

Specification for

Codes for the representation of names of counties and similar areas

UDC 003.292.2/.3:801.311(41-3)

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- English Place Name Society
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- Institute of Purchasing and Supply
- Library Association
- Patent Office
- Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use
- Post Office
- Society of Genealogists

The following bodies were also represented in the drafting of the standard, through subcommittees and panels:

- Department of the Environment
- Ordnance Survey
- Royal Geographical Society

This British Standard, having been prepared under the direction of the Documentation Standards Committee, was published under the authority of the Board of BSI and comes into effect on 30 November 1987

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The following BSI references relate to the work on this standard:
Committee reference DOT/11
Draft for comment 86/62716 DC

ISBN 0 580 16094 7

Amendments issued since publication

Amd. No.	Date of issue	Comments

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Foreword

This British Standard has been prepared under the direction of the Documentation Standards Committee. It specifies nationally applicable codes for the names of counties and similar areas associated with the United Kingdom (see 1.1). However where these national codes are used internationally this standard should be used in conjunction with BS 5374 (identical with ISO 3166) “*Specification for codes for the representation of names of countries*” (see 2.3).

The names of counties have long been used to help distinguish between towns and villages with identical names in different parts of the country, e.g. Newport in Essex and Newport in Somerset. In this general context, various codes were developed to represent the names of counties. With the increasing use of computerized storage and retrieval of information, the need for standardized codes has become more important in minimizing the amount of computer memory involved.

Prior to the publication of this British Standard, two nationally applicable systems were in general use, the three-letter Chapman County Codes and the four-digit codes produced by the Department of the Environment. With minor modifications, these two systems have been incorporated in this standard, together with a two-letter code.

The basic principle employed in producing the alphabetical codes — as distinct from abbreviations — is a visual or phonetic association between the codes and the names being coded. Where small variations in spelling exist for a specific area, particularly with Irish, Scottish or Welsh names, they have not been regarded as separate names and have not been allocated separate codes.

Furthermore, the lists of names are strictly alphabetical, to avoid any implication of political or administrative status or precedence.

This standard gives guidance for implementing and maintaining the codes.

NOTE An International Standard specifying codes for the representation of names of subentities in current use (see Table 1 to Table 3) is under preparation by Technical Committee 46, Documentation, of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), in which the United Kingdom participates.

A British Standard does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users of British Standards are responsible for their correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard does not of itself confer immunity from legal obligations.

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i and ii, pages 1 to 26, an inside back cover and a back cover.

This standard has been updated (see copyright date) and may have had amendments incorporated. This will be indicated in the amendment table on the inside front cover.

Section 1. General

1.1 Scope

This British Standard specifies nationally applicable codes that represent the current and historic names of constituent countries, counties and similar areas associated with the United Kingdom. These codes cover Irish subentities commonly used before 1922, the names of subentities used prior to the reorganization of local government in the 1970s, and other names in common use.

This standard specifies two-letter codes, three-letter codes and four-digit codes for current names and only three-letter codes for historic names.

This standard is intended for use in any application requiring codes for such subentities.

NOTE 1 This standard does not reflect in any way the legal, political or administrative significance of the subentities, although boroughs with county status are, in general, excluded.

NOTE 2 The subentities in this standard are, or were historically, associated with the United Kingdom. Accordingly, when the codes within this standard are used in an international context, they should be prefixed by the international alpha-2 code for the United Kingdom (as defined in BS 5374) followed by a hyphen, i.e. GB- (see 2.3).

NOTE 3 The Post Office has a set of abbreviations for county names that should be used in addressing items for delivery purposes.

NOTE 4 The titles of the publications referred to in this standard are listed on the inside back cover.

1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following definitions apply.

1.2.1 entity

the name of a country, dependency, or other area of special geopolitical interest

NOTE This definition has been taken from BS 5374 and in the context of this standard refers to the United Kingdom as defined in BS 5374.

1.2.2 subentity

the name of a component part of an entity

1.2.3 alpha-2 code

a code comprising two letters

1.2.4 alpha-3 code

a code comprising three letters

1.2.5 numeric-4 code

a code comprising four digits

1.2.6 current name

a name in official use when this standard was published

1.2.7 historic name

a name in either current or former use

1.3 Principles for the subentity lists

1.3.1 Names associated with the United Kingdom, as both current and commonly found historic subentities, are included in this British Standard without any implications of status or precedence. Accordingly all such names associated with the United Kingdom are coded.

Examples: England (ENG), a country within the United Kingdom;
Kent (KEN), a county within the United Kingdom.

1.3.2 When there is a boundary change without a change of name, the code remains the same.

Example: Buckinghamshire in 1986 was not coterminous with Buckinghamshire in 1970; both are coded as BM, BKM and 0400.

1.3.3 The use of the suffix “-shire” and terms such as “borough”, “city” and “region” has varied throughout history and according to context. Their inclusion or omission is not reflected in the codes. Within this standard a commonly found form of the name is used.

Example: Devon is, on occasion, termed Devonshire.

The codes DV, DEV and 1100 are used for Devon and Devonshire.

1.3.4 Minor variations in spelling of a name are identified in the lists within this standard but the same code is specified.

Examples: Breconshire and Brecknockshire: BRE;
Shetland and Zetland: ZE, ZET and 9010.

1.3.5 If significantly different names (rather than minor variations in spelling) have been in common use, different codes are specified.

Examples: East Lothian (ELN), *also known as* Haddingtonshire (HAD);
Shropshire (SHR), *also known as* Salop (SAL).

1.4 Principles for the codes

1.4.1 This British Standard specifies upper case three-letter (alpha-3) codes for all subentities; for those in current use, upper case two-letter (alpha-2) codes and four-digit codes (numeric-4) are also specified.

1.4.2 The alphabetical codes are intended to give, wherever possible, a visual or phonetic association with the name, avoiding reference to geographic or geopolitical status.

1.4.3 In deriving the three-letter codes for current subentities, the use of the letters I and O in the third position is precluded. This avoids any confusion with the digits one and zero (1 and 0) and their possible misinterpretation if applied in conjunction with postcodes used throughout the United Kingdom. Similarly, two-letter combinations which conflict with postcodes are avoided wherever possible.

Section 2. Code application

2.1 General

When applying this standard for subentities associated with the United Kingdom, the codes in Table 1 to Table 6 shall be used.

Users shall clearly state whether they are using alpha-2, alpha-3 or numeric-4 codes from BS 6879.

2.2 Temporary codes

For subentities uncoded as yet, codes starting with X shall be used.

2.3 International application

When the codes are used internationally, they shall be prefixed by the international alpha-2 code for the United Kingdom (as defined in BS 5374) followed by a hyphen, e.g. GB-.

NOTE 1 The codes within BS 5374 were derived largely from the country designations for vehicles reported by the governments of states adhering to the conventions on road traffic.

Clear distinction shall be made between the national codes used nationally and the national codes used internationally.

Particular care shall be taken to distinguish Great Britain (a component part and thus a subentity of the United Kingdom) and the United Kingdom itself (the entity).

Examples:

	National use
United Kingdom	UK or UKM or 0010
Great Britain	GB or GBN or 0012
Wales	WA or WLS or 0016
Powys	PW or POW or 6500
	International use
United Kingdom	GB or GB-UK or GB-UKM or GB-0010
Great Britain	GB-GB or GB-GBN or GB-0012
Wales	GB-WA or GB-WLS or GB-0016
Powys	GB-PW or GB-POW or GB-6500

NOTE 2 The Technical Committee responsible for this standard has taken a view on the draft requirements proposed by the international committee. As a result the requirement stated in 2.3 has been included in advance of the international work being completed (see foreword).

The user should therefore apply 2.3 with some degree of caution to allow for change, should the international work, once finalized, make this necessary. The Technical Committee's intention is at the moment to take account of such a change, should it arise, and to review this standard accordingly.

2.4 Further divisions of subentities

To serve their specific purposes users may need to divide the subentities, e.g. into districts or parishes within a county.

Any such codes devised shall remain distinguishable from those used for other areas or purposes.

NOTE 1 For example the Department of the Environment has published four-digit codes for current administrative districts.

When drawing up other codes in a multi-county context a suitable separator, e.g.: (colon) shall be inserted.

NOTE 2 It will be appropriate, in order to avoid ambiguity, to use a code from this standard as a prefix.

2.5 Subentity lists and codes

2.5.1 The alpha-2, the alpha-3 and the numeric-4 codes for the current subentities in alphabetical order shall be as specified in Table 1. The location codes of the subentities shall also be as indicated.

2.5.2 The alpha-2 codes in alphabetical order for the current subentities shall be as specified in Table 2.

2.5.3 The numeric-4 codes in numerical order for the current subentities shall be as specified in Table 3.

2.5.4 The codes for the current and commonly found historic subentities in alphabetical order shall be as specified in Table 4. The location codes of the subentities shall also be as indicated.

2.5.5 The alpha-3 codes in alphabetical order for the current and commonly found historic subentities shall be as specified in Table 5.

2.5.6 The codes for the current and commonly found historic subentities, subdivided by location in alphabetical order, shall be as specified in Table 6.

Table 1 — Alphabetical list of current subentities with their codes

Subentity	Code			Location	Remarks
	Alpha-2	Alpha-3	Numeric		
Antrim	AT	ANT	7005	NIR	
Ards	AD	ARD	7010	NIR	
Armagh	AM	ARM	7015	NIR	
Avon	AV	AVN	0100	ENG	
Ballymena	BA	BLA	7020	NIR	
Ballymoney	BY	BLY	7025	NIR	
Banbridge	BB	BNB	7030	NIR	
Bedfordshire	BF	BDF	0200	ENG	
Belfast	BT	BFS	7035	NIR	
Berkshire	BK	BRK	0300	ENG	
Borders Region	BO	BOR	8000	SCT	
Buckinghamshire	BM	BKM	0400	ENG	
Cambridgeshire	CB	CAM	0500	ENG	
Carrickfergus	CF	CKF	7040	NIR	
Castlereagh	CS	CSR	7045	NIR	
Central Region	CE	CEN	8100	SCT	
Channel Islands	CI	CHA	0030		
Cheshire	CH	CHS	0600	ENG	
Cleveland	CL	CLV	0700	ENG	
Clwyd	CD	CWD	6000	WLS	
Coleraine	CR	CLR	7050	NIR	
Cookstown	CT	CKT	7055	NIR	
Cornwall	CN	CON	0800	ENG	
Craigavon	CG	CGV	7060	NIR	
Cumbria	CA	CMA	0900	ENG	
Derbyshire	DY	DBY	1000	ENG	
Derry	DR	DRY	7095	NIR	
Devon	DV	DEV	1100	ENG	
Dorset	DO	DOR	1200	ENG	
Down	DW	DOW	7065	NIR	
Dumfries and Galloway Region	DG	DGY	8200	SCT	
Dungannon	DN	DGN	7070	NIR	
Durham	DU	DUR	1300	ENG	
Dyfed	DF	DFD	6100	WLS	
East Sussex	ES	ESX	1400	ENG	
England	EN	ENG	0015		
England and Wales	EW	EAW	0014		
Essex	EE	ESS	1500	ENG	
Fermanagh	FE	FER	7075	NIR	
Fife Region	FF	FIF	8300	SCT	

Table 1 — Alphabetical list of current subentities with their codes

Subentity	Code			Location	Remarks
	Alpha-2	Alpha-3	Numeric		
Gloucestershire	GS	GLS	1600	ENG	} Alternative forms
Grampian Region	GP	GMP	8400	SCT	
Great Britain	GB	GBN	0012		
Greater London	GL	GTL	5000	ENG	
Greater Manchester	GM	GTM	4200	ENG	
Guernesey	GY	GSY	0032	CHA	
Guernsey	GY	GSY	0032	CHA	
Gwent	GT	GNT	6200	WLS	
Gwynedd	GW	GWN	6300	WLS	
Hampshire	HM	HAM	1700	ENG	}
Hereford and Worcester	HW	HWR	1800	ENG	
Hertfordshire	HT	HRT	1900	ENG	
Highland Region	HL	HLD	8500	SCT	
Humberside	HU	HUM	2000	ENG	
Isle of Man	IM	IOM	0040		
Isle of Wight	IW	IOW	2100	ENG	
Isles of Scilly	IS	IOS	0835	ENG	
Jersey	JY	JSY	0038	CHA	}
Kent	KN	KEN	2200	ENG	
Lancashire	LA	LAN	2300	ENG	
Larne	LR	LRN	7080	NIR	
Leicestershire	LE	LEC	2400	ENG	
Limavady	LM	LMV	7085	NIR	
Lincolnshire	LN	LIN	2500	ENG	
Lisburn	LB	LSB	7090	NIR	
Lothian Region	LT	LTN	8600	SCT	
Magherafelt	MF	MFT	7100	NIR	}
Merseyside	MS	MSY	4300	ENG	
Mid Glamorgan	MG	MGM	6400	WLS	
Moyle	ML	MYL	7110	NIR	
Newry and Mourne	NM	NYM	7105	NIR	
Newtownabbey	NA	NTA	7115	NIR	
Norfolk	NK	NFK	2600	ENG	
North Down	ND	NDN	7120	NIR	
North Yorkshire	NY	NYK	2700	ENG	
Northamptonshire	NH	NTH	2800	ENG	}
Northern Ireland	NI	NIR	0017		
Northumberland	NL	NBL	2900	ENG	
Nottinghamshire	NT	NTT	3000	ENG	

Table 1 — Alphabetical list of current subentities with their codes

Subentity	Code			Location	Remarks
	Alpha-2	Alpha-3	Numeric		
Omagh	OM	OMH	7125	NIR	Entity, included for completeness
Orkney	OK	ORK	9000	SCT	
Oxfordshire	OX	OXF	3100	ENG	
Powys	PW	POW	6500	WLS	
Scotland	SC	SCT	0019		
Shetland	ZE	ZET	9010	SCT	
Shropshire	SH	SHR	3200	ENG	
Somerset	SM	SOM	3300	ENG	
South Glamorgan	SG	SGM	6600	WLS	
South Yorkshire	SY	SYK	4400	ENG	
Staffordshire	ST	STS	3400	ENG	
Strabane	SB	STB	7130	NIR	
Strathclyde Region	SD	STD	8700	SCT	
Suffolk	SF	SFK	3500	ENG	
Surrey	SU	SRY	3600	ENG	
Tayside Region	TY	TAY	8900	SCT	
Tyne and Wear	TW	TWR	4500	ENG	
United Kingdom	UK	UKM	0010		
Wales	WA	WLS	0016		
Warwickshire	WK	WAR	3700	ENG	
West Glamorgan	WG	WGM	6700	WLS	
West Midlands	WM	WMD	4600	ENG	
West Sussex	WS	WSX	3800	ENG	
West Yorkshire	WY	WYK	4700	ENG	
Western Isles	WI	WIS	9020	SCT	
Wiltshire	WL	WIL	3900	ENG	