

Fieldcraft Skills

Basic Land Navigation



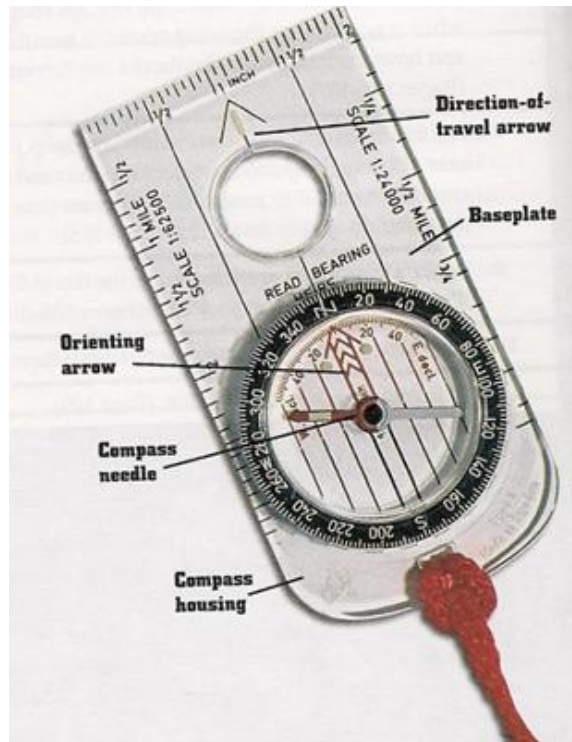
Basic Map and Compass Use

Finding North

Most compasses have an orienting arrow etched on the base of the housing and a direction of travel arrow on the base plate. The numbers on the housing indicate the 360 degrees of a circle.

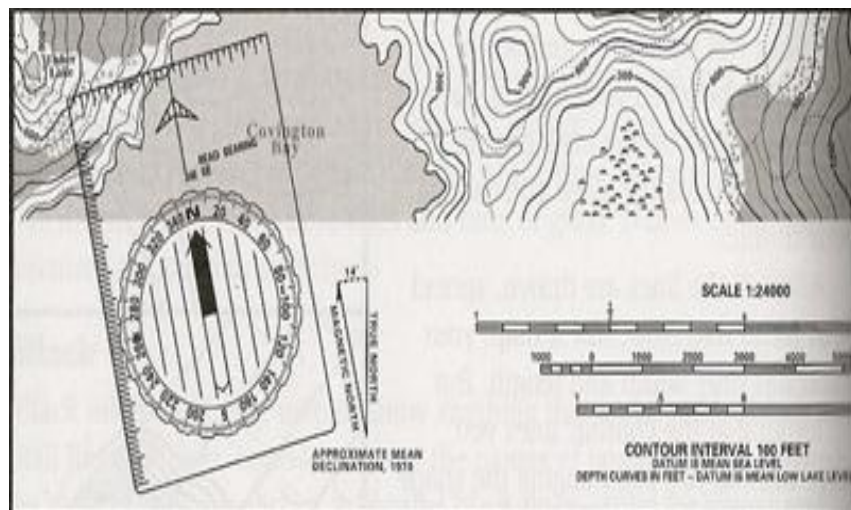
To find Magnetic North, adjust the compass housing until N (North) on the housing aligns with the direction of travel arrow.

Hold the compass against your torso with the direction of travel arrow pointing away from you. Turn your body until the needle is lined up inside the orienting arrow on the bottom of the compass housing. Your direction of travel arrow is now pointing directly toward Magnetic North.



Declination

The compass needle point to Magnetic North, maps are drawn with True North at the top of the map. Larger scale maps also indicate Grid North specific to that map.



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The difference between *Magnetic North* (where a compass needle points) and *True North* (a line between you and the North Pole) is called declination, and is measured in degrees. The magnetic pole in North America is located in the Hudson's Bay region of Canada.

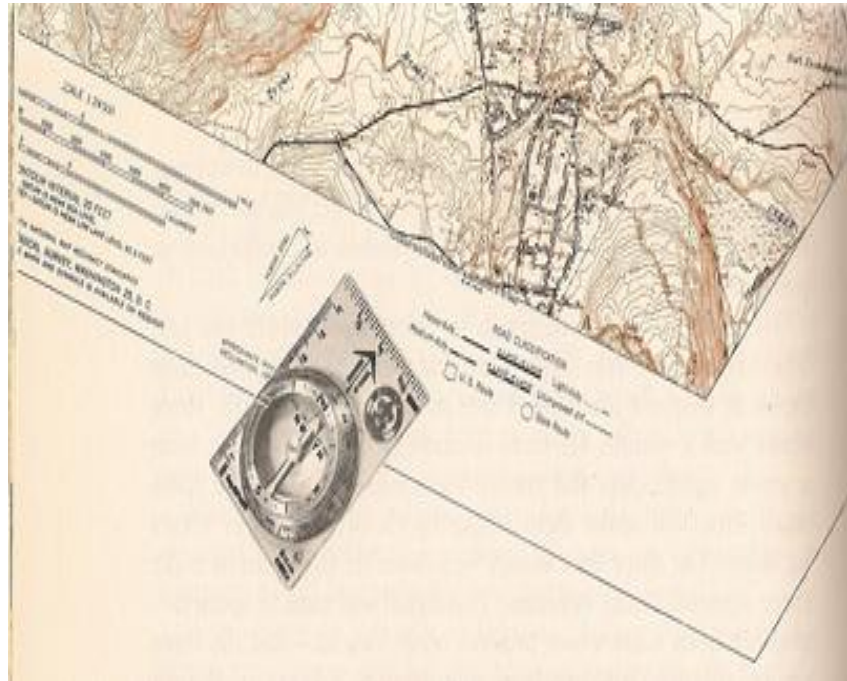
In much of the Midwest, the directions toward *Magnetic North* and the North Pole are in close alignment. As you travel east or west of the Midwest, the poles seem to move apart from one another.

Declination (the difference between Magnetic North and True North) increases. On the east coast of the United States, the declination is between 8 and 20 degrees, increasing the farther north you travel.

Orienting A Map

Map marginal information often displays multiple arrows, one pointing toward Magnetic North, one toward True North, and often one indicating Grid North which is specific to the map.

With N on the compass housing aligned with the direction of travel arrow, set your compass alongside the Magnetic North arrow on a map.



Slowly turn the map until the compass needle rests inside the orienting arrow. The compass will be oriented toward Magnetic North while the map is oriented to True North.