



# **GIS Standard Operating Guidance for Multi-Agency Coordination Centers**



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# CREDITS

Many dedicated leaders in the public safety and GIS communities supported the development of this initial GIS Standard Operating Guidance for Multi-Agency Coordination.

Foremost, the National Alliance for Public Safety GIS Foundation and its partners in the project are grateful for the time and expertise that so many practitioners contributed in developing this. NAPSG Foundation would like to recognize Paul Hardwick and Tricia Toomey of the Homeland Security Regional Technology Center at the SDSU Research Foundation for their technical support and expertise that has made this project possible.

A special thank you goes to the leadership team who supported the concept through the early stages of the project and guided the development of the initial GIS Standard Operating Guidance for Multi-Agency Coordination Centers.

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# DOCUMENT BACKGROUND

This Standard Operating Guidance (SOG) document was developed by a team of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialists and professionals, leaders in public safety operations & management, and incident support subject matter experts. This document strives to serve as a template to support national GIS standards for emergency response in Multi-Agency Coordination Centers. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group GIS Standard Operating Procedures (GSTOP, June 2006)<sup>i</sup> served as the primary reference and guide to developing SOPs for Incident Command Systems. Examples are provided from the County of San Diego's Standard Operating Procedures and are for reference purposes only, they are not intended to set a standard.

This document proposes a set of guidelines for coordinating GIS emergency response efforts. These guidelines are intended to serve as a shared foundation, encouraging improved communication and collaboration amongst GIS and other emergency response staff. This is a living document that provides a starting point to produce guidelines for the organization and management of GIS data, map creation and output within Multi-Agency Coordination Centers. It is anticipated that this document will be updated as more and more local agencies adopt GIS operating procedures for emergency management and provide best practices back to NAPSG Foundation.

Intended as a template, agencies are encouraged to modify document content to accommodate local and regional specific details. Modifications may range from referencing local datasets and file locations to adjusting standard map products to better account for local hazards or values at risk. It is recommended that you work with your local emergency service coordinators to create an SOP or SOG that meets the unique needs of your agency and/or jurisdiction.

## Tips on How to Use this Guidance Document

Within this document, *background information* on each section is offered in text boxes at the beginning of each chapter. The background information is intended to guide the user on how to utilize the associated guidance. Text which is bold, italicized, and in carrots delineates where **<<LOCAL JURISDICTIONAL INPUT IS NEEDED>>**. Examples are given in motion quotes and are intended to provide the reader with tips on how to use and interpret the examples provided. Diagrams are also marked as examples to indicate where local inputs are required. These examples and diagrams are offered up only for reference purposes and are not intended to set a standard.

It is recommended that once your agency has created a GIS operations document for your agency that it is exercised when emergency management agencies or first responders conduct exercises. This is a good opportunity to see if the document actual works and provides useful information. If possible GIS staff should provide injects to exercises that specifically test different elements within the document. Exercise after action reports should identify areas of the document and GIS response that worked and did not work. The document should be updated after each exercise to improve its effectiveness.

# INTRODUCTION

**Purpose:** This Standard Operating Guidance document was prepared to provide guidance and key components of a template SOP or SOG that will help to facilitate local agencies and jurisdiction with the creation, preparation, coordination, and dissemination of GIS services and products during emergency events. This is a living document that provides a starting point to produce guidelines for the organization and management of GIS data, map creation and output within Multi-Agency Coordination Centers specifically. Additionally, proper internal and external communication channels for sharing these products are addressed.

**Audience:** The intended audience for this document includes all staff assigned GIS positions supporting an emergency event in a coordination center, including Emergency Operation Center (EOC), Department Operation Center (DOC) and Emergency Medical Services Medical Operations Center (EMS MOC) support responsibilities. This document is meant for use in Multi-Agency Coordination Centers and therefore follows the National Incident Management Structure (NIMS). This document is not intended for use by the Incident Command and therefore does not follow the Incident Command System (ICS). For more information about GIS use within ICS please see the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group GIS Standard Operating Procedures \(GSTOP, June 2006\)](#). However, components of this guidance document can be adopted and applied to the development of SOPs or SOGs for ICS specifically.

## **Objectives:**

Four objectives were set to adequately address GIS needs and practices in an emergency event:

1. Determine key GIS supplies and tools for Multi-Agency Coordination Centers (EOC, DOC, or MOC)
2. Determine data and mapping protocols
3. Determine and document protocols for data/map dissemination/sharing via web applications
4. Determine data and map sharing practices with external contacts

In order to meet these four objectives, this document is broken down into the following eight chapters:

Emergency Management Systems - Outlines the various emergency management organizational structures and physical layout of the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (OAEOC) to aid when responding to an emergency operations center (EOC), department operations center (DOC), or medical operations center (MOC).

GIS Minimum Expectations – Outlines the hardware, software, data, map and general resources necessary for GIS staff to perform their jobs as well as the GIS knowledge, skills and abilities that are required to adequately function in the many GIS emergency support roles that exist.

File Naming and Directory Structure – Provides standardized naming conventions for GIS files and directory structure to support data management and facilitate identification.

Incident Data Acquisition and Availability Expectations – Provides information on briefing cycles and when incident data become available and accessible to GIS users.

Documentation and Metadata – Outlines the documentation/metadata expectations and procedures.

Data Protocols – Details data format conventions, backup policy, data sharing and the use of web applications.

Mapping Protocols – Details required map elements, data content and format conventions, distribution regulations, symbology guidelines and QA/QC. Outlines cartographic standards for map products.

Staffing and Team Transition – Outlines the procedure for requesting additional GIS support, tracking GIS requests and handling shift changes.

# Example Title Page for Your Agency's SOG

## **GIS Standard Operating Guideline for the <<INSERT JURISDICTION/AGENCY>> <<INSERT COORDINATION CENTER>>**

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# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

**Background:** This section may be helpful in a Standard Operating Procedure to provide a background on the various emergency management and incident command systems that are in place. In many cases the GIS Responders to the Multi-Agency Coordination Center may be unfamiliar with the layout, hierarchy, and processes taking place. For example, GIS Responders may be asked to physically take a map or digital file, etc. to the Joint Information Center (JIC) or to various agencies sitting within the EOC, and it will be helpful to know where to find them and how the EOC is being run. It may also be helpful to know proper chain of command. Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the sections and examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

- ✓ **Purpose:** In order to respond to an emergency incident as a GIS Responder it is important to understand the various emergency management and incident command systems that are in place. An organizational structure and physical layout of the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center is also provided for reference.

## NIMS

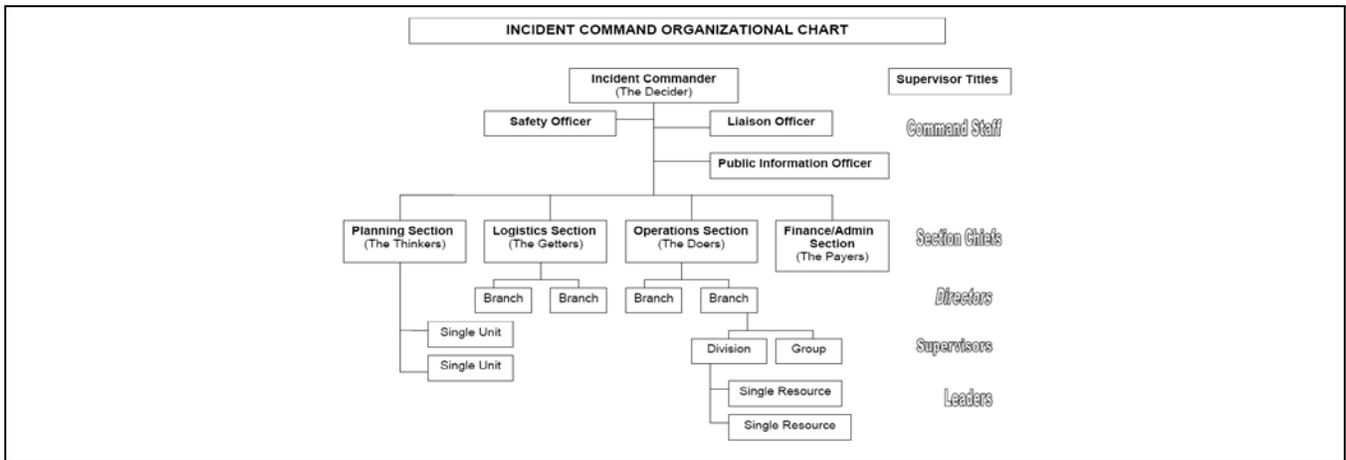
The **National Incident Management System (NIMS)** was released in March 2004 by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). NIMS offers a standardized approach to incident management and response. It was developed to allow first responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines to work together better in an effort to respond to all hazards including natural disasters and emergencies. Benefits of NIMS include a unified approach to incident management, standard command and management structures, and emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management. NIMS lays out the standardized structure of an Incident Command System (ICS) and definitions of an (EOC). For more information about NIMS see:

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>

## ICS

The **Incident Command System (ICS)** is a command structure set up in the field for first responders. Some of these command systems have GIS staff. ICS provides a flexible mechanism for coordinated and collaborative incident management for first responders in the field. The physical location where the ICS is set up is called the Incident Command Post (ICP). If you are requested to respond or drop off information to the ICP, the following organizational structure is helpful for finding the right people. For more information about ICS see:

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/index.htm>



**Figure 1 – EXAMPLE ICS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.**

## EOC

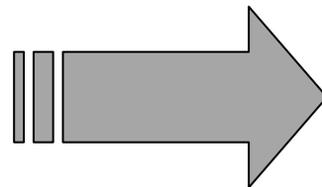
According to NIMS an EOC is activated to support the on-scene response during an escalating incident by relieving the burden of external coordination and securing additional resources.

An EOC is the physical location where organizations and agencies come together during an emergency to coordinate response and recovery actions and resources. It is also where management decisions are facilitated. The organization structure of an EOC in <<STATE>> is laid out in the <<SYSTEM>>.

### Example Organization Chart

The organization structure of an EOC in California is laid out in the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). Figure 2 shows the physical layout and design of the <<JURISDICTION>> Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (OAEOC).

See Figure 2 – Example of OAEOC Physical Layout



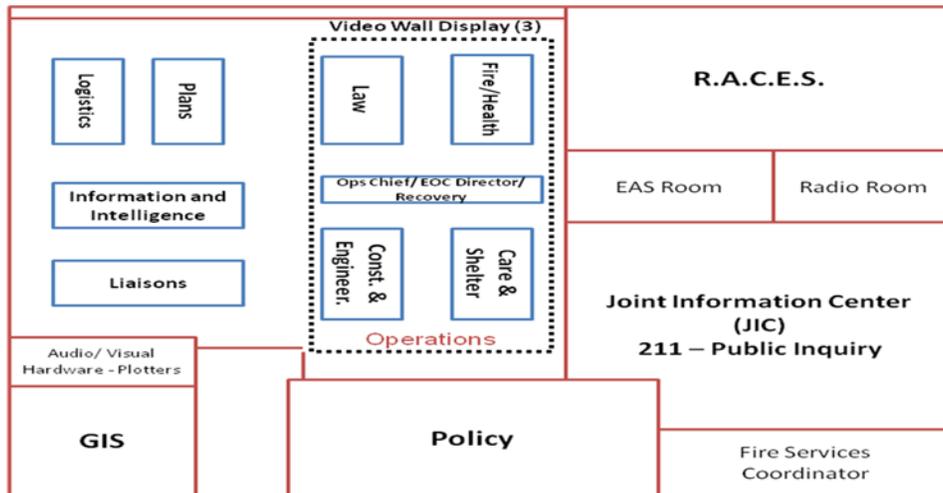


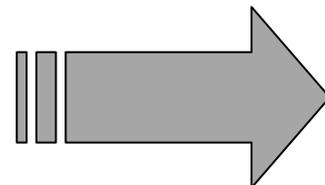
Figure 2 - *EXAMPLE* OAEOC PHYSICAL LAYOUT. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

<<STATE/REGIONAL/LOCAL SYSTEM NAME>>

<<INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OR REFERENCE TO STATE, REGIONAL, OR LOCAL SYSTEMS OR DOCUMENTS WHICH IMPACT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS IN THE AREA. >>

**Example Organizational Chart for SEMS** The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is a set of emergency management principles developed as a result of the 1991 Oakland East Bay Hills fire for coordinating state and local emergency response in California. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) directed the use of NIMS for emergency response. SEMS principles have been integrated into NIMS. Full compliance was reached in California in 2007.

See Figure 3 – Example of OAEOC Level III Organization Chart



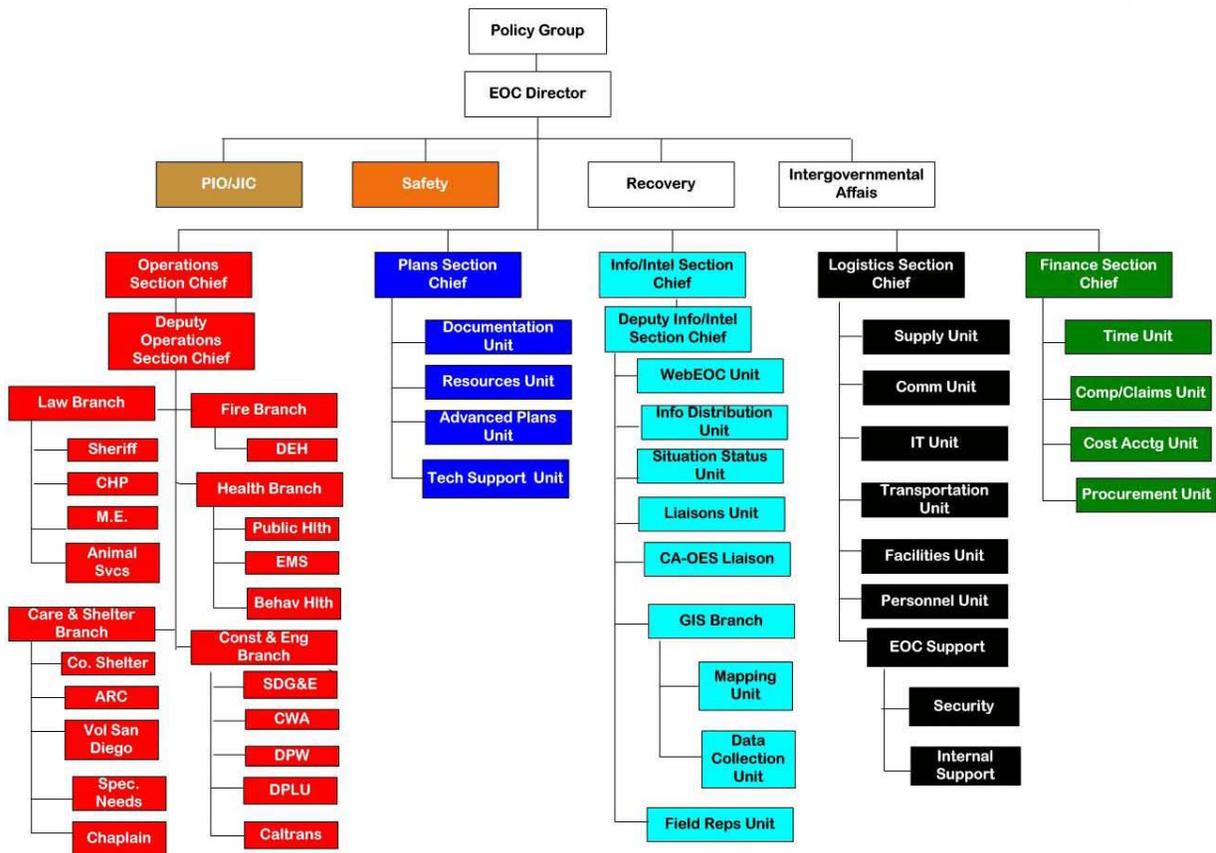


Figure 3 – EXAMPLE OAEOC LEVEL III ORGANIZATION CHART. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

# GIS RESOURCES AND STAFFING

**Background:** This chapter details the physical resources and personnel skill sets required for GIS Responders to fulfill GIS needs & expectations in an emergency event. Potential GIS responders should be identified prior to an incident.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the sections and examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. For example if the local Multi-Agency Coordination Center does not have computers loaded with GIS software or data the document will need to provide instructions on where the equipment is located. The GIS Staffing requirements are also solely provided as an example and should be modified based on your jurisdictional needs. *Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.*

✓ **Purpose:** This chapter details the resources and skill sets required for GIS Responders to fulfill GIS needs & expectations in an emergency event.

## RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

### Example GIS Supply List

The table below serves as an example for the “GIS Supply List”. The needs and availability of resources for each agency or jurisdiction will vary. Use this list as a guiding example and not as a fixed set of requirements.

	REQUIRED		Location		
	Office	Field	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
<b>HARDWARE (Where possible, field hardware should be ruggedized)</b>					
Laptop and/or Desktop	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
License keys, dongles and codes written down	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plotter	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projector	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GPS Hardware		√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projection Screen			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multi-Gb Flash Drive (32 Gb or more)	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portable, External Hard Drive (1 Terabyte or more)	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Backup Laptop Battery		√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3G Broadband Access Card Activated	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cell phone with published number and TXT or SMS activated	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SOFTWARE					
ArcGIS licensed to machine	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Office	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adobe Reader	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adobe Acrobat Full Version			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GPS device and ArcGIS GPS Analyst extension		√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metric Converter	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DATA RESOURCES					
Commercially Available Imagery	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locally Available Downloaded Data	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare Copies of the above	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MAP RESOURCES					
Department Specific Maps			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wall Maps			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locally Used Road Maps	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campus Maps			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transit Maps			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourist (POI) Maps			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GENERAL RESOURCES					
GIS Desk Book*	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Markers (Dry Erase)/Pens/Pencils	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compass (Magnetic not scribing type)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protractor			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ruler or map scale	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CDs/DVDs - Writeable	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Push Pins	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plotter Ink Cartridges	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plotter Paper (to include Mylar)	√		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phone Books			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAFETY					
Personal Phone with Texting ability or SMS (to communicate with relatives)	√	√			
Personal hot drink cup	√	√			
A supply of your business cards (Current business cell phone on card)	√	√			
Snack Food, e.g., energy bar	√	√			
Your emergency contact list printed up and current – The emergency GIS group members, your family personal contacts.	√	√			

**Figure 4 Example GIS SUPPLY LIST, this example is provided for reference purposes only and is not intended to set a standard.**

*\*GIS Desk book to include – SOP, Contact List, Data/Map Matrix, Symbology Quick Guide, GIS EOC Staff Checklist, Map/Schematic of the Room (where are resources located), ArcGIS Tips/Tricks, How to Access/Use WebEOC.*

## STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

The skills required for a GIS support staff are varied by the event and duration of the event. The <<EOC/DOC/MOC UNIT/BRANCH/ETC>> is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information across all Emergency Support Functions. The focus of the team will be to develop an integrated common operational picture of an emergency event. It will review information coming from the field, departmental control centers and EOC personnel to quality control the data, identify gaps, and develop intelligence products for staff. Most of the <<BRANCH/UNIT/ETC>> products will be built around geospatial information.

The structure is modular. In a small incident, one person could fill more than one role and in a large-scale incident several people could staff the same role. Be sure to consider that the guidance on staffing is for Multi-Agency Coordination Centers and does not specifically support the Incident Command Structure (ICS). One point of differentiation to note is that in ICS there is no 'Branch' for GIS. However, a Geospatial Task Group may be constructed under the Situation Unit Leader to support the GIS needs in support of ICS.

### Example Roles in a GIS Branch:

*This example assumes that a GIS Branch will be formed in the multi-agency coordination center to manage all incidents. These roles are as follows:*

1. GIS Branch Coordinator
2. GIS Unit Leader
3. GIS Specialist
4. Field Analyst/Observer
5. Communications Specialist
6. GIS Analyst
7. Policy Specialist
8. Technical Liaisons

*Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.*

## GIS Role Tables

In the GIS Role tables, each GIS Role is thoroughly defined as are the skills required in order for an individual to qualify to fill each GIS Role in the manner required to adequately support the <<STATE/REGIONAL/LOCAL SYSTEM NAME>> in an emergency event. An individual's ability to assume each GIS role is determined by the frequency with which that individual conducts certain GIS or GIS-related activities within their daily work routine. These values are idealized and do not need to be exactly duplicated or represented in the person filling the role. Refer to Appendix 1 for a full description of GIS emergency roles and responsibilities.

### Example GIS Role Chart –



Provided below, in Figure 5, is an example of one GIS Role and its associated skill set requirements and responsibilities. Additional GIS Role charts are provided in the appendix.

<b>ROLE: GIS ANALYST</b> - This position can perform research, database queries and statistical analysis for the GIS specialist. Frequently during emergencies, data come into the INCIDENT/EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER in less than pristine condition. The analyst will massage the data into a usable format. Having a GIS Analyst on site will free up the GIS specialist to concentrate on simple GIS analysis and map production.		
<b>SKILL</b>	<b>DUTY/TASK</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
Administering and Operating GIS Application	Use ArcINFO 9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data.	Often (weekly)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data.	Often (weekly)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Often (weekly)
	Analyze raster data sets with Spatial Analyst/Grid or Imagine	Often (weekly)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Often (weekly)
	Project spatial data	Often (weekly)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Often (weekly)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Often (weekly)
	Edit GIS data	Often (weekly)
	Convert data (i.e., geodatabase, shapefile, coverage, DWG, etc.)	Often (weekly)
	Generate statistics	Often (weekly)
	Geocode data	Often (weekly)
	Perform image analysis	Often (weekly)
	Map and Create new GIS data	Often (weekly)
	Maintain existing GIS data (QA/QC)	Often (weekly)
GIS Services to End Users	Create maps	Often (weekly)
	Create reports based upon GIS Analysis	Often (weekly)
	Create charts	Often (weekly)
	Create tables	Often (weekly)
	Interpret analysis for client	Often (weekly)
	Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Often (weekly)
	Directly work with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Occasionally (every month)

**Figure 5 - EXAMPLE GIS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES.** Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

# FILE NAMING AND DIRECTORY STRUCTURE

**Background:** This chapter is intended to provide GIS staff with a common, standardized file naming convention and directory structure. The examples provided are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

The example directory structure was borrowed from the National Wildfire Coordinating Groups GIS SOP used by GIS Specialists to fulfill the GIS needs of the Planning Section of the Incident Management Teams. Standard naming conventions and directory structures foster easier collaboration between varying shifts of GIS Responders. The directory structure is set up with the date and time at the beginning of each folder and file to facilitate easy chronologic sorting ensuring that the most recent map information is at the top or bottom of a file list depending on sort order.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the sections and examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

- ✓ **Purpose:** This chapter provides GIS staff with a common, standardized file naming convention and directory structure. The structure and naming conventions set herein are intended to support an efficient work flow process by providing self-evident naming protocols that are specific not only to each individual incident but also to each incident's time(s) and date(s).

## GIS FILE DIRECTORY STRUCTURE

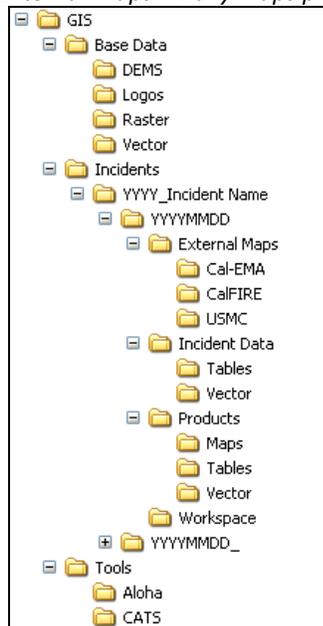
During an emergency event, incident related data and maps can be retrieved from: **1. <<FOLDER LOCATION>>** **AND/OR 2. <<WEB APPLICATION>>** per the file structure outline and guidelines defined below. *Figure 6 on the following page serves as an example of how this directory structure and naming convention would be used in an actual event.*

### Example Directory Structure:

The example directory structure convention provided here was borrowed from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) SOPs. This structure will be accessible on the <<FOLDER LOCATION>> however; it is also suggested to maintain a copy on your desktop/laptop C:\ drive in the event that a network connection is not possible. The directory structure is set up with the data and time at the beginning of each folder and file to facilitate easy chronologic sorting.

## Example Directory Structure

- <<Folder (for example, P:\EOCGIS)>>\BaseData - This folder contains base map data; data specific or derived from the event are NOT stored here.
  - DEMs - Digital Elevation Models
  - Logos – logos and data disclaimers
  - Raster – Hillshade, Eagle Aerial Imagery, Air Photo Imagery
  - Vector – Transportation, Admin Boundaries, Points of Interest, etc
- <<Folder>>\Tools This folder contains extensions, scripts, models, DMS-DD conversion macro/script, other software used during the incident
- <<Folder>>\Incidents\ - This is the top tier GIS Emergency Response directory:
  - YYYY\_IncidentName – This is the top tier Folder for a unique event. 4-digit year and the name of the Unique Incident (e.g. 2003\_CedarFire)
    - Date (YYYYMMDD) date/time stamped incident spatial data layers; one folder for each day of the incident
      - Incident Data – All data stored in this folder are data that are specific to the incident and include a date/time stamp – DATA SHOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED TO THE WEB UNTIL THE PRODUCT IS READY FOR USE/DISSEMINATION AND APPROVED BY THE INCIDENT COMMANDER. Consideration should be given to breaking ‘incident data’ into sub-groups 1) DEM, 2) Raster, and 3) Vector – as incident data could be collected in these forms.
      - Products – GIS analysis and map products produced for the event on that day
      - Workspace – Workspace for that day
      - External Maps – Daily maps produced outside the organization

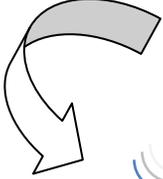


**Figure 6 - Example Directory Structure and File Naming Convention**

**NOTE:** In addition to incident related maps and data, resources such as basemap data, GIS Map templates, layer files, scripts and other tools will be accessible on <<FOLDER LOCATION>>.

## GIS FILE NAMING CONVENTION

All data files (\*.shp, \*.xls, \*.dbf, etc.) must contain <<ENTER LOCAL REGULATIONS>>. Similarly, map document names (\*.pdf, \*.jpg, etc) must contain <<ENTER LOCAL REGULATIONS>>.



### Example GIS File Naming Convention:

Provided below is a recommended GIS file naming convention that can be applied. Be sure to consider your local regulations when defining this component of your SOP or SOG.

### Recommended GIS File Naming Convention

All data files (\*.shp, \*.xls, \*.dbf, etc.) must contain date/time, incident agency responsible for creating a map and subject matter qualifiers. Similarly, map document names (\*.pdf, \*.jpg, etc) must contain date/time, incident name, subject matter information as well as size (e.g. 11X17, ANSI B, Custom32X66, etc.) and orientation (i.e. portrait vs. landscape) of the map.

- Data file – yyyyymmdd\_hhmm\_IncidentName\_Subjectmatter\_Agency.
- Map document -  
yyyyymmdd\_hhmm\_IncidentName\_Subjectmatter\_Agency\_Size\_Orientation.\*\*\*

For field collected data, also include a Source Code tag when naming the data file:

- GPS\_Name = Global Positioning System\_Collector's Name
- FOBS = Field Observer
- SITL = Situation Unit Leader

For data/maps that were provided by Local, State or Federal Agency tag with Agency's Acronym:

- CalFire (or relevant state agency)
- CDC
- Etc

NOTE: When adding non-standard tags ALWAYS notify GIS staff of their presence and meaning.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of each GIS responder to ALWAYS communicate the file naming convention that they are using to those with whom they are sharing the data.

## DATA ACQUISITION AND AVAILABILITY EXPECTATIONS

**Background:** This section is intended to familiarize GIS Responders with the types of data that may be requested of them, data they may need to acquire and data they may need to create. The briefing cycles section is intended to give GIS responders direction for responsibilities and a timeframe for which products may need to be ready. The damage assessment section is intended to give direction on how damage assessment data is collected and disseminated.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike especially related to the release of damage assessment information. Please be sure to modify the sections and examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

- ✓ **Purpose:** This chapter provides GIS staff with an understanding of the media briefing cycles, incident data, and damage assessment protocols.

### BRIEFING CYCLES

During an emergency event, the <<**EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (OR DOC/MOC/ETC)**>> operates on A <<**ENTER BRIEFING CYCLE TIMES, EX: 12 HOUR**>> briefing cycle. Often <<**ENTER BRIEFING TIMES**>>, EOC Officials and/or Elected Officials and/or staff brief the media/public. These briefings provide information as to the extent of the area and population affected as well as actions enlisted by the <<**JURISDICTION OR ENTITY**>> and other agencies to show the incident progression (if applicable) and reconcile the damage.

#### Example - Direction for GIS Staff:

Between scheduled briefings Incident Management Teams - IMT (and field responders only if an IMT is not set-up) send data, in various formats, to EOC staff. GIS staff is responsible for compiling these data, conducting analyses and providing maps to help staff make decisions regarding susceptible vulnerable populations, facility closures, potential environmental health hazards, etc. GIS staff is also responsible for providing maps for the briefings. Example briefings maps illustrate the extent of damage or the evacuation areas.

### INCIDENT DATA

Typical types of incident data include: Road Closures, Detours, Shelters, Evacuation Areas, or Incident Perimeters. Incident data comes from a number of sources: GPS data, field ICP, remotely sensed imagery, emergency or mass notification system, word of mouth, scratch paper, etc. There is an element of latency inherent in the distribution of GIS data, for a number of reasons:

- Data need to be transferred from the field.

- Data are often converted into or created from scratch in a GIS friendly format before validation.
- Data must be released/approved for release by the data owner and/or the Emergency Management Team.
- Ability to commission reconnaissance flights/aerial surveys.
- Data analysis and computation time.
- Quality control of the data inputs and outputs.

# DOCUMENTATION AND METADATA

**Background:** It is recommended that metadata be provided on all GIS data leaving the Multi-Agency Coordination Center, especially any data to be released to the public. Due to the proliferation of geospatial data during an incident from other agencies, news organizations, and social network crowd sourced information it is very important to attach a minimum set of metadata on data released to the public to distinguish the data as authoritative. Due to the time needed to complete FGDC (Federal Geographic Data Committee) compliant metadata, the file naming convention may serve as a good fit for data maintaining residency in the Multi-Agency Coordination Center during extremely busy periods of time.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

- ✓ **Purpose:** This chapter provides guidance for the creation of metadata for all incident data and modified base data.

## DISSEMINATION OF METADATA

Metadata should be created/updated in GIS File Management System in compliance with the FGDC (Federal Geographic Data Committee). <<**REFERENCE ANY MATERIALS/POLICIES THAT OUTLINE METADATA GUIDELINES**>>.

The metadata file can be exported in HTML, SGML or .txt format and should be named in the same convention as the data to which it refers (date/time stamp, incident name, etc).

# DATA PROTOCOLS

**Background:** It is recommended that data formats, data and map transfer protocols, and back up policies be standardized prior to an incident. Things to consider are native data and file formats that emergency responders and other GIS responders will be accessing. For example, if a .dbf table is distributed out to the Emergency Management Team and they use Microsoft Excel to open the file they will receive a warning message, most responders will not go beyond the warning message to access the file. Another example is if a .pdf or .kml file is distributed to field personnel and they do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader or Google Earth on their mobile device the field personnel will not be able to open the file.

The Data Sharing/ Exchange Policy section establishes the rules for the sharing of data and policy for release to the news media and for public release. It is important to note that GIS responders are not allowed to release incident information to anyone outside the incident without following the policies identified within the jurisdiction.

The Minimum Essential Datasets section provides an example of datasets that GIS responders may want to have at their disposal prior to an incident. It may not be necessary to include the list in the local document, but it is recommended that a list is available in case GIS assistance is provided by individuals or entities that are not familiar with the local data. It is also a good idea to have this data available on an Emergency DVD/CD or hard drive that can be shared with other responding agencies or to easily reload data in case of hardware failure.

Data connection information is important to include in case automatic data connections fail. Data connection protocols are not easily remembered when hurried or tired.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

It is recommended that the all data be stored locally in the Multi-Agency Coordination Center or on a computer/ hard drive designated for EOC use. This is to accommodate loss of network/ internet connectivity. Storing data on a back-up DVD or thumb-drive may also be beneficial.

- ✓ **Purpose:** This chapter discusses data format conventions, data backup and data sharing policies.

## DATA FORMAT CONVENTIONS

### Example Data Format Conventions:

GIS staff should adhere to the following Data Format Conventions when sharing/transferring files with other GIS staff.

### Example Data Format Conventions

- *Acceptable Data Formats include - <<Example: .xls, .dbf, .shp, File Geodatabase, KML*
- *Post tables for GIS staff as .dbf for quick import into ArcGIS*
- *When working with Excel spreadsheets remember that cell values linked to calculations will not be translated between .xls and .dbf. If there are values of consequence that are linked to a calculation, create a new field for the data values and perform a paste special (Values only) before converting to .dbf. Make sure that there are no spaces in the header row and worksheet tabs.*
  - *Also note Microsoft 2007 does not support saving as a .dbf; however, ArcMap now intakes .xls and has always accepted .CSV files.*
- *Tables posted for consumption of use outside of GIS should be in an MS Excel (.xls) or (.xlsx) format to avoid software compatibility warnings when opening the file.*
- *Acceptable Map [Output] Formats include - <<Example: .jpg, .pdf, .mxd*
- *When exporting to .jpg or .pdf use a resolution of 100 dpi (for printing hard copies 300 dpi is the recommended resolution) unless higher resolution is necessary to see detail. This reduces file sizes to accommodate file sharing and network limitations.*
  - *Use Relative Paths Option when sharing .mxds with others - Select the Document Properties option from the File Menu, followed by the Data Sources button in the "Map Title" Properties dialog. Then select "Store relative path names to data sources" and "Make relative paths the default for new map documents I create."*

*NOTE: When posting zip files, use same naming convention as associated data file (refer to above naming conventions).*

## DATA BACKUP POLICY

To avoid duplication of effort and loss of work products GIS staff are to adhere to the following practices  
<<ENTER DATA BACKUP POLICY>>

### Example Data Backup Policy

- Perform and save all work in the Workspace directory under the incident (or on your C: Drive if the network is unavailable or sluggish)
- Create backup copies of the files you are working on, on a regular basis
  - At a specific time interval, it is recommended this be done every 2-4 hours
- Save/Backup work to USB memory stick or to portable, external hard drive
  - Tip: Purchase a portable, external hard drive with backup software.
  - IMPORTANT – *Legal action* is often associated with post disaster mitigation, relief, and funding. Saving all your work and keeping a time log or journal of events, people, and requests made is highly suggested.

## DATA SHARING/EXCHANGE POLICY

### Web Applications

**<<DESCRIBE WEB APPLICATIONS AND SYSTEMS. PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND OUTLINE THE PROCESSES FOR SHARING DATA AND MAP PRODUCTS. ATTACHMENTS MAY BE INCLUDED TO PROVIDE STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKING WITH THESE SYSTEMS.>>**

### GIS Press Package (optional)

**<<IF DATA WILL ALSO BE SHARED WITH THE PUBLIC OUTLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR DATA RELEASE OR REFERENCE EXISTING POLICIES. >>**

#### Example GIS Press Package Policy

To further ensure the security and/or confidentiality of all incident related data:

- Do not share files through web applications unless the data are complete, ready-for-use, and where applicable you have been given the proper authority.
- When sharing GIS files (shape files, personal geodatabase, etc), ALWAYS attach a projection file. Projection files are REQUIRED to be posted with all GIS data file formats. Projection to be used should be determined before emergency situation.
- When using web applications to share files, use the meta\_tag to alert GIS users as to status of the data/map/etc (i.e. FACT, DRAFT, etc.)
- Clear data and map transfer with your Operation Center Manager or Director, as needed, when sharing data and map products between EOC, DOC and/or MOC GIS Staff and/or through web applications.
- The Public Information Officer is responsible for sharing ALL data and/or maps with the media.
- Public Access to <<jurisdiction>> GIS Data During a Disaster
- When the need to distribute certain types of GIS information is first apparent, certain assurances must be made. In order for a data layer to be made available publicly in a GIS press package, it must meet the following eight criteria. The questions must be applied individually to each data set that is to be included in the GIS press package. A “No” answer on any of the following questions should prohibit the release of the specific data layer in the press package.
  1. Is the Incident the source of the information, (the data is not base data)?
  2. The data is essential in the press package, otherwise the press package will not make sense?
  3. Has the data has been cleared to be in the press package by its authors?
  4. Has the data been cleared to be released by the incident PIO in this briefing cycle (if any doubt see question 3)?
  5. Has the data been checked for quality and consistency?
  6. Is the data or subject matter releasable and not described on the Release Constrained Data layer list?
  7. Is the data still current with recent events?
  8. Does the data have metadata (see standard in definition)?

Additionally, if the data passes the above questions with a “Yes” answer to all of them, the data must be summarily vetted.

**<<DESCRIBE ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING DATA RELEASE.>>**

- ✓ **For example:** GIS Staff is not at liberty to distribute maps or GIS incident data to media or public. This is the decision of incident command. Data must be vetted by the GIS Branch Coordinator, EOC GIS Unit Leader, and the PIO Chief. If there is any concern over the release of the data, the GIS Branch Coordinator will contact the Department Data Owner to ensure the release is appropriate. Final sign-off then comes from the GIS Branch Coordinator, bringing the info first to the Info/Intel Section Chief (See Figure 3 – OES/NIMS Org chart) for sign-off and then finally the EOC director. No release may be made before this final sign-off is made.

## MINIMUM ESSENTIAL DATASETS

The recommended datasets list details GIS datasets that are optional in support of the mapping functions outlined in these standards.

Example Datasets	
<b>Datasets</b>	
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <u>Purpose:</u> Identify access routes to the incident, evacuation routes, and other related transportation reference points. Support routing of public vehicles (evacuation/avoidance).<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Streets (name, hierarchy – primary vs. interstate)</li><li>• Private roads</li><li>• Traffic control points</li><li>• Access control points</li><li>• Road construction</li><li>• Transportation resources - buses, school buses (with wheelchair access), ambulances</li><li>• Navigable waterways</li><li>• Mass transit</li><li>• Railways</li><li>• Airports</li><li>• Helicopter landing zones</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <u>Purpose:</u> Identify impacted and at-risk populations.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daytime population</li><li>• At need populations (schools, daycares, public meeting places, seniors homes, universities etc)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Buildings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <u>Purpose:</u> Identify affected facilities or facilities in use for the incident.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential shelter sites (large buildings – schools, convention centers etc)</li><li>• Primary and secondary mass care centers from existing EOC plan</li><li>• Critical Infrastructure</li><li>• Building footprints</li><li>• Ice arenas (temporary morgues)</li></ul></li></ul>

**Example Datasets Continued:**

**Utilities**

- ✓ Purpose: Identify infrastructure that could be damaged. Identify infrastructure that could be hazardous. Provide guidance for access by first responders.
  - Utility pipelines
  - Power lines (underground and overhead)
  - Propane farms
  - Sanitary Sewers
  - Water Treatment Plants
  - Storm water facilities - catch basins, storm sewers, outfalls
  - Wet Hydrants
  - Dry/draft hydrants
  - Potable water mains
  - Extremely Hazardous Sites and Hazardous Sites (SARAH Title 3 sites)
  - Public Service facilities (public works, water treatment, waste water treatment, electric plants)

**Communications**

- ✓ Purpose: Identify potential communication outages due to the incident.
  - Cell towers
  - Radio communication
  - Siren locations, sound buffers
  - Main internet hubs/lines

**Land Ownership/Administrative**

- ✓ Purpose: Identify land ownership. This data may be managed by the tax assessors office.
  - Address points
  - Parcel boundaries with CAMA data
  - Jurisdictions

**Environment**

- ✓ Purpose: Identify physical environment conditions that may influence hazard behavior or response.
  - Topography
  - Water courses
  - Lakes
  - Rivers
  - DEM
  - Fuel models
  - Historical fire incidents
  - FEMA flood zones

### *Example datasets continued*

#### **Imagery**

- Aerial imagery with Date
- Oblique aerial imagery (i.e., Pictometry)

#### **Dynamic Datasets**

- ✓ Purpose: Gain perspective on incident within context of current conditions
  - Atmospheric conditions (wind direction, etc)
  - Traffic counts/traffic flow
  - Incident Datasets

#### **Incident Specific**

- ✓ Purpose: Visualize location and extent of incident
  - Location and extent of extent of tactical area or incident boundaries (point, line, or polygon)
  - Plume (fire, chemical, etc)
  - Shake Map (USGS)

#### **Incident Command**

- ✓ Purpose: Identify incident operations sites and zones
  - Incident command post
  - Staging areas
  - Hot/warm/cold zones
  - Shelter sites
  - Decontamination site
  - Evacuation zone
  - Police/fire stations
  - Hospitals/emergent care
  - Heliports
  - Airports
  - Landmarks

# DATA CONNECTIONS

## Example Data Connections

*Example: <<Server name>>*

*Personal/File GDB, Shapefiles, Coverages: <<Folder location>>*

*CD/DVD: <<CD/DVD name>>*

## ENTERPRISE DATABASE

### Example Enterprise Database

*<<Provide process and connection properties for SDE databases.>>*

*Open GIS File Management Program*

- *Double Click Database Connections*
- *Select Add Spatial Database Connection*
- *Enter connection information:*
  - *Server: <server>*
  - *Service: <service>*
  - *Database: <database>*
  - *Username: <username>*

*Password: <password>*

## GIS EMERGENCY DVD

**<<IF APPLICABLE, DESCRIBE THE DATASETS AND OTHER CONTENT PROVIDED ON CD/DVD. INCLUDE INFORMATION ON HOW THE CD/DVD IS PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED AND IDENTIFY ANY USAGE RESTRICTIONS. IDENTIFY THE PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE MEDIA>>**

# MAPPING PROTOCOLS

**Background:** It is recommended that map templates populated with base data and symbolized similar to local map products be compiled prior to an incident. Templates speed up the process of getting the maps out to the Emergency Management Team especially during the first response period. You may find that map templates and elements need to be changed based on the type of incident or as the incident expands and contracts.

It is important to establish QA/QC procedures. Before a map is released from the GIS unit all map element have been updated including scale bar, file location information, title, legend, and symbology. Special attention should be paid to time and date information. This information is critical when asked to reproduce a map or for after action reporting or for litigation purposes.

There is not a nationally adopted symbology set for emergency management/ incident response. There are however, symbol sets put forth by the Homeland Security Working Group (<http://www.fgdc.gov/HSWG/index.html>), National Fire Protection Association (<http://www.nfpa.org>), and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (<http://www.nwcg.gov/>).

Agencies may want to establish standard and optional map products based on types of incidents that are reoccur on a frequent basis in their region such as floods, hurricanes, or wildfires.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

- ✓ **Purpose:** In order to maintain a uniform look and feel, to facilitate interpretability and ease of use, all GIS Staff will follow the guidelines listed below when creating map products in support of an emergency event.

## MAP TEMPLATES (MXD)

- Map Templates are available at: <<**FOLDER LOCATION OR HYPERLINK**>>
- Use the Templates available at this location to create all map products

**Note:** *In a future version of this document, example map templates may be provided. Additional research is required to create the map templates for the most broadly relevant needs for Multi-Agency Coordination Centers. Additionally through the development of this guidance, NAPSG Foundation has identified a need for map templates for incident command, NIMS, and other key applications.*

## MAP ELEMENTS

### RE QU IR ED M A

#### Example Required Map Elements

- Title – Includes Incident Name, Map theme, Geographic Extent, time/date stamp of data
- Legend
- Scale Bar
- Logos and Data Disclaimers
  - Logo and data disclaimer to recognize data sources
  - Logo and data disclaimer to recognize County Group/Dept/Division
- File Location– provide the full path name for the network location of the mxd; ex:  
C:\GIS\Incidents\yyyy\_IncidentName\YYYYMMDD\Products\yyyymmdd\_hhmm\_IncidentName\_Subjectmatter\_Agency\_Size\_Orientation.mxd
- North Arrow
- Projection – Name of the projection, datum, and units
- Data Sources – who, what, where, when, why and how (source codes - refer to page 21 of <http://www.nwccg.gov/pms/pubs/GSTOP7.pdf> NWCCG SOP)
- “Time Sensitive Data” Disclaimer Stamp – for all maps that are time sensitive
- “DRAFT” stamp – if map is a draft

## MAP PRODUCT FORMAT CONVENTIONS

- Share completed map products with <<enter agency/section>> in <<enter format>> format.
- Export maps with 100 dpi resolution to keep file size down, unless higher resolution is necessary to see detail (300 dpi is recommended for hard copy print maps). This eases data sharing and load on networks.

## MAP DISTRIBUTION REGULATIONS

Example map distribution guidelines:

- GIS Staff is not at liberty to distribute maps or GIS incident data to media or public. This is the decision of incident command.
- Incident maps may be distributed to the Public if requested/instructed by Incident <<enter position>> Commander.>>

## MAP SYMBOLOGY GUIDELINES

- Reference the most widely used symbol set by your jurisdiction.
- A symbol set specifically for Multi-Agency Coordination Centers has not yet been developed or socialized.
- The FGDC offers some suggested symbology that may or may not support the needs of your agency. For these resources visit - <http://www.fgdc.gov/HSWG/index.html>.
- If you are an ArcGIS user, additional resources on how to use the FGDC symbology is available at - <http://resources.arcgis.com/content/kbase?fa=articleShow&d=29213>

## QA/QC

- Strive for excellence on the first go. If a bad map or bad data are discovered, update the <<enter GIS position>> immediately. The GIS group (and all individuals referring to map/data) will be notified via <<Identify channels for communicating QC related issues>>, identify what exactly the flaw is, work to correct the map and redistribute immediately.
- Remove bad data or maps from locations such as published web applications as soon as possible, but do not delete the bad information from the disk drive. Instead, add a tag to the file name indicating that it is bad data and should not be used. A record of any bad data that was released may need to be accessed at some point during or after the event.

## Standard Map Product Definitions

The standard map product definitions outline the product objectives, target audience, data content and cartographic requirements for those map products. These map products communicate incident specific details as well as general environment and infrastructure information to support emergency management operations.

<<Enter standard map product definitions.>>

## Optional Map Product Definitions

The optional map product definitions outline the product objectives, target audience, data content and cartographic requirements for those map products that are *optional* for all State or Regional Multi-Agency Incidents. These map products provide supplementary and specialized information for use during the response and recovery phases of the incident. Other ad-hoc map products may also be requested to meet incident specific needs.

<<Enter optional map product definitions.>>

**Note:** *In a future version of this document, example map product definitions will be provided. Additional research is required to create a list of the most broadly relevant list of map product definitions. Additionally through the development of this guidance, NAPSG Foundation has identified a need for map product definitions for incident command, NIMS, and other key applications.*

# STAFFING AND TEAM TRANSITION

**Background:** It is recommended that GIS staff expectations are identified prior to an incident. Potential GIS responders should be made aware of these expectations before agreeing to be a GIS Responder. The environment during an incident in a Multi-Agency Coordination center can be very frantic with request for information and maps coming from a variety of people and disciplines. Responders are also expected to work long hours while keeping a high performance level and intensity. Some people do not function well in this type of environment and may not be an ideal candidate as a GIS Responder.

Not all Multi-Agency Coordination Centers are alike. Please be sure to modify the examples below to fit your Multi-Agency Coordination Center needs. Examples are for reference purposes only and are not intended to set a standard.

- ✓ **Purpose:** In order to facilitate a smooth transition between shifts, it is important that GIS staff accurately maintain record of all requests and their priority level as well as what has been delivered and what is pending.

## GIS RESPONDER EXPECTATIONS

### Example GIS Responder Expectations:

GIS is considered an essential emergency function and GIS Staff are consequently considered essential personnel during an emergency event. Staff that is directly affected by the event is not expected to report to work. It is the responsibility of GIS staff to communicate their availability status to the GIS Branch Coordinator. The GIS Branch Coordinator will keep track of which staff is available to report and which staff has been affected by the event and unable to report.

## EOC/DOC/MOC GIS STAFFING

EOCs, DOCs and MOCs employ <<enter shift length, ex: 12 hour>> shifts. During most emergency events the EOC, DOCs and MOC are staffed 24 hrs/day.

<<Outline how EOC, DOC, and MOC are staffed. Detail the process for obtaining additional GIS support and identify reserve staff resources>>

## TEAM TRANSITION

### START OF SHIFT

At the beginning of a shift, GIS staff should complete the following tasks: <<Enter local protocols.>>

<<Example of beginning of shift tasks:

- Sign in on your operations center's Staffing Log.
- Communicate your role and availability via <<Identify appropriate communication systems and channels>>
- Assess GIS needs of Incident Command and your operations center and the needs of fellow GIS staff at other operations centers.
- As necessary or requested, provide data, map products and progress reports through relevant communication channels >>

### END OF SHIFT

At the end of a work shift, GIS staff will debrief their replacement with the following information:

<<Enter local protocols.>>

<<Example of end of shift tasks:

- Wrap up the project/map/data that you are working on to the best of your ability.
- Communicate the end of your shift via <<Identify appropriate communication systems and channels>>. Include the name of your replacement.
- Debrief your replacement as to what deliverables have been requested.
- Debrief your replacement as to what has been created, what is left to be created?
  - Where are the necessary scratch files?
  - What base data have been modified?
  - Where are your notes?
  - Provide the last Media Report?
  - What next steps have been identified?
- Provide your replacement with your contact information.
- Provide your replacement with contact information for other GIS Staff that are currently staffing the event or that are due to report.
- Provide your replacement with direct report information – to whom they are reporting; who is reporting to them.
- Sign-Out on your operations center's Staffing Log.>>

## **APPENDIX 1: GIS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The roles for standard operation are based upon a white paper written by a Seattle Emergency Management Unit describing how to “Get the Most Out of GIS in an Emergency Operations Center”<sup>ii</sup>. There are 8 roles and they are designed to work in conjunction with or in direct support of the EOC or Operation center.

The Unit is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information across all Emergency Support Functions. The focus of the team will be to develop an integrated common operational picture of an emergency event. It will review information coming from the field, departmental control centers and EOC personnel to quality control the data, identify gaps, and develop intelligence products for staff.

The structure is modular. In a small event, one person could fill more than one role and in a big event several people could staff the same role. Staffing is accomplished by tapping staff who are not currently assigned emergency roles under current response plans.

Most of the branch’s products will be built around geospatial information. These include situation maps, an incident action plan, and briefing maps. However, being a team approach, the GIS Specialist will be called upon to support other team members as needed.

### **These roles are:**

- 1. GIS Branch Coordinator**
- 2. GIS Unit Leader**
- 3. GIS Specialist**
- 4. Field Analyst/Observer**
- 5. Communications Specialist**
- 6. GIS Analyst**
- 7. Policy Specialist**
- 8. Technical Liaisons**

### **GIS Role Tables**

In the GIS Role tables to follow, each GIS Role is thoroughly defined as are the skills required in order for an individual to qualify to fill each GIS Role in the manner required to adequately support the county in an emergency event. An individual’s ability to assume each GIS role is determined by the frequency with which that individual conducts certain GIS or GIS-related activities within their daily work routine. These values are idealized and do not need to be exactly duplicated or represented in the person filling the role.

**ROLE: GIS BRANCH COORDINATOR** Because an incident will often involve multiple jurisdictions, agencies, and departments that require communication of GIS coordination activities and staff levels and resources, an Incident GIS Coordination Role will be require as an umbrella communicator/coordinator. This role is designed to insure that the required GIS staff are available and informed of their duties to the Operation Centers. This role is often a member of the jurisdictions upper management with direct contact with the jurisdictions leadership. The role may serve as a liaison to other jurisdictions and can coordinate the GIS assistance of staff and GIS resources to other jurisdictions if requested by the respective emergency management or emergency services department. This role should be able to pinch hit in any of the jurisdictions operation centers, including GIS work to help out the Operation Center Coordinators. The defining characteristic of this role is providing the staff, training, resources, GIS logistical support (software, servers, field equipment, etc.) to the other roles.

One of the most important duties performed by this position is preparing the jurisdiction for emergency response by developing staffing, ensuring personnel are adequately trained and equipped and by developing standard operational plans in coordination with the Operation Center GIS Coordinators. This role may also work in conjunction with the surround jurisdictions GIS emergency response units.

**This role is required to respond to the operation centers or duty stations.**

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
Administering and Operating GIS Applications	Use ArcINFO9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Project spatial data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Edit GIS data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Convert data (i.e., geodatabase, shapefiles, coverage, DWG,...etc)	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Generate statistics	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Geocode data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Perform image analysis	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Map and Create new GIS data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
Maintain existing GIS data (QA/QC)	Rarely (every 6 mos.)	
GIS Services to End Users	Creating maps	Occasionally (every month)
	Create reports based upon GIS Analysis	Often (weekly)
	Create charts	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Create tables	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Interpret analysis for client	Often (weekly)

Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Often (weekly)
Directly working with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Often (weekly)

**ROLE: OPERATIONS CENTER GIS COORDINATOR - GIS UNIT LEADER** - For the GIS specialist, the most visible role of the Operations Center GIS Coordinator will be performing “traffic control” for the Operation Center. GIS personnel staffing Operation Centers frequently complain about pressure from high level managers. The Operation Center GIS Coordinator takes this heat for the GIS staff. All work requests from the Operation Center management come through the Unit Leader who makes decisions about prioritizing competing projects in the Operations center. The Operation Center GIS Coordinator should also be able to pinch hit in any of the Unit’s positions, including GIS. The main reason is that the Operation Center GIS Coordinator is the full-time cadre around which the GIS Unit is built. The Operation Center GIS Coordinator is a member of the EOC Management staff and is therefore the first Unit member in the Operation Center after an event. The defining characteristic of this role is managing the GIS needs of the operation center it is assigned to.

This role is designed to manage and maintain the GIS operations at anyone of the operations centers when not activated. As previously indicated this role assigns GIS work at the Operation Center and receives the requests for their Operation Center. Additionally, they perform QA/QC on the products that are produced in their Operation Center and ensure the work is finished by given deadlines. This role is required to post their information/data findings to web applications and to coordinate and communicate with the Incident GIS Coordination/Logistics Support Role. **This role is required to respond first to the operation center or duty station.**

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
Administering and Operating GIS Applications	Use ArcINFO9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data	Occasionally (every month)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data	Occasionally (every month)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Analyze raster data sets with Spatial Analyst/Grid or Imagine	Occasionally (every month)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Occasionally (every month)
	Project spatial data	Occasionally (every month)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Occasionally (every month)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Edit GIS data	Occasionally (every month)
	Convert data (i.e., geodatabase, shapefiles, coverage, DWG,...etc)	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Generate statistics	Occasionally (every month)
	Geocode data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Perform image analysis	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Map and Create new GIS data	Occasionally (every month)
	Maintain existing GIS data (QA/QC)	Occasionally (every month)
GIS Services to End Users	Creating maps	Often (weekly)
	Create reports based upon GIS Analysis	Often (weekly)
	Create charts	Often (weekly)

	Create tables	Often (weekly)
	Interpret analysis for client	Often (weekly)
	Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Often (weekly)
	Directly working with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Often (weekly)

**ROLE: GIS SPECIALIST** The most important function of the GIS Specialist will be integrating the vast amount of data that a large event will generate. While most of the roles here do not directly address GIS coordination with agencies outside the Operation Centers (with the exception of the EOC GIS Coordinator and Incident GIS Coordinator), they are organized to facilitate the integration of data into an operation center in the context that it will be disseminated to others (one of the primary purposes of an EOC). The GIS Specialist role will have to create a Situation Map every few hours that neatly summarizes the most important points of an emergency response on a small sheet of paper. The primary it will also perform ad hoc analysis at the request of the Operation Center GIS Coordinator. Part of the analytical function will be to perform analysis that verifies data. This specialist will also assist Emergency Public Information Officers produce spatial information for public consumption. The defining characteristic of this role is the ability to *quickly make maps and perform simple analyses* for the operation center coordinator.

**This role is required to respond to the operation center or duty station.**

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
Administering and Operating GIS Applications	Use ArcINFO9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data	Often (weekly)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data	Occasionally (every month)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Occasionally (every month)
	Analyze raster data sets with Spatial Analyst/Grid or Imagine	Occasionally (every month)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Occasionally (every month)
	Project spatial data	Occasionally (every month)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Occasionally (every month)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Occasionally (every month)
	Edit GIS data	Occasionally (every month)
	Convert data (i.e., geodatabase, shapefiles, coverage, DWG,...etc)	Often (weekly)
	Generate statistics	Often (weekly)
	Geocode data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Perform image analysis	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Map and Create new GIS data	Often (weekly)
	Maintain existing GIS data (QA/QC)	Often (weekly)
GIS Services to	Creating maps	Often (weekly)

End Users	Create reports based upon GIS Analysis	Occasionally (every month)
	Create charts	Often (weekly)
	Create tables	Often (weekly)
	Interpret analysis for client	Often (weekly)
	Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Directly working with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Rarely (every 6 mos.)

**ROLE: FIELD ANALYST / OBSERVER** - This role acts as the eyes of the operation centers and GIS specialist in the field. It provides a way for operation centers to directly access an incident site. One of its most important duties is collecting GPS data and relay it back to the GIS specialist. This position verifies information for the GIS specialist. Specifically, this individual is required to collect and report spatial information from the field in the forms of maps, data, or positions relay via phone or radio. Their primary task or job often is not related to emergency response, but they are required to perform this task during a disaster. They are skilled in GPS collection and are familiar with the difficulties of working in remote locations in rapidly changing environment. This role must be able to be detached to a state or federal agency if called to this duty. This role is the primary forward observer for spatial information for command centers.

**This role is required to respond to the operation center or duty station.**

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
Administering and Operating GIS Applications	Use ArcINFO9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data	Occasionally (every month)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data	Occasionally (every month)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Often (weekly)
	Analyze raster data sets with Spatial Analyst/Grid or Imagine	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Occasionally (every month)
	Project spatial data	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Often (weekly)
	Edit GIS data	Often (weekly)
	Convert data (i.e., geodatabase, shapefiles, coverage, DWG,...etc)	Often (weekly)
	Generate statistics	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Geocode data	Often (weekly)
	Perform image analysis	Never (never)
	Map and Create new GIS data	Often (weekly)
	Maintain existing GIS data (QA/QC)	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
GIS Services to	Creating maps	Often (weekly)

End Users	Create reports based upon GIS Analysis	Occasionally (every month)
	Create charts	Occasionally (every month)
	Create tables	Occasionally (every month)
	Interpret analysis for client	Occasionally (every month)
	Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Never (never)
	Directly working with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Never (never)

**ROLE: COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST** - This role acts as the ears of the Unit by monitoring radio and TV communications. For the GIS analyst, it is an information source. It will often be the first to pick up new, raw information. The person filling this role will be able to provide frequent updates to the GIS specialist and assist with vetting information. This role will also be cross-trained to perform the simple tasks outlined in the GIS Specialist role. In a fast moving event, the Communications Specialist would directly update a map document set up by the GIS Specialist. **This role is required to respond to the operation center or duty station.**

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
Administering and Operating GIS Applications	Use ArcINFO9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data	Occasionally (every month)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data	Occasionally (every month)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Analyze raster data sets with Spatial Analyst/Grid or Imagine	Never (never)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Project spatial data	Occasionally (every month)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
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	Perform image analysis	Never (never)
	Map and Create new GIS data	Occasionally (every month)
Maintain existing GIS data (QA/QC)	Rarely (every 6 mos.)	
GIS Services to End Users	Creating maps	Occasionally (every month)
	Create reports based upon GIS Analysis	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Create charts	Occasionally (every month)
	Create tables	Occasionally (every month)
	Interpret analysis for client	Rarely (every 6 mos.)
	Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Never (never)
	Directly working with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Rarely (every 6 mos.)

**ROLE: GIS ANALYST** - This position can perform research, database queries and statistical analysis for the GIS specialist. Frequently during emergencies, data comes into the EOC in less than pristine condition. The analyst will massage the data into a usable format. Having a database expert on site will free up the GIS specialist to concentrate on simple GIS analysis and map production. **This role is required to respond to the operation center or duty station.**

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
Administering and Operating GIS Application	Use ArcINFO9.x to identify, evaluate, and input spatial data.	Often (weekly)
	Use ArcINFO 9.x to query data.	Often (weekly)
	Convert or import digital data using digitizers, scanners or GPS.	Often (weekly)
	Analyze raster data sets with Spatial Analyst/Grid or Imagine	Often (weekly)
	Analyze vector data sets with Geoprocessing	Often (weekly)
	Project spatial data	Often (weekly)
GIS Product Development	Create FDGC Metadata	Often (weekly)
	Collect field location data via GPS	Often (weekly)
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	Map and Create new GIS data	Often (weekly)
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GIS Services to End Users	Creating maps	Often (weekly)
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	Create charts	Often (weekly)
	Create tables	Often (weekly)
	Interpret analysis for client	Often (weekly)
	Determining design format of GIS data layers or database used with GIS layers	Often (weekly)
	Directly working with clients to meet their GIS need or further their understanding of GIS	Occasionally (every month)

**ROLE: POLICY SPECIALIST** - This role is the Unit's writer. This position produces the text that accompanies maps and other analysis if they require special explanation or detail. The people staffing this position are drawn from the Executive and pool of senior public information officers (PIOs). They help ensure that GIS maps communicate with a lay audience and integrate with non-geographic material. Although they are not technically part of the unit's GIS structure they play an important role of minimizing miscommunication to the public and other non-technical agency representatives.

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
<p>This role requires no specialized GIS skills, only a general understanding of what the technology is and what it does, and how has conducted the work or sources of information. This role is very important in that it should act as a reality check QA/QC in asking about the quality or source of information or claims made in the GIS products. This role is required to respond to the operation center or duty station.</p>		

**ROLE: TECHNICAL LIAISONS** - While not officially, members of the Unit, as needed, the operation center Unit will be augmented with scientific liaisons to better inform GIS analysis. Often, decision makers look to GIS analysts to provide detailed technical analysis outside their areas of expertise. The operation center plan provides a mechanism to request scientific support when needed. From areas multi-disciplinary areas of expertise, a pool will be formed of individuals to fill this role.

SKILL	DUTY/TASK	FREQUENCY
<p>This role requires no specialized GIS Skills, only a general understanding of what the technology is and what it does. This role is very important role in that it should augment the expertise of GIS Analyst and GIS specialist so that they can make informed decision when working with spatial data that has a specific technical aspect, e.g., HAZMAT, sensitive biology, engineering, etc. This role does not require a response to the EOC or physical presence (unless requested), but should be available via phone and email when needed.</p>		

## Appendix 2: List of Referenced Links

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<sup>i</sup> National Wildlife Coordinating Group. GIS Standard Operating Procedures (June 2006)  
<<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/GSTOP7.pdf>>

<sup>ii</sup> Arnone, Harvey and T.J. McDonald, “Getting the Most Out of GIS in an Emergency Operations Center: Support for GIS operations using a Situation Status Unit” (ESRI International User Conference Proceedings and Seattle Emergency Management Agency)  
<<http://proceedings.esri.com/library/userconf/proc05/papers/pap1422.pdf>>