

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AREA

CARTOGRAPHIC DIMENSIONS (300 FIELD, subfield “c”)

As in several other areas of the description for cartographic resources, the practice of providing dimensions has changed little from AACR2 to RDA. For illustrative purposes, the pages following this document are taken, with permission, from *Cartographic Materials: A Manual of Interpretation for AACR2, Revised, Second Edition* and the text and images apply quite readily to either cataloging standard. Below is an overview of key points about Dimensions as applied to all resources, but with a focus on maps with its own instructions.

Background and a Notable Change:

First, if cataloging according to LC practice and/or as a member of PCC BIBCO, this element is considered Core for RDA. Second, it must be noted that since dimensions record a carrier(s) and/or a container(s) of a resource it has a relationship to the 338 field for recording the type of carrier (see RDA instruction **3.3**). And perhaps the biggest change from AACR2 to RDA, at least amongst U.S. catalogers, is recognizing that “cm” for centimeters, and “km” for kilometers are not abbreviations of these words, they are considered symbols and thus a period does not end either of these, which would indicate an abbreviated word. For example:

1 map : \$b color ; \$c 55 x 63 cm, on sheet 70 x 80 cm, folded to 23 x 11 cm

Dimensions for All Resources:

Instructions for Dimensions are found in **3.5** in RDA. At **3.5.1.3 Recording Dimensions** states “Unless instructed otherwise, record dimensions in centimetres to the next whole centimetre up, using the metric symbol *cm* (e.g., if the height measures 17.2 centimetres, record *18 cm*)” though the LC policy statements allow for an alternative to this, which is that a local agency can choose a preferred system of measurement. Just as important, this instruction also points to the few instances where terms for units of measure may still be abbreviated, specifically that is **B.5.1** in Appendix B (inches can be “in.” and feet can be “ft.”). The remainder of **3.5.1** area covers a host of specific instructions for containers. However, there is a specific instructional area in RDA for cartographic materials dimensions, and it is found at **3.5.2**.

Dimensions for Cartographic Resources:

We are providing measurements for up to three things in our bibliographic description for a cartographic resource: the carrier of information, such as the main map(s) itself and/or the sheet or similar it is printed/drawn on, or the face of a globe; the container if there is one, such as a jewel box for a cartographic CD-ROM, an envelope that a folded map was issued in, or similarly a tube for a rolled map; and in the case of a map folded to show a panel or folded inside of an attached cover and issued that way, also their dimensions.

All of the content of instruction **3.5.2** walks one through the same steps for providing dimensions of the main map or maps, its container (the sheet or similar printed/drawn upon), folding sizes, external containers, how to handle multiple sizes of main maps and/or sheets, and so on. It starts with the familiar phrase in **3.5.2.2**, “Record the dimensions of each map, etc., by giving the measurements of the face of the map, etc., measured within the neat line.” Each successive step is done in the same manner as outlined in the illustrative *Cartographic Materials* pages that follow this document. For instance, if you don’t have a neat line to work with, what does one do? “If the map, etc.: a) is irregularly shaped, or b) has no neat line or c) bleeds off the edge, record the greater or greatest dimensions of the map itself. If it is difficult to determine the points for measuring the height and width of the map, etc., itself (e.g., when the shape is extremely irregular, or when it was printed without one or more of its borders), record the height and width of the sheet specified as such.” **3.5.2.2 – 3.5.2.7** covers all of the various iterations and twists and turns for supplying dimensions for a map.