Government of Canada   Gouvernement du Canada

Data reference standard on Canadian provinces and territories

1. Preamble

1.1 This data reference provides a standard list of values for all Canadian provinces and territories. The list reflects Canada's 13 major political units. There are many coding systems for Canadian provinces and territories. The data reference standard shows the relationships among the recommended code and other common codes.

1.2 This list is intended to standardize the way Canadian provinces and territories are described in datasets to enable data interoperability and improve data quality.

1.3 Not included in this reference standard are previous names, abbreviations and codes for provinces and territories. When changes occur in the future, version history will be maintained.

1.4 The Alpha Code exactly matches the set of codes created and managed by Canada Post. If Canada Post changes their codes, the Government of Canada will review and separately approve any changes to this reference standard. Alpha Code were chosen for three reasons:

1.4.1 It is comprehensible for users.

1.4.2 It is closely aligned with the ISO 3166-2 code for subdivision and is identical to the Canada Post abbreviation.

1.4.3 It has already been adopted by a number of federal departments.

1.5 This data reference standard will be reviewed as required by the data reference stewards in consultation with the data reference standard custodian.

1.5.1 Data reference stewards: Statistics Canada and Natural Resources Canada

1.5.2 Data reference custodian: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

2. Effective date

2.1 This data reference standard takes effect on October 2, 2023.

3. Requirements

3.1 This data reference standard provides details on the requirements set out in subsections 4.3.1 of the Directive on Service and Digital.

3.2 Service owners and data practitioners must:

3.2.1 Apply the data reference table (Appendix A) to describe Canadian provinces and territories in datasets.

3.2.1.1 Use the codes within the "Alpha Code" column when sharing data within the federal government or publishing data to the Open Government Portal.

3.2.1.2 Use the Statistics Canada numerical when a numerical code is required in a data system.

4. Application

4.1 This data reference standard applies to organizations described in Section 6 of the Directive on Service and Digital.

4.2 This data reference standard applies to datasets and systems that are developed after the effective date of this reference standard.

5. References

5.1 This reference standard should be read in conjunction with:

- Directive on Service and Digital
- Standard for Managing Metadata
- Canada Post Addressing Guidelines. Table 4 - Canadian provinces and territories names and abbreviations
- Geographical Names Board of Canada. Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming (2011)
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Standard 3166 Country Codes. Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions
- Statistics Canada. Standard Geographical Classification Code (2021)
- Reference Standard entry on the Open Government Portal (CSV, JSON, Data Dictionary and RSS Feed)

5.2 Related policy instruments:

- Policy on Service and Digital

6. Enquiries

6.1 For interpretation of any aspect of this reference standard, contact ServiceDigital-ServicesNumerique@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

Appendix A: Data reference table

Table 1. Reference data table for Canadian provinces and territories

Name in English (nm_en)	Name in French (nm_fr)	Abbreviation in English (ab_en)	Abbreviation in French (ab_fr)	Alpha Code (al_code)	Numeric Code (nu_code)	ISO Code (iso_code)
Newfoundland and Labrador	Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador	N.L.	T.-N.-L.	NL	10	CA-NL
Prince Edward Island	Île-du-Prince-Édouard	P.E.I.	Î.-P.-É.	PE	11	CA-PE
Nova Scotia	Nouvelle-Écosse	N.S.	N.-É.	NS	12	CA-NS
New Brunswick	Nouveau-Brunswick	N.B.	N.-B.	NB	13	CA-NB
Quebec	Québec	Que.	Qc	QC	24	CA-QC
Ontario	Ontario	Ont.	Ont.	ON	35	CA-ON
Manitoba	Manitoba	Man.	Man.	MB	46	CA-MB
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan	Sask.	Sask.	SK	47	CA-SK
Alberta	Alberta	Alta.	Alb.	AB	48	CA-AB
British Columbia	Colombie-Britannique	B.C.	C.-B.	BC	59	CA-BC
Yukon	Yukon	Y.T.	Yn	YT	60	CA-YT
Northwest Territories	Territoires du Nord-Ouest	N.W.T.	T.N.-O.	NT	61	CA-NT
Nunavut	Nunavut	Nvt.	Nt	NU	62	CA-NU

This table shows the relationship between the alphanumeric codes (the "Alpha Code" column) and other code structures for Canadian provinces and territories (Statistics Canada Standard Geographical Classification Code, ISO Country Subdivision Code).

This data reference standard is available in machine-readable formats. Machine-readable means that software can be directed to reference the table and automatically pull names and codes through an application programming interface (API).

- [Data reference on Canadian provinces and territories (CSV)](#)
- [Data reference on Canadian provinces and territories (JSON)](#)

Appendix B: Data dictionary

The following explains the columns within the data reference table for Canadian provinces and territories.

Name in English - English name informed by the ISO Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 2: Country subdivision code (3166-2), Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming 2011 (Geographical Names Board of Canada, Natural Resources Canada), the Statistics Canada Standard Geographical Classification (2016), and the Canada Post Canadian provinces and territories names and abbreviations. Data type - alphanumeric.

Name in French - French name informed by the ISO Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 2: Country subdivision code (3166-2), Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming 2011 (Geographical Names Board of Canada, Natural Resources Canada), the Statistics Canada Standard Geographical Classification (2016), and the Canada Post Canadian provinces and territories names and abbreviations. Data type – alphanumeric.

Abbreviation in English - English abbreviation informed by the Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming 2011 (Geographical Names Board of Canada, Natural Resources Canada) and the Statistics Canada Standard Geographical Classification (2016). Data type - alphanumeric.

Abbreviation in French - French abbreviation informed by the Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming 2011 (Geographical Names Board of Canada, Natural Resources Canada) and the Statistics Canada Standard Geographical Classification (2016). Data type - alphanumeric.

Alpha Code - This code represents the major political units in the country of Canada. Data type - alphanumeric. ('Alpha Code' was used as the title for an alphanumeric code to be clear about the difference between this and the numeric code). This code was created by Canada Post.

Numeric Code – This code also represents the major political units in the country of Canada. Data type - numeric. This code was created by Statistics Canada

ISO Code – This code is stewarded by the International Standards organization and following the CA- prefix, matches the alpha code created by Canada Post

Date modified:

2025-06-09