



Homeland Security Working Group

December 2004

The Federal Geographic Data Committee's (FGDC) Homeland Security Working Group ensures that the National Spatial Data Infrastructure supports the *preparation for, prevention of, protection against, response to, and recovery from* (1) threats to the nation's population centers and critical infrastructure that are of terrorist, criminal, accidental, or natural origin and (2) related adverse events.

The working group has regular participation from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Homeland Security, the Interior, and Transportation; the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Communications Commission, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Capital Planning Commission, and Tennessee Valley Authority; and the National States Geographic Information Council.

Major activities

Map symbology: Use of different map symbols for the same information slows and degrades communication, especially when many organizations need to work together. The working group is compiling a set of standard map symbols to support homeland security applications. A revised symbol set for emergency response applications is available at <http://www.fgdc.gov/HSWG> (case sensitive). The working group plans to submit the revised symbol set for formal adoption through the ANSI INCITS L1 standards process.

Policy support:

- The working group developed guidelines that provide procedures to identify sensitive

information content of geospatial data. Should such content be identified, the guidelines help organizations decide what safeguarding to provide for the data. The geospatial data community's use of a common approach to identify data that have sensitive content and to provide appropriate access to such data will increase the effectiveness of individual organization's actions.

The revised "interim version" of the guidelines and a document that summarizes public comments and responses to the comments are available through the working group's web site at <http://www.fgdc.gov/fgdc/homeland/index.html>. The comments were received during a public review held from May 3 through June 2, 2004. The working group is submitting the guidelines for adoption by the FGDC steering committee.

- The white paper "Homeland Security and Geographic Information Systems", available on the group's web site, describes how geographic information system and mapping technologies can help save lives and protect property.

Geoaddressing through the US National Grid: A geoaddress is a means to communicate a location. Standard ways to briefly and accurately communicate locations among responders help the homeland security community, especially when organizations unfamiliar with an area are part of the response. This project promotes use of the US National Grid as a "language of location" when people need to communicate locations based on grid coordinates. Away from the road network, or in the event of major disaster, grid coordinates may be the only type of

geaddress that is readily useable. The US National Grid also is compatible with Global Positioning System (GPS) devices. More information about the US National Grid is available at <http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/status/usng.html>.

For more information

Visit the working group's web site at <http://www.fgdc.gov/fgdc/homeland/index.html>, or contact Michael Domaratz, the working group co-chair, at the U.S. Geological Survey by phone at (703) 648-4434 or by email at mdomarat@usgs.gov