### USGS Publication Series Definitions

#### Introduction

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is renowned for its high-quality science and publications. USGS scientists conduct integrated, multidisciplinary studies, and the USGS publication series represent a broad range of scientific information products in which to present the scientific results from these studies. The USGS definition of a scientific information product is found in Survey Manual (SM) chapter [SM 502.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5021-fundamental-science-practices-foundation), Fundamental Science Practices: Foundation Policy.

This appendix accompanies [SM 1100.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11003-us-geological-survey-publication-series), U.S. Geological Survey Publication Series, in which each series is briefly summarized. The appendix provides additional details about each of the series, such as the intended audience, the purpose, and the content, to help ensure the series are used appropriately.

* **Audience**. Selection of a publication series must consider the needs of the intended audience and its familiarity with the subject matter. There are [four distinct audience types](https://www.usgs.gov/information-policies-and-instructions/definitions-usgs-audience-types): core professional, noncore professional, general public, and USGS employees. For example, Professional Papers, Scientific Investigations Reports, and Scientific Investigations Maps are generally directed to core and noncore professional audiences. Fact Sheets can be directed to the general public, core professionals, or noncore professionals depending on the content.
* **Purpose**. Each publication series is designed to serve a specific purpose. For example, the publication series range from the USGS’s premier Professional Paper series that documents research results of lasting scientific interest; the Techniques and Methods series that describes scientific methods and procedures; the Open-File Report (OFR) series that is used to fill an immediate or urgent public need; to the General Information Product series that educates the general public about scientific issues, USGS programs, and products using nontechnical language.
* **Content**. Publication series content ranges from narrow to broad in scope and highly technical to general interest in subject matter. Publication series products may comprise text, tabular data, technical illustrations, cartographic products, motion or still imagery, or a combination of these.

All publication series must follow the USGS [Fundamental Science Practices](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/science-quality-and-integrity/fundamental-science-practices) (FSP) requirements for peer review (refer to [SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review), Fundamental Science Practices: Peer Review) and must receive other applicable reviews and approvals prior to release (refer to [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and), Fundamental Science Practices: Review, Approval, and Release of Information Products, and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products), Authority to Approve Information Products). Publishing related requirements that must be followed in addition to those in [SM 1100.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11003-us-geological-survey-publication-series) include requirements related to editorial review (refer to [SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey), Editorial Review of U.S. Geological Survey Publication Series), metadata review (refer to [SM 502.7](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-metadata-usgs), Fundamental Science Practices: Metadata for USGS Scientific Information Products Including Data; use of copyrighted material (refer to [SM 1100.6](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11006-use-copyrighted-material-usgs-information), Use of Copyrighted Material in USGS Information Products); Section 508 accessibility (refer to [SM 600.6](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/6006-implementation-and-administration-section-508), Implementation and Administration of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act); and USGS Visual Identity System (VIS) compliance (refer to [SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system), USGS Visual Identity System). Except for the Restricted-File Federal Interagency Report (RFFIR) series, all publication series must be assigned a [Digital Object Identifier](https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/digital-object-identifiers?qt-science_support_page_related_con=0#qt-science_support_page_related_con) (DOI).

Page-size illustrations and figures used in all publication series except the Open-File Report and RFFIR series must meet standards for USGS page-size illustrations. Page-size and oversize maps in all publication series except Open-File Reports and RFFIRs must also meet [Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards](https://www.fgdc.gov/standards/list). Because of their limited use or the need for quick release, the Open-File Report and Restricted-File Federal Interagency Report series are not held to the same standards required for other publication series, though a set of minimum standards must be met, such as consistent use of symbols, correct figure numbering, and consistency among figures, text, and tables. Oversized maps and illustrations accompanying a publication series information product must be no wider than 42 inches (36 inches is recommended) to promote cost-effective reproduction.

The Science Publishing Network (SPN) in the USGS Office of Communications and Publishing (OCAP) is the sole source for publishing support services for all publication series and for other Bureau information products when such services are needed. Contact the local Publishing Service Center Chief in the SPN or the Bureau Approving Official Coordinator in the Office of Science Quality and Integrity for advice related to selecting the appropriate publication series to use.

All publication series (excluding RFFIRs, which are unnumbered, and Techniques and Methods, which use specialized numbering) must use the official series-specific numbering convention. Series numbers are assigned automatically in the internal Information Product Data System (IPDS). For series that allow chapter letter designations (A, B, C, and so on) after the series number, the author must discuss these letter designations with the SPN prior to Bureau approval and the approving official will authorize the letter designations to be manually recorded in the IPDS. Chapters within a single information product cannot be assigned an individual DOI for each chapter, but chapters prepared for separate release can be assigned individual DOIs.

Any data (including geodatabases) used to support interpretive conclusions in a publication series information product, as well as the accompanying metadata, must be made available to the public in a data release or through a web data service before or simultaneously with the release of the associated information product (refer to the FSP [guide to data releases](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/office-science-quality-and-integrity/guide-data-releases-or?qt-science_support_page_related_con=0#qt-science_support_page_related_con) and the [acceptable digital data repositories](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/office-science-quality-and-integrity/acceptable-digital) information). Subsets of the associated data, along with a link to the full data release or web data service, may appear in tables within the body of the publication series information product.

Metadata for map and map-like publication series information products must be made available to the public simultaneously with the map product and through the [USGS Science Data Catalog](https://data.usgs.gov/datacatalog/). Note that topographic maps and other USGS National Geospatial Program (NGP) map products are not included in the USGS publication series—refer to the [USGS NGP Standards and Specifications](https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/ngp/ss) for more information on requirements for these typographic map products.

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| Publication series | Professional Paper |
| **Target audience** | Core professionals and noncore professionals. |
| **Purpose** | Document research that is of lasting scientific interest. |
| **Content** | Premier series of the USGS that comprises comprehensive interpretive reports of wide and lasting interest and scientific or technical importance, characterized by thoroughness of study and breadth of scope or geographic coverage. This series may include collections of related papers addressing different aspects of a single scientific topic, either issued together under one cover or as separate chapters. Oversize plates are permitted if essential to convey content. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Professional Paper, followed by the series number with no year number and no leading zeroes, for example, Professional Paper 1234. May be issued as separate chapters indicated by a letter after the series number, such as Professional Paper 1814–A. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Scientific Investigations Report |
| **Target audience** | Core professionals and noncore professionals. |
| **Purpose** | Present significant interpretations of lasting scientific importance (like Professional Papers) but generally narrower or limited in scientific scope and (or) geographic coverage. |
| **Content** | Scientific Investigations Reports, like Professional Papers, contain significant interpretations and are of lasting scientific importance but generally are narrower in scientific scope and (or) geographic coverage. This series includes general manuals, field trip guidebooks, road logs, proceedings and abstracts for USGS-sponsored meetings, and general reference materials. This series may also comprise a collection of related reports on a specific topic published as a single volume or as individual chapters. Oversize plates are permitted if essential to convey the content. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Scientific Investigations Report, followed by the series number (which includes the four-digit year). The numbering begins with 5001 for the first report approved each calendar year, for example, Scientific Investigations Report 2017–5001. May be issued as separate chapters indicated by a letter following the series number, such as Scientific Investigations Report 2017–5013–A, 2017–5013–B, and so on. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Scientific Investigations Map |
| **Target audience** | Core professionals, noncore professionals, and less commonly, general public. |
| **Purpose** | Cartographic presentation of geologic, bathymetric, vegetation, landform, land classification, map projections, hydrologic, biologic, planetary, and other data and information. |
| **Content** | Scientific results of studies presented as black-and white or multicolor maps. Maps may be accompanied by companion pamphlets. Map and (or) pamphlet may include additional descriptive information and graphical presentations that are not maps, such as descriptions of map units, correlation charts, cross sections, block diagrams, tables, photographs, or other illustrations. May be a collection of related maps addressing different aspects of a single geographic area or scientific topic, issued separately, or as a set. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable map sheet dimensions and pamphlet length; generally comprises one oversize map sheet but may include multiple sheets. |
| **Visual style** | Maps must comply with [FGDC cartographic standards](https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/fgdc_gds/geolsymstd.php). Page-size illustrations on maps or within pamphlets must meet standards for USGS page-size illustrations. USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Scientific Investigations Map, followed by the series number with no year number and no leading zeroes, for example, Scientific Investigations Map 3386. Topic-related maps may be issued as separate information products indicated by a letter following the series number, such as Scientific Investigations Map 2932–A, 2932–B, and so on. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Data Report (formerly Data Series) |
| **Target audience** | Core professionals and noncore professionals. |
| **Purpose** | Primarily used for extended textual descriptions of datasets or databases that go beyond the minimally required metadata. The associated dataset or database itself is released separately as a data release from an acceptable USGS digital repository. This series is not to be used instead of a data release. |
| **Content** | May contain noninterpretive and (or) interpretive information. For example, noninterpretive information may include purpose and scope, collection methods, summaries, and other information that goes beyond the minimally required metadata. Examples of interpretive information may include analysis of the data and conclusions. Other more specific examples for this series include noninterpretive and (or) interpretive extended descriptions of digital content, such as scientific video, multimedia, photographs, or software manuals and documentation, where the actual content is released separately. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Data Report, followed by the series number with no year number and no leading zeroes, for example, Data Report 101 (was published as Data Series 101). May be issued as separate chapters indicated by a letter following the series number, such as Data Report 69–A, 69–B, and so on. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)).  Videos that are scientific in nature rather than for outreach purposes may be released in this series, and these scientific videos do not require concept approval by the OCAP before production can begin. |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Techniques and Methods |
| **Target audience** | Core professionals and USGS employees. |
| **Purpose** | Describe approved scientific and data-collection procedures and standard methods for planning and executing studies, laboratory analyses, and modeling and simulation processes. |
| **Content** | Procedures for the collection, analysis, or interpretation of scientific data. This series may also be used for software manuals and documentation. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). |
| **Numbering** | Unlike other series, numbers for this series are assigned by the SPN upon request from the author. Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Techniques and Methods, followed by series number with no leading zeroes, for example, Techniques and Methods Book 8. May have chapters and sections indicated by letters and numbers, as Techniques and Methods Book 8, Section A, Chapter 3. May use internal military numbering scheme when needed to reference paragraphs within the report. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Circular |
| **Target audience** | General public, noncore professionals, and core professionals. |
| **Purpose** | Convey in plain language a wide variety of scientific topics related to the mission of the USGS. |
| **Content** | Covers a wide variety of topics that explain processes, issues, or USGS programs and projects. Often demonstrates how science can address issues of public interest and inform public policy. Circulars are of wide interest to nonscientists. This series should not be used to present new scientific information or data. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual Style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)); generally involves extensive use of color, photographs, and simple illustrations. |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Circular, followed by series number with no year number and no leading zeroes, for example, Circular 345. May be issued as separate related publications or as separate chapters indicated by letter, such as Circular 345–A. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Fact Sheet |
| **Target audience** | General public, noncore professionals, and core professionals. |
| **Purpose** | Inform about USGS science and products in concise but nontechnical language. Commonly used to provide a summary of a larger or more technical information product such as a Professional Paper or journal article. |
| **Content** | Focuses on USGS science, programs, funded projects, data, tools, services, and other topics of public interest, such as topical investigations or catastrophic events; hazard and resource assessments; or classification procedures. May be used to summarize previously published information. May be used to release new information about USGS programs, and services, but because products are generally of minimal archival value, this series should not be used to release new scientific results that have not been published elsewhere. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | One to four pages recommended; maximum allowed is six pages with SPN concurrence. Larger manuscripts should be released in a different series. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). Often illustrative with extensive use of color. |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Fact Sheet, followed by the series number (which includes the four-digit year). The numbering begins with 3001 for the first fact sheet approved each calendar year, for example, Fact Sheet 2017–3001. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | General Information Product |
| **Target audience** | General public. |
| **Purpose** | Convey, in plain language, earth, water, and biological science topics of public interest. |
| **Content** | Covers a wide variety of topics concisely and clearly. Focus is on USGS programs, projects, and services and general scientific information. This series can be presented in a variety of media and formats, including pamphlets, postcards, posters, videos, educational materials, discs, bookmarks, and interactive and motion graphics. This series is not to be used for releasing new scientific information or data. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)); generally involves extensive use of color, imagery, and simple illustrations. |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as General Information Product, followed by series number with no year number and no leading zeroes, for example, General Information Product 345.  For smaller-sized information products, such as bookmarks, series name can be identified using the abbreviation GIP followed by series number, for example,  GIP 17. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a full editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Content and design must be approved by the OCAP at the concept stage ([SM 1100.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11003-us-geological-survey-publication-series) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). All videos in this series also require audiovisual concept approval by the OCAP before production can begin ([SM 1100.7](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11007-audiovisual-media-and-products)).  Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Open-File Report |
| **Target audience** | Core professionals and noncore professionals. |
| **Purpose** | A limited-use series to be used for the dissemination of information that must be released immediately to fill an urgent public need or information that is preliminary or provisional in nature and will be superseded by a final product in another publication series, such as the Professional Paper, the Scientific Investigations Report series, the Techniques and Methods series, or an outside publication. |
| **Content** | OFRs include, but are not limited to, preliminary or provisional: methods; interpretive results (maps and reports) from scientific investigations; reports of project progress with interpretive content; supporting documentation for another publication series or outside publication; a collection of abstracts from non-USGS conferences; a collection of short papers; software user manuals and documentation where the software is released separately; bibliographies; and videos that are scientific in nature.  Because it is a limited-use series, do not use OFRs for release of USGS information that is intended to be of lasting scientific importance. Additionally, do not use this series as the final information product of a major scientific investigation; to introduce new or revised geologic, stratigraphic, hydrologic, or taxonomic nomenclature; to release standard methods; or to publish a collection of manuscripts intended for release as separate, lettered chapters. |
| **Media** | Must be released online; may also be released in print or on other media. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | USGS VIS must be used ([SM 550.1](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5501-usgs-visual-identity-system)). Format is generally plain. Because OFRs are intended for rapid release, presentation quality is held to a lesser standard than that required for other series. |
| **Numbering** | Official series-specific numbering convention must be used. Series name to be written as Open-File Report, followed by series number (which includes the four-digit year) with no letter suffix. The numbering begins with 1001 for the first report approved each calendar year, for example, Open-File Report 2017–1001. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a limited editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)).  Videos that are scientific in nature rather than for outreach purposes may be released in this series, and these scientific videos do not require concept approval by the OCAP before production can begin. |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the SPN. |
| **Release** | Public release by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | The SPN maintains distribution requirements for printed or replicated copies. |

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| Publication series | Restricted-File Federal Interagency Report (formerly Administrative Report) |
| **Target audience** | The other Federal agency or foreign government entity that is funding the underlying project. The terms “funding agency,” requesting agency,” and “receiving agency” used herein are synonymous. Federal-interstate compact commissions or Native American tribal organizations are not considered to be Federal agencies or foreign governments in the context of this policy; therefore, this series is not the appropriate series for release to these audiences. |
| **Purpose** | The scientific or technical findings presented in this limited-use series are released confidentially to the other Federal agency or foreign government entity in recognition of the proprietary interest the funding agency has--an interest usually acquired by financial sponsorship. This series is considered unpublished and must not be cited or quoted except in a follow-up Restricted-File Federal Interagency Report to the same funding agency. If the funding agency releases the report to the public and there is a need to cite it, do not cite it as a USGS Restricted-File Federal Interagency Report, but rather, contact the SPN for guidance on citing the report as a product of the funding agency. Use of this series is discouraged, and authors should carefully consider public release in another USGS publication series where possible. |
| **Content** | Scientific or technical study results requested by the funding agency. |
| **Media** | May be delivered in print, on disc, or other media depending on the funding agency’s needs. |
| **Length** | Variable. |
| **Visual style** | No USGS format or style requirements; generally plain. Must not include the USGS VIS or any other Bureau identification indicating that it is a USGS information product. |
| **Numbering** | No numbering is used. |
| **Peer review** | Must receive a minimum of two peer reviews ([SM 502.3](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/5023-fundamental-science-practices-peer-review)). |
| **Editorial review** | Must receive a limited editorial review ([SM 1100.2](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/11002-editorial-review-us-geological-survey)). |
| **Other reviews** | Additional reviews as described in [SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) may also be required. |
| **Approval** | Must receive Bureau approval prior to release ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and) and [SM 205.18](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/20518-authority-approve-information-products)). |
| **Production** | Final files are prepared by the author. |
| **Release** | May be publicly released only by the funding agency, or the funding agency may request public release by the USGS. In the latter case, the information product must be prepared for public release in one of the other USGS publication series or as an outside publication; must meet appropriate review and approval requirements; and it can then be released by the SPN through the USGS Publications Warehouse ([SM 502.4](https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/survey-manual/fundamental-science-practices-review-approval-and)). |
| **Distribution** | Supplied to the funding agency in digital format or, if in print, only in quantities to meet the receiving agency needs; one copy must be provided to the USGS Library (Reston) for the restricted collection until the information product is released in another publication series that is citable. Must not be referenced, posted, or indexed on any USGS web page or made available through the USGS Publications Warehouse or on other public USGS web pages. |