

BASIS FOR DETERMINATION OF LOCATORS

The SRAL has proposed the WGS-84 geodetic system as a basis for converting latitude and longitude into a Maidenhead Locator.

This proposal is important, because it thereby establishes the necessary link of the World-Wide Maidenhead Locator system with an international geodetic system.

The latitude and longitude system of the Earth must be linked to a "zero point". This point may be called a geodetic center point. There are many such points in use; by cities, countries, continents, and for the whole world. These "zero points" are usually not coincidental. Therefore it is important to establish which geodetic system the Maidenhead Locator System should be linked to.

When using a map or a GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) receiver to determine a Maidenhead Locator, it is possible to have the map or the GPS receiver calculate the locator on the basis of many different geodetic systems. In Europe the most commonly geodetic system used up to recent time has been the European Datum of 1950, called ED-50.

The few last years more and more maps use their latitude and longitude linked to the newer world-wide geodetic system World Geodetic System 1984, called WGS-84.

The difference between latitude/longitude on ED-50 versus WGS-84 is of the order of 300 meters. This has no practical consequence to radio amateurs calculating their Maidenhead Locator square other than the radio amateurs close to the square borders. Then it has consequence for contest square multipliers.

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