

Homeland Security Mapping Standard:

Point Symbology for Emergency Management

The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Homeland Security Working Group has developed a standard set of symbols for use by emergency managers and first responders. The symbols have been adopted through the American National Standards Institute as **ANSI INCITS 415-2006**. They will also be adopted as a standard of the Department of Homeland Security.

Federal, State, and local agencies worked together to develop the symbology. The symbols are designed to provide immediate and general understanding of a situation, supporting a common operating picture in maps and communication. Damage level or operational status can be communicated through a colored and textured frame around the symbols.

The symbols are organized into a hierarchy of features, themes, and categories. Symbols for specific features are the most complex, therefore difficult to read at smaller map scales. For instance, a “wildfire” feature is

best represented by the feature symbol  at large scales, and by the theme  (“fire”) and category  (“incident”) symbols at smaller scales.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who developed this standard?

This symbol project was originated by FEMA and the standard was developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee's Homeland Security Working Group (FGDC HSWG). A “Symbol Subgroup” of the HSWG was formed with representatives from Federal, State, and local government to refine the symbols and describe their usage. After the symbols were developed there were two periods of public comment. More information can be found at www.fgdc.gov/HSWG/.

Why were the symbols developed as True Type Fonts?

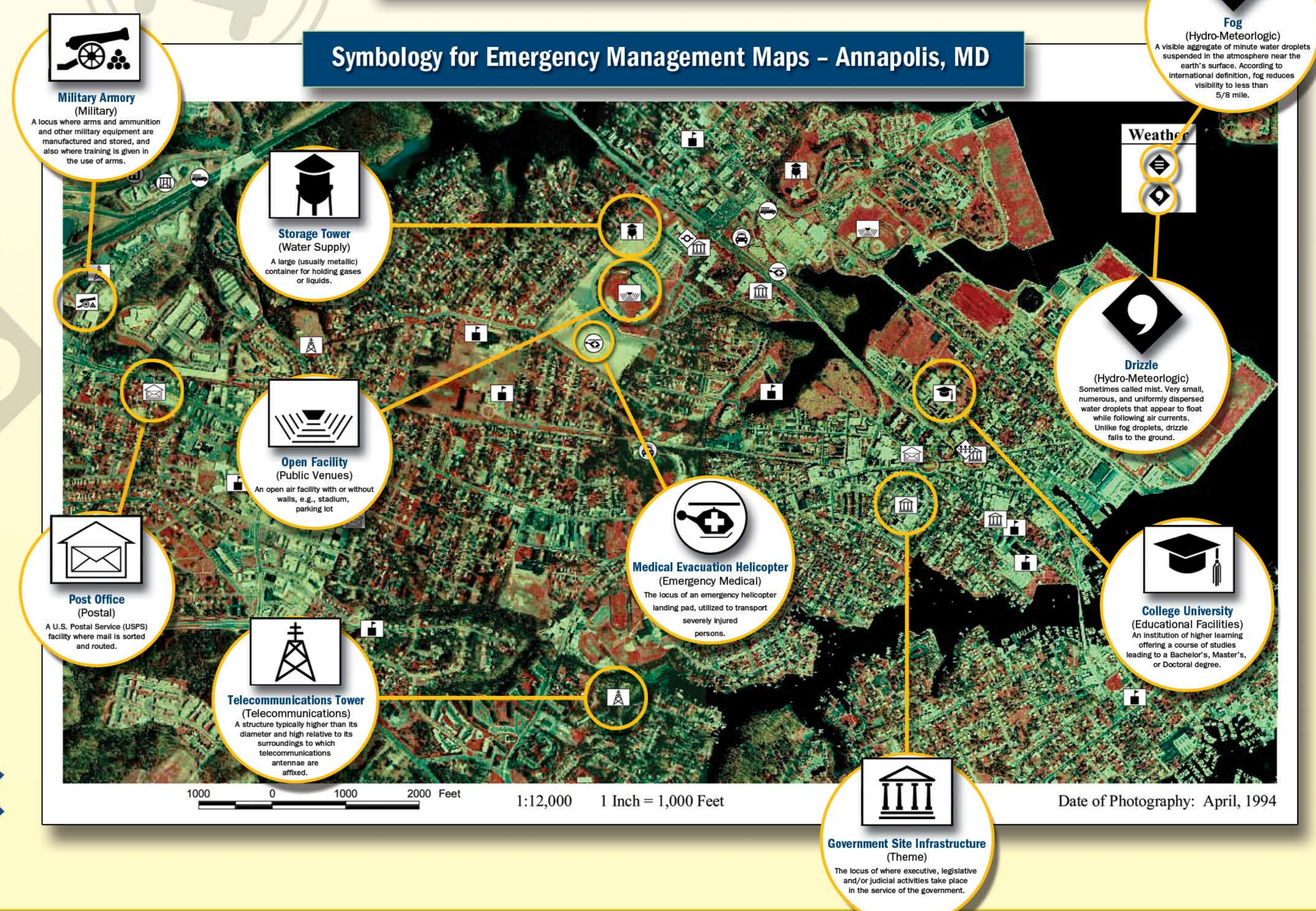
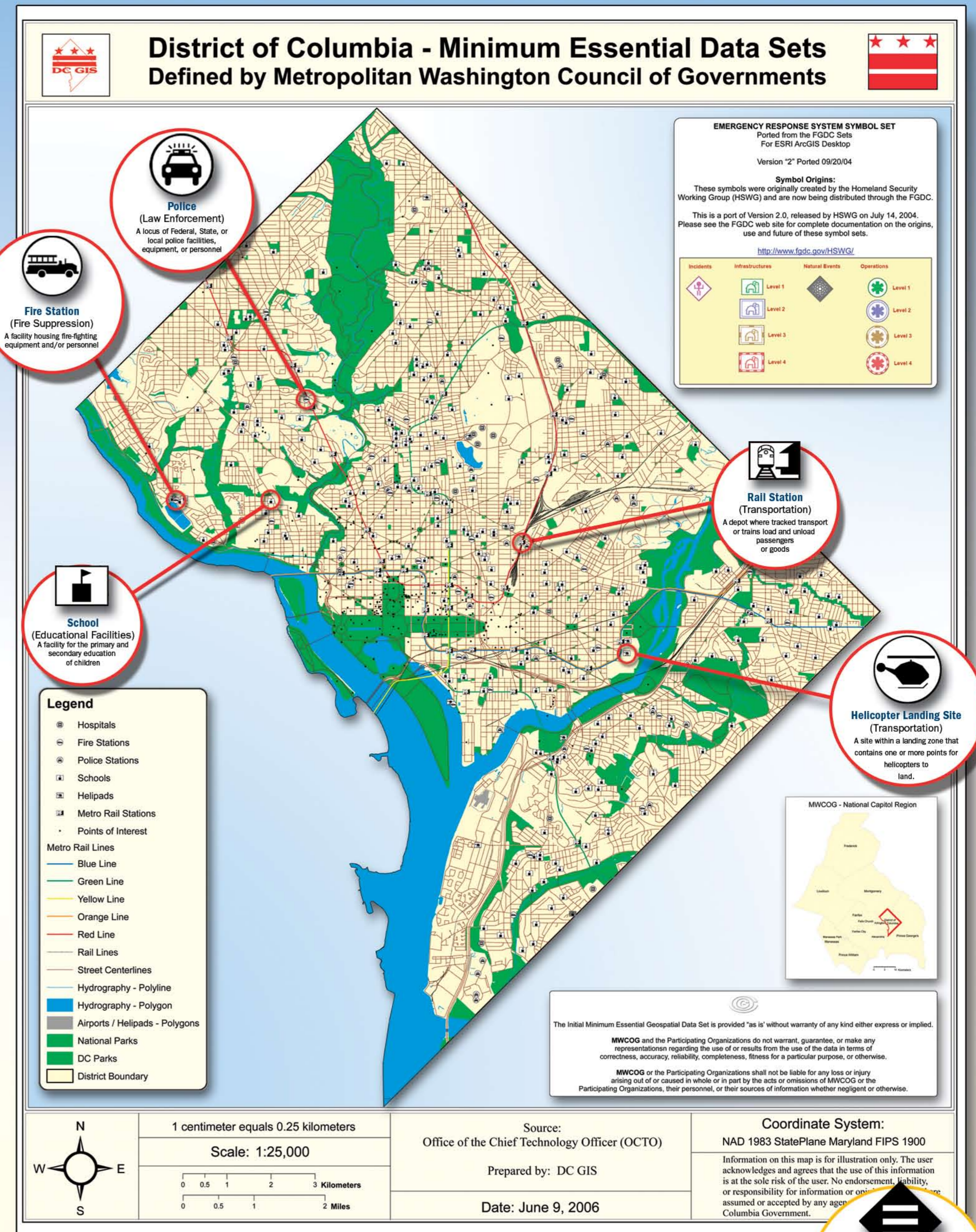
True Type Font symbols seemed a good place to start to enable them in a wide variety of software applications. Eventually FEMA intends to offer more formats, but it will be the responsibility of software vendors to build these symbols into their products and add value to them.

Will additional symbols be created?

If there is demand for new symbols, they will be incorporated as resources permit and the standards process allows. Suggestions may be sent to scott.mcafee@dhs.gov.

Are the symbols available as ESRI markers?

ESRI will include the symbols in future releases of its software. In the meantime, Jim Mossman of Digital Deja View has developed a set of ESRI markers and documentation for installation and use. They can be downloaded from the ESRI Arcscripts site at: arcscripts.esri.com by searching on “emergency response symbol.” Please note that the Symbol Subgroup was not involved in the development of these markers and provides no support for them.



FEMA

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