/manual/PGaddress-e.asp>
- United States Postal Service, Publication 28 – Postal Addressing Standards
<http://pe.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub28/pub28.pdf>

Universal Postal Union

- Addressing Knowledge Centre – General Addressing Issues.
Not all countries have or use a postcode system. The General Addressing Issues document identifies which countries use a postcode system and countries that do not.
<http://www.upu.int/en/resources/postcodes/knowledge-centre.html>

Government of Alberta

- Data Exchange Standard – Character Set (UTF-8)
<https://imtpolicy.sp.alberta.ca/standards/Pages/Data-Exchange-Standard-Character-Set.aspx>

Appendix A

Types of Standards	Description
Technical Standard	These are detailed, unique standards that have developed in response to government IMT policies. Technical standards are intended to be replicable, transferable, and adaptable across ministries and other government agencies. Examples of these could include address data standards or specifications for a single identifier for transacting with government electronically.
Product Standard	An IMT product or specific technology oriented standard that facilitates the task of planning for enhancements and acquisitions within the government's broad information systems environment. As a definitive list of the numerous technologies either employed or under evaluation by Workplace Technology Services, product standards are critical in establishing conformity, interoperability and interchange-ability. Examples of these could include a government-wide standard for document, record management and database, and the list of core products for government workstations.
Process Standard	An established, mandatory business practice that supports IMT projects and existing systems to improve the outcome, diminish risks, and increase reliability. Examples could include business continuity planning processes, threat risk assessment processes, etc.
Reference Standard	An IMT industry standard (either a national or international formal or de facto standard) that has been adopted for use by the Province of Alberta. A Reference Standard may be adopted either as stand-alone or as a precursor to a customized standard or policy document. Examples could include the 1024 bit RSA standard for public key encryption.