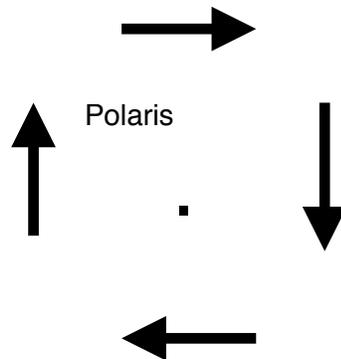


Aligning the Platform

Users in the northern hemisphere may use Polaris to align the platform. Keep in mind Polaris is 3/4 of a degree off from the earth's celestial pole so a polar alignment using Polaris will not be precise, but reasonably accurate. Users that desire a more accurate alignment can start the alignment using Polaris, then continue with the "drift alignment".

Polar alignment using Polaris:

The easiest way for users with Newtonian style reflectors is to visualize a box around the star Polaris, each side having an arrow as shown below:



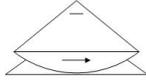
Start by moving the tracking platform to the start position. With the tracking motor turned off, center Polaris in a medium power eyepiece. Use a wide-field eyepiece if one is available. Next release the drive friction lever and move the platform a small amount in the tracking direction, then lower the lever to lock the position again. Observe where Polaris has moved in the eyepiece. Find the corresponding arrow on the chart that matches the movement of Polaris. The arrow will match the **actual position** of the platform in relation to Polaris. So for example, if Polaris had moved down after pushing it through the tracking direction, that would match the arrow on the right side of Polaris in the diagram, indicating that the platform was pointing too far the right side. Left/right movements of Polaris indicate the platform north or south end needs to be raised. This can be done with the adjusting the feet of the platform or adding shims to the appropriate end's feet. After each adjustment of the platform, repeat the process until Polaris stays centered for the entire movement of the tracking platform. Start with small movements of tracking so Polaris stays in the field of view in case the error is large. Gradually increase the amount of tracking movement as the error decreases until the platform can be moved all the way to the stop.

Drift Alignment:

The principle of the drift alignment is similar to the polar alignment in that the direction of the star movement or drift is observed and the platform is moved in accordance with the direction of the star's movement. The diagram below illustrates the procedure and can be used as a guide.

First step

Move the EqPlatform to its starting position



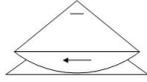
Second step

Center Polaris in your RACI finder



Third step

Move the EqPlatform to its end position



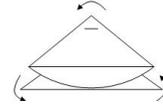
Forth step

If Polaris is above the center in the RACI finder

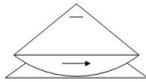


Fifth step

Turn the EqPlatform anti-clockwise



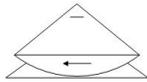
Move the EqPlatform to its starting position



Center Polaris in your RACI finder



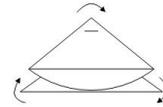
Move the EqPlatform to its end position



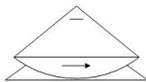
If Polaris is beneath the center in the RACI finder



Turn the EqPlatform clockwise



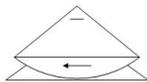
Move the EqPlatform to its starting position



Center Polaris in your RACI finder



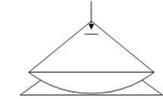
Move the EqPlatform to its end position



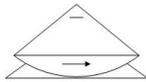
If Polaris is shifted to the right in the RACI finder



Lower the south side of the EqPlatform



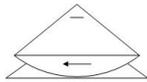
Move the EqPlatform to its starting position



Center Polaris in your RACI finder



Move the EqPlatform to its end position



If Polaris is shifted to the left in the RACI finder



Lift the south side of the EqPlatform

