

# FIRMette – Desktop User Guide

Make FIRMettes from FIRM Scans Saved Locally

## BACKGROUND AND APPROPRIATE USE

Digital images of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are the simplest way to view flood hazards electronically. These are available for FEMA’s entire current and historical map inventory and are called FIRM Scans.

FIRM Scans are pictures of a whole map. They are available from FEMA’s Map Service Center (MSC) Web site and can be downloaded or delivered on CD and DVD and saved and used locally from your computer. Because a FIRM Scan is a picture of a whole map sheet, you need a specialized large-format printer to create a paper copy.

For those who can only print to smaller, standard size paper, FEMA provides free tools for creating an individualized flood map, or FIRMette.

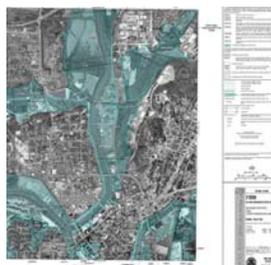


Figure 1. A FIRMette is a full-scale section of a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that you create yourself online by selecting the desired area from an image of a FIRM.

FIRMettes (see Figure 1) are portions of FIRM Scan images formatted for printing on standard office printers. You can make FIRMettes from any map in the FEMA inventory online by using the *FIRMette – Web* tool accessible from the MSC Web site, [www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov). For those who prefer to work offline or use flood maps stored locally on your computer, the *FIRMette – Desktop* tool is available for download for free from the MSC Web site. The Desktop tool

also has more options for printing than the online tool.

## BEFORE YOU START

To use *FIRMette – Desktop* you will need to download the tool from FEMA’s MSC Web site, [www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov). Please read the detailed instructions available in the Installation and User Guide that can be viewed by clicking on the “learn more” link.

## OPENING THE APPLICATION

When you have successfully installed the *FIRMette – Desktop* tool, a shortcut icon will appear on your desktop screen. Double-click on the icon to open and begin using the application. A welcome screen will appear. To skip the tutorial, click on Get Started to create a FIRMette.

## SELECTING THE FIRM

From the main toolbar, select the *File* drop-down menu and click on the method that you would prefer in order to identify and open the FIRM Scan. The options include *Open by File Name*, *Open by Address*, and *Open by Coordinates*. These options only display FIRM Scans that are already stored on your local computer and the *Open by Address* and *Open by Coordinates* will only work when you have an active internet connection. FIRM Scans may be downloaded from the MSC Web site, or ordered for delivery on CD and DVD. Both color (.png) and black and white (.tif) flood maps may be used.

## CREATING A FIRMette

The image opened will have three default selections: FIRMette Area, the North Arrow, and the Title Block. You



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can move these selections to the area of the FIRM desired.

To zoom in and out to see more or less detail, you can click on *View* in the main toolbar and select either *Zoom In* or *Zoom Out* and click on the FIRM Scan image where you want to zoom in. From the *View* drop-down menu, select *Full View* to return to the original image size. It is a good idea to have the image in full view before choosing the FIRMette selections.

An official FIRMette must contain three regions: FIRMette Area, the Title Block, and the North Arrow. The North Arrow and the Title Block should already be selected by the *FIRMette – Desktop* program. If you find that these selections are not accurate, you can change them by dragging the selection box to the corresponding region. To choose the FIRMette Area, click the *FIRMette Area* button and drag the FIRMette selection box to the area you would like. To start over, click on *Clear Selections*.

An 11” x 17” flat map must contain five regions: FIRMette Area, the Title Block, the North Arrow, the Scale, and the Effective Date. A FIRMette can only be created from map pages of a Flat Map, not the index page. These can be found starting on page two onward of the Flat Map. You can select the page by clicking on the drop-down menu in the main toolbar.

## PRINTING A FIRMette

To change paper size, select the desired size from the Page Size drop-down menu. There are three standard paper sizes to choose from: 8.5” x 11,” 8.5” x 14” and 11” x 17.” The larger the paper size, the larger the FIRMette area can be.

To print the FIRMette, click on the *Print* button. This will bring up the *Print Preview* window. Here you can see the FIRMette selections and ensure they are correct before printing. Click on *Print* to send the FIRMette to a printer. Click on the *Print to PDF* button to save the FIRMette as a .pdf file. Please note that all FIRMettes will print as landscape by default so there is no need to change this in your printer settings.

The *FIRMette – Desktop* application now supports printing a full-size FIRM at 36” x 25.875 to a plotter. This can be done by selecting the *Print Entire Flood Map* option under the *File* menu.

## Viewing LOMCs

The *FIRMette – Desktop* application will now allow users to automatically download and view Letters of Map Change (LOMC). When a FIRM Scan is opened, the application will access information from the MSC Web site and will automatically download and list any LOMCs which affect the panel to your local computer, as long as you have an active connection to the internet. Once the LOMCs are downloaded, they may be viewed by double-clicking on the case number and will always be displayed when the panel is opened regardless of whether or not you have an active internet connection. Remember that you may need to check for recent LOMCs if you do not always have an active internet connection.

## EXITING FIRMette - DESKTOP

When you are finished with a FIRM Scan, you can select *Close* to close the file. If you are finished creating FIRMettes, click *Exit* to close the application.

