



Static Maps

Accessibility Quick Card

Static digital maps are usually formatted as PDFs or images. Proper design can make them accessible to a wider audience and those using assistive technologies.

For the complete Map Design Guide and more information on map design and accessibility, visit mdod.maryland.gov

- **Design for accessibility**

Design maps according to the best practices outlined in the Map Design Guide.

Provide descriptive text that conveys the map's message via a combination of title, caption, body text, alt text, data table, and/or a link to more information.

Ensure descriptive elements flow together without repeating. Connect the elements by placing them in order, by referencing the location of related information, or by linking to more information

Place descriptive text outside images to ensure it can be read by assistive technologies.

- **Enable human contact**

Provide general contact information that is easy to find. Ensure that staff is available to answer questions for as long as the map is reasonably current.

- **Export to a usable format**

Use **images** when inserting into document applications that support accessibility, such as Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign. JPGs work best for photos with continuous tone. PNGs work best with areas of flat color like polygons. Try both for the best quality and smallest file size.

Use **PDFs** when an entire page will be the finished product. Export PDFs flattened (without layers) and with as few attributes as possible or items may disappear when applying accessibility to the PDF.

- **Tag and clean up**

Tag everything in a map as one figure or image. Then add a brief alternative (alt) text to flow with the document's other text elements.

Tag graphical elements as background (artifact) if they don't help the message flow. Most assistive technologies ignore artifacts.

- **Read the final flow**

Does it make sense? Could you use the text alone? If you needed more information, could you easily find it?

Learn More

mdod.maryland.gov/news/Pages/Web-Accessibility.aspx

or contact us directly at:

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