



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
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9 July 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR

State Inspectors General
United States Property and Fiscal Officers
Chief Information Officers/Directors of Information Management
Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Operations/Plans, Operations, and Training Officers
State Environmental Program Managers

SUBJECT: Metadata Requirements for Geographic Data

1. References:

a. Executive Order 12906, Coordinating Geographic Data Acquisition and Access: The National Spatial Data Infrastructure (encl 1).

b. Federal Geographic Data Committee (FDGC), Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM), version 2, FGDC-STD-001-1998 (encl 2).

2. The purpose of this memorandum is to establish Army National Guard (ARNG) policy on metadata requirements for geographic data.

3. Definitions.

a. Metadata is descriptive information (encapsulated in file format) that summarizes the content, quality, condition, lineage, and other relevant characteristics of geographic data. Metadata is intended to aid users in determining the "fitness for use" of data for a particular application.

b. Geographic data is digital information that identifies the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features or boundaries on, above, or below the Earth's surface.

4. Background. Executive Order (EO) 12906 establishes metadata standards for Federal agencies. The ARNG is herein providing guidance on metadata in order to meet the standards outlined in the EO. Metadata ensures that potential data users can make an informed decision about whether the data is appropriate for the intended use and guarantees that geographic data sets possessed by the ARNG will not be vulnerable to risk of data loss due to personnel turnover. Lack of knowledge about what data is available within the ARNG has led to duplication of effort. Having complete metadata will make it possible to catalog and search available data sources. The

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ARNG's utilization of geographic information makes the adoption of metadata standards essential for efficient information exchange and to meet the metadata requirements established in the above references.

5. All geographic data shall be documented in accordance with Executive Order 12906.

a. Metadata file content and structure shall be compliant with the standards set forth in reference 1b. Metadata shall be included with the data set as a companion file or files in American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) text or Hypertext Markup Language format.

b. Metadata should be created while the geographic data is being developed. This is the point when the information needed for compiling metadata is most readily available. Creating metadata after the geographic data is developed can lead to creation of less accurate documentation and can significantly increase the time and cost of gathering necessary information. Geographic data that was previously collected or produced, either indirectly or directly shall be documented as stated in section 3b of reference 1a.

c. The creator of a specific geographic data set is responsible for creating the associated metadata. As stated in section 4d of reference 1a, geographic data created for the ARNG via contracts or interagency agreements are subject to the same metadata requirements as data created internally by the ARNG. Any contract or agreement that will result in creation or collection of geographic data must explicitly state that the contractor will also create or collect metadata that complies with standards set forth in reference 1b.

d. Geographic data shall not be distributed to other external agencies, entities, or persons, either public or private, without including the associated metadata. Geographic data shall not be utilized to perform analysis relating to environmental projects or analysis for items such as Integrated Natural or Cultural Resource Management Plans, National Environmental Policy Act documents or construction projects unless FGDC compliant metadata is available for these data. This restriction also applies when the ARNG redistributes geographic data previously obtained from other governmental agencies or non-governmental organizations.

6. The metadata tools in ArcCatalog by ESRI shall be utilized to produce FGDC compliant metadata. ArcCatalog enables ARNG personnel to reduce the training and effort involved in creating metadata.

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7. All ARNG offices possessing geographic data will immediately undertake an internal assessment of its level of compliance with the metadata requirements of Executive Order 12906 and report the results of that assessment to the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) point of contact below no later than 30 days after receipt of memorandum. In addition, all offices will ensure that metadata exists for all geographic data in its possession no later than their first GIS data submission to the National Guard Bureau. The scope of this memorandum includes all digital geographic data.

8. Points of contact are COL Kirk Krist, Chief Information Officer, at DSN 327-3572, 703-607-3572, or email: kirk.krist@ngbcio.ngb.army.mil, and LTC Jerry Walter, Chief Environmental Programs Division, at DSN 327-7963, 703-607-7963, or email: jerry.walter@ngb.army.mil.

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