

Guide: Usage Guidelines

URL: <https://www.pgc.umn.edu/guides/commercial-imagery/usage-guidelines/>

Last Modified: February 11, 2026

Export Date: May 29, 2026

Important information about the EOCL license and proper image use.

Electro-Optical Commercial Layer (EOCL) License

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) Electro-Optical Commercial Layer (EOCL) license was developed to accommodate the desire to share commercial satellite imagery across U.S. Government agencies, contractors, and other entities supporting U.S. Government interests.

Read more about the mission of NRO at www.nro.gov/

Commonly referred to as the EOCL License, the US Government Plus End User License Agreement (EULA) establishes the terms of use (how data may be used) for commercial imagery and derived Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) and Digital Surface Models (DSMs).

The EOCL License applies to all data, imagery, imagery services, and imagery and elevation derived products. The license rights for use by the U.S. Government (USG) are established under the contract and apply in perpetuity. Derived DEMs under the EOCL License are no longer publicly releasable without prior NGA approval.

EOCL PGC FAQ

Licensed Users

Members of the United States Federal Government including all branches, departments, agencies, and offices are licensed to use the imagery under the terms of the EOCL License.

The U.S. Government (USG) may share the imagery with the following organizations, as temporary licensed users:

- USG Contractors & university researchers supporting USG contracts

Rules For Use

U.S. Government Purpose

Imagery shared with organizations beyond the USG must support a USG purpose, with a direct benefit to the USG.

EDUCATE

USG must educate anyone who receives the data on the terms of the EOCL License and communicate restrictions for proper use, to ensure compliance with the license.

PRODUCT CREATION

Licensed users may generate an unlimited number of hardcopies and softcopies for their use, as well as any derived product.

MARKING: COPYRIGHT & LICENSE

Any new imagery or imagery-derived products obtained through the NGA must contain copyright and EOCL License

notice.

BUSINESS IMPACT

USG shall use its reasonable best efforts to minimize the effects on commercial sales. Do not sell or use it for commercial gain, or anyone planning to do so.

Note on Ownership

It is important to note that licensed data does not transfer ownership of the data to the buyer. Rather, it grants the purchaser permission to use the data as outlined in the license agreement. The vendor retains ownership and copyrights to the imagery.

Sharing & Copying Licensed Data

Licensed data (imagery or imagery derived products) is provided by the Polar Geospatial Center to researchers and logistics personnel that are working in direct support of an active award funded by the NSF Office of Polar Programs.

Licensed data can be shared with other collaborators working in support of the same award so long as the award remains active.

Prohibited Activities:

- Sharing or copying of data for purposes outside of the scope of the award
- Sharing of data with collaborators not funded under the award or collaborators at non-U.S. institutions
- Using the data after the term of an award has expired
- Posting the data to a public website without access controls
- Sharing the data with anyone planning to sell it or use it for commercial gain

Please contact the PGC if you have any questions regarding the sharing or copying of licensed commercial satellite imagery or imagery derived products.

Publishing Licensed Data

There are many cases when imagery or imagery derived products is going to be shared, whether internally with a research group, through a lecture or presentation, in a poster, or in a peer-reviewed journal.

PGC has laid out the guidelines for what is required for copyright, acknowledgement, and public release in the Citation and Publication Approval guide, including Vantor, PGC, and NRO requirements.

Summary

In this Guide, we've covered:

- Purpose of the NRO EOCL license
- Guidelines for sharing imagery and derived products
- Resources for citation and publication approval