

EIM Help – How to Name and Describe Field Locations

Version 2.4

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What does an EIM location represent?

An EIM location represents a **discrete geographic point on the earth's surface** where environmental data were collected. The same EIM location represents data collected above or below this point.

Important points to note

Use a consistent naming convention

Use a consistent naming convention for locations within your site or area. For example, you can combine your EIM Study ID or Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) Number into your Location ID's to make them unique in EIM ([see example 1, below](#)). For wells, you can use the unique Washington State Well Tag ID ([see example 7, below](#)). More details on this in sections below.

In these cases, enter only one EIM location

Same geographic point, different EIM studies

EIM studies can share the same EIM location

Make sure a location isn't already in EIM before submitting a new one. Use [EIM Map Search](#) to do this. Make sure metadata for an existing location accurately represents your location.

If you can use an existing EIM location, see section "[More on SSLID](#)" below, on how to link your data using the Result template.

VCP locations

Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) numbers are usually incorporated into EIM Location ID's. VCP studies sometimes close and later reopen under a new VCP number. Consequently, some EIM Location ID's contain old VCP numbers.

Don't submit new locations! Submit new result data to existing locations. If you have new locations, use either the old or the new VCP number in the EIM Location ID. Contact your EIM Data Coordinator if you have questions.

Same geographic point, different monitoring depths

Each EIM location represents a point on the earth's surface. All monitoring done above or below that point belongs to the same EIM location. Examples are water columns, test pits, sediment cores, soil borings, wells, and sediment dredging sites. **Don't enter separate EIM locations to represent different monitoring depths at the same point** ([see example 4, below](#)). Instead, use the Field Collection Upper and Lower Depth fields in your Result template. Download EIM help "[Entering Field Collection Depth or Height](#)" for details.

Same geographic point, different monitoring events

Don't enter separate EIM locations for individual monitoring events at the same location ([see example 5, below](#)). Instead, use the Field Collection Date and Time fields in your Result template to denote individual monitoring dates and times.

Same geographic point, soil boring later made into a well

If you have a soil boring in EIM in which a well was later constructed, don't enter a new EIM location for the well. Contact your EIM Data Coordinator. They will convert the soil boring into a well for you. It's also OK for the soil boring data to remain with the well.

Overview of naming and description fields

Give each of your monitoring locations the following four identifiers and descriptors:

1. Location ID

Metadata	Information
Definition	Unique ID to identify a monitoring location in EIM.
Uniqueness	Must be unique to EIM. No two EIM monitoring locations can have the same Location ID (see example 1, below).
Max length	15 characters.
Where in EIM?	Location template (column A). Result template (column B).
Examples	VCNW5647-MW4; BFO-AND1; BSE_21_GolfCrs; VCSW1676_B-1.

2. Location Name

Metadata	Information
Definition	Short, descriptive name to identify a monitoring location in EIM.
Uniqueness	Doesn't need to be unique, but make it descriptive.
Max length	40 characters.
Where in EIM?	Location template (column B).
Examples	VCNW5647 MW4; Anderson Creek at Roberts RD bridge; Boise Creek station 21 golf course; Boring 1.

3. Location Description

Metadata	Information
Definition	More detailed information about where to find your location, such as how to access the site, proximity to landmarks, etc.
Uniqueness	Unique to your study in EIM. Don't use same description for each monitoring location at your site.
Max length	2000 characters.
Where in EIM?	Location template (column D).
Examples	Northeast corner of property. Anderson Creek at downstream side of Roberts RD bridge. Left of 10th hole of Enumclaw Golf Course on Boise Creek. Parking lot west of former dry cleaner building.
Other	See section " More on Location Description ," below.

4. Study-Specific Location ID (SSLID)

Metadata	Information
Definition	What your monitoring location is called in your own EIM study. Usually represents your site or field ID and matches what's in your report(s).
Uniqueness	Must be unique to your study but NOT unique to EIM (see example 3, below).
Max length	40 characters. (8 characters or fewer display better on GIS map labels).
Where in EIM?	Result template (column C).

Metadata	Information
Examples	MW4; AND1; BSE_21_GolfCrs; B-1.
Other	See section “ More on SSLID ,” below.

More on SSLID

Why does EIM have SSLID?

Study-Specific Location ID (SSLID) seems redundant with EIM Location ID, but we have it for two reasons:

1. Allows you to assign whatever ID you want to your EIM location, like “MW-4.” Unlike Location ID, it doesn’t need to be unique to EIM. It can match your site or field ID and tie your EIM data to your project reports and maps.
2. Allows two or more EIM studies to share an EIM location, but each have their own ID’s.

Why should I check my Location ID and SSLID pairings?

You initially establish Location ID and SSLID pairings in a study by submitting data in the Result template.

Example of Location ID and SSLID pairing in Result template.

Study ID (column A)	Location ID (column B)	SSLID (column C)
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	MW4

Use the same pairings for all future data submittals to your study.

Inconsistent pairings of Location ID’s and SSLID’s is a common data submittal error. It usually happens when users submit additional data to a location.

If you aren’t sure what Location ID and SSLID pairings were previously used in your study, download the results data from [EIM Search](#) to view them or contact your EIM Data Coordinator.

How do I use SSLID to link my data to an existing EIM Location?

Say a location, a well in this case, is already in EIM with Location ID “VCNW5647-MW4.” The user who originally submitted the location assigned the Location ID. Their sampling site ID was MW4, which they used for their SSLID.

You monitored the same well, but your sampling site ID is “MW12.” The SSLID allows you to call the existing EIM location “MW12” in your own study. You don’t need to add a new location.

How do you do this? When you fill out your Result template, enter your Study ID, the existing EIM Location ID, and *your* site ID under SSLID. Once we load your data into EIM, it links to the existing EIM location, labeled with your own site ID.

EIM Result template, SSLID examples.

Study ID (column A)	Location ID (column B)	SSLID (column C)	Notes
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4.	MW4.	Original study and location.
VCSW7890	VCNW5647-MW4	MW12	Your study and location.

More on Location Description

The best location descriptions are like directions to the location. This is easy for some locations like stream sampling sites, typically accessed at road crossings. (Example: Anderson Creek at downstream side of Roberts RD bridge).

But it’s not easy for other sampling locations, like on cleanup sites. They can have hundreds of locations within a small area. Making detailed descriptions takes a lot of time and isn’t always useful, so we don’t need as much detail, just a general indication of what the location is (a boring, a well, a soil sampling location, etc.) and where it is on the site.

The following examples provide guidance for different data types.

Location Description examples for specific types of sites

Stream sampling

- Anderson Creek at downstream side of Roberts RD bridge.
- Woodland Creek at Hawks Prairie Road near intersection with Johnson Point Road NE.
- Heading west on Aldergrove Road near Lake Terrell Wildlife Area, there is a pull out on the left 0.8 miles west of N. Star Rd. Walk down the path toward the lake. Sampling location is Terrell Creek, 50 feet upstream of mouth.

Cleanup sites

Keep it simple. Give a general idea of what the location is and where it is on the site.

- Soil, SW wall of UST excavation.
- Sub slab soil gas, NE corner of building.

- Boring in parking lot west of cleaners.
- Well in NE quadrant of site, downgradient of contaminant source.

Marine water and marine sediment

There are no landmarks to describe the relative position of most marine sediment and water sampling locations. Indicate the waterbody (inlet or bay) the location is in. List proximity to landmarks on shore and/or relative position to other sampling locations.

- Puget Sound, near Tacoma Narrows Park, SW of Tacoma Narrows Bridge.
- Hood Canal, west of Brinnon, about 50 meters offshore.
- Strait of Juan de Fuca, north of Port Angeles, west of station RS3467.

Location naming examples

1. Location ID

OK - Location ID's are unique in EIM.

Location ID's prefixed with EIM Study ID create uniqueness.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW5	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 5	MW5
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW6	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 6	MW6

NOT OK - Location ID's aren't unique in EIM.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW4
VCNW5647	MW5	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 5	MW5
VCNW5647	MW6	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 6	MW6

2. Location Name

OK - Location Names are descriptive.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW5	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 5	MW5
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW6	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 6	MW6

NOT OK - Location Names aren't descriptive enough.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	Monitoring Well	MW4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW5	Monitoring Well	MW5
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW6	Monitoring Well	MW6

3. Study-Specific Location ID (SSLID)

OK - SSLID's are unique for each Location in Study.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW5	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 5	MW5
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW6	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 6	MW6

NOT OK - SSLID's aren't unique for each Location in Study.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW5	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 5	MW
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW6	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 6	MW

NOT OK - One Location ID can't have more than one SSLID within a Study.

This is a common error with subsequent data submittals. It will cause an error when we load the data. Check the Location ID and SSLID pairings you used in previous submittals or look up the pairings in [EIM Search](#) for your study.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	MW-4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4	Well-4

4. Sampling depths

NOT OK - Sample depth specified in location information.

Denote samples taken at different depths (like 5, 10, and 15 feet) in the Result template Field Collection Reference Point and Field Collection Upper and Lower Depth columns.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4-5	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4-5 ft	MW4-5
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4-10	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4-10 ft	MW4-10
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4-15	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4-15 ft	MW4-15

5. Sampling events

NOT OK - Sampling date specified in location information.

Denote samples taken on different dates in the Result template Field Collection Date and Time columns.

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4-6	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4 6/12	MW4-6/12
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4-9	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4 9/12	MW4-9/12
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4-12	VCNW5647 Monitoring Well 4 12/12	MW4-12/12

6. Same Location ID, Location Name, and SSLID

OK - All three are the same, but unique in the study and EIM.

(Location Name doesn't need to be unique in EIM).

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647-MW4	VCNW5647-MW4
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW5	VCNW5647-MW5	VCNW5647-MW5
VCNW5647	VCNW5647-MW6	VCNW5647-MW6	VCNW5647-MW6

7. Wells

OK - All three are the same, but unique in the study and EIM.

Using Washington State unique Well Tag. (Location Name doesn't need to be unique in EIM).

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	AAB124	AAB124	AAB124
VCNW5647	AAB125	AAB125	AAB125
VCNW5647	AAB126	AAB126	AAB126

OK - Same Location ID and Location Name the same, but unique in the study and EIM.

Using Well Tag ID's and your site ID (as SSLID). (Location Name doesn't need to be unique in EIM).

Study ID	Location ID	Location Name	SSLID
VCNW5647	AAB124	AAB124	MW4
VCNW5647	AAB125	AAB125	MW5
VCNW5647	AAB126	AAB126	MW6

OK - Also see Example 6, above.

Document revision history

Revision Date	Revision No.	Summary of Changes	Reviser(s)
10/2/2007	1.0	Original Document	CN, KC
11/6/2009	1.1	Updated examples	CN, KC
6/13/2011	1.2	Nomenclature change - dropped 'User' from Study ID and Location ID	CN
8/1/2013	1.3	Changed Study Location Name to Study-Specific Location ID to reflect data model change	CN
12/6/2013	1.4	Added more background content and information for each field type.	KC, CN
3/11/2016	2.0	Restructured, added clarification on relationships between Study-Specific Location ID's and Location ID's.	JK, CN
09/13/2017	2.1	Updated links	KC

Revision Date	Revision No.	Summary of Changes	Reviser(s)
01/04/2018	2.2	Added info about what to do if you have a soil boring that is later made into a monitoring well. Changed title from Naming EIM Monitoring Locations. Updated style.	CN
06/18/2019	2.3	Added paragraph about VCPs under heading “Same geographic point, different EIM Studies”	KC
06/09/2020	2.4	Addressed accessibility and updated links. Location Name now doesn’t need to be unique, just descriptive. Location Description can be more general for cleanup sites. Added acronym SSLID for Study-Specific Location ID. Changed title from Naming Conventions for EIM Field Locations.	KC, SP, CN