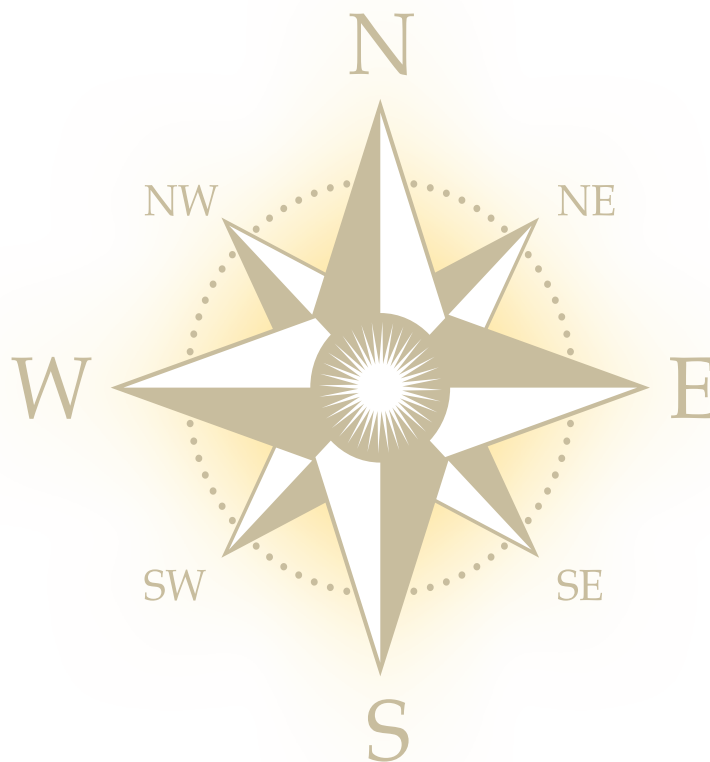




Cardinal Calibration

Painting a compass rose

BY LAURIE PROBST

A COMPASS ROSE—WHAT A beautiful sight to see from the air, painted on the ramp of a local airport. If you'd like to see one at your local airport, consider making it a chapter project. There are a couple of ways to get it done. If you're looking for a group of experts to partner with, contact your local Ninety-Nines chapter and make it a joint project. Airmarking is a signature project for these women pilots, and working in conjunction with a local EAA chapter makes it even more fun and worthwhile. Each Ninety-Nines chapter has its own airmarking chairperson, who can tell you what is needed ahead of time and who can also coordinate the actual painting. There have been many such joint projects across the country. If you're not able to partner with a Ninety-Nines chapter, here are some helpful tips.

To start you will need to contact the entity in charge of the airport to see where the compass rose may be painted. Some airports have restrictions as to where pavement may be painted, or they may even have some resurfacing scheduled that would affect the date and/or placement of the rose. When you contact the airport manager, you will also need to ask if the airport has a particular surveyor it uses, if there is any charge involved, etc. Having one who is familiar with the airport is always a plus. The surveyor will need to come out and drive nails into the pavement to accurately mark the four cardinal directions for your rose. Paint fades over time, so having the nails is extremely helpful when returning to touch up in the future. Don't forget to give the surveyor the dimensions of the rose, so he or she knows how far apart to put the markers.

The other question to ask the airport manager would be whether the airport is able to secure highway paint. It adheres to the pavement well and lasts longer. Many roses are painted in Handicap Blue and Highway White, as both are quite visible from the air. If the rose is to double as a landing pad for a helicopter, such as Flight for Life, you will also need to ask for the reflective powder to sprinkle on the wet paint. This helps make the pad more visible for night landings. Some airports have access to paint via county maintenance facilities; if not, you may have to purchase it. Determining the area of the compass rose will help you figure out how much paint will be needed. Plan on at least two coats for the initial rose.

Other supplies to get ahead of time would include brooms, sidewalk chalk, paint rollers, poles, brushes, tape measure, pans, rags, masking tape, a sifter for the reflective dust, and a chalk line. A rope can also come in handy as a compass to mark points of the rose out from the center. Draw a plan for



Above: A surveyor will come out and accurately mark the four cardinal directions with nails.

Left: Using masking tape to outline your design will help make clean lines and separate the colors you plan to use.

Below: Have fun and be creative with your design, remember to choose bright colors that will be easily visible from the air, and enjoy your work of art!



your rose and determine the dimensions of each point. An easy way to start is to make a large circle in the middle and then make points outward from there.

Have fun with it and be creative. Perhaps someone in your chapter has a flair for graphic design and would love to plan the compass rose and its color scheme. If you

are planning on painting some sort of logo in the center, make a template out of sturdy cardboard to act as a stencil that can be placed on the dry paint, rather than trying to paint it freehand.

If your rose is to double as a calibration pad, Advisory Circular 150/5300-13 Appendix 4 on the FAA website will give

you guidance on the specific requirements to meet.

When painting day has arrived begin by sweeping the area. Find the survey nails and mark north with chalk, for easy reference. Use the rope, chalk, tape measure, and chalk line to help you mark your plan on the pavement. Masking tape is used to outline the area for the first color, to make clean lines. After that color is dry, you can carefully pull up the tape, outline the other color, and paint. Touch-ups can be made with brushes once the entire compass rose is dry. Drying time will be temperature-dependent.

Once completed, you will want to see the rose from the air and admire a job well done. It will help other pilots find your airport and add a little beauty among the hold short and taxi lines. **EAA**

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