
Zip Code Maps Readme

Tyler Mangin *Updated: November 17th, 2015*

Files and Usage

US Postal Service Zip Codes

- US_ZIP_2014data.dta
- US_ZIP_2014coord.dta

US Census ZIP Code Tabulation Areas

- US_ZCTA_LowRes_2013data.dta
- US_ZCTA_LowRes_2013coord.dta

“LowRes” refers to the underlying KML boundary map, which is a generalization of the more detailed Census TIGER/Line files. It is meant to keep file sizes smaller and reduce processing time in STATA.

The Zip Code maps are STATA .dta files meant to be used in conjunction with Maurizio Pisati’s spmap command.¹ For example

```
1 findit spmap
2 /*install*/
3 use US_ZIP_2014data
4 spmap using US_ZIP_2014coord.dta, id(_ID)
```

ZCTA vs. ZIP Disambiguation

From the U.S. Census’s Bureau’s website:²

ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) are generalized areal representations of United States Postal Service (USPS) ZIP Code service areas. The USPS ZIP Codes identify the individual post office or metropolitan area delivery station associated with mailing addresses. USPS ZIP Codes are not areal features but a collection of mail delivery routes.

¹See <https://ideas.repec.org/c/boc/bocode/s456812.html>

²<https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/zctas.html>

ZTCA representations might be preferred for some purposes requiring harmonization with U.S. Census data. However, ZCTA definitions *do not* cover the full extent of the the U.S's geographic region. Maps involving ZTCAs can have gaps, and an occasional ZCTA crosses recognizable state boundaries. Again, from the Census Bureau:

For the 2010 Census, large water bodies and large unpopulated land areas do not have ZCTAs ... In most instances the ZCTA code is the same as the ZIP Code for an area. Some addresses will end up with a ZCTA code different from their ZIP Code. ... Some ZIP Codes represent very few addresses (sometimes only one) and therefore will not appear in the ZCTA universe.



Figure 1: *Alaskan ZCTAs*

Figure 2: *Alaskan ZIPs*

Sources and Attribution

For US_ZCTA_LowRes_2013 STATA files:

Files were generated from the Census Bureau's KML Cartographic Boundary Files ³.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 Census, KML - Cartographic Boundary Files 2013. Available at https://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/kml/kml_zcta.html (November 18, 2015).

For US_ZIP_2013 STATA files:

Files were generated from an ArcGIS layer based on Esri and TomTom data.

Sources: Esri, TomTom. Last Modified August 3, 2015. Available at <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=8d2012a2016e484dafaac0451f9aea24>

³<https://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-kml.html>