



Coffee Break Training - Community Risk Reduction

Location, Location, Location: Geaddressing the Future

No. CR-2015-7 July 15, 2015

Learning Objective: The student will be able to explain the need for standards-based geaddressing.

Firefighters, police and other emergency personnel respond to a wide variety of large and small incidents at locations both near and far from their home station and fire department.

In the very modern city of Dubai, using the Military Grid Reference System, all occupancies, including individual apartments in skyscrapers, have been provided easy to communicate incident locations (called “geaddresses”) for every doorstep. The emirate distributed a geaddress and bar code to every named place and building in the emirate to identify any target location with a click of any smartphone, navigator or computer. Not only does this help speed the response to emergency situations, it also improves the record-keeping efforts of city inspectors and others.



The Dubai skyline: one of the world's most wired areas.

The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association (FFCA) and its subsidiary, the Florida Association for Search and Rescue, are also addressing the future in a standards-based enterprise approach for old and new technology. They recently revised a key recommendation for “the addition of the United States National Grid (USNG) coordinate reference system to all map products as part of regular map maintenance and update cycles.” See http://www.ffca.org/files/pdf%20files/FASAR-position-USNG_edited4-8-151.pdf.

Moreover, FFCA further recommends “the incorporation of USNG as a required selection element for all contracts for goods and services which involve the use of location-based information. This includes, but is not limited to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software, Mobile Display Terminal systems (MDT), geographic information systems, and incident management and reporting systems. When displaying electronic maps, such devices and systems must correctly depict a user-indicated position at the correct, scale-appropriate USNG coordinate and must accept and correctly map USNG coordinate input. In accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 950, *Standard for Data Development and Exchange for the Fire Service*, systems must include USNG when transferring point-location information amongst systems.”

The U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Urban Search and Rescue Teams, plus many other states, counties, and communities in the U.S. have or are adopting the USNG standard (<http://usngcenter.org/portfolio-item/mapbooks/>).

When addressing current and future conditions, only a standards-based approach to geaddressing (<http://www.fgdc.gov/usng>) provides the interoperability required for operations and equipment while simplifying training and, most importantly, keeping to an absolute minimum the number of words needed to communicate a precise location in an emergency:

“MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, three-six-two-three, eight-eight-zero-five, Brush Fifty-Two, Fire Zero Eight, we were working the fire line, we are stuck in a ditch with fire approaching, send me a tractor.” (LUNAR: Location, Unit ID, Name, Assignment, Resources needed.)

For more information, subsequent Coffee Break Training items will describe these and other preparedness efforts, including those you can practice in your community for no cost.

For archived downloads, go to:

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/coffee_break/