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Military Soils Engineering

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HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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Military Soils Engineering

Contents

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF TABLES	xxvi
PREFACE	xxix
CHAPTER 1. ROCKS AND MINERALS	1-1
Section I. Minerals	1-1
Physical properties	1-1
Hardness	1-1
Crystal form	1-2
Cleavage	1-2
Fracture	1-3
Luster and color	1-3
Streak	1-3
Specific gravity	1-3
Common rock-forming minerals	1-3
Quartz	1-4
Feldspars	1-4
Micas	1-4
Amphiboles	1-4
Pyroxenes	1-4
Olivine	1-4
Chlorite	1-4
Calcite	1-5
Dolomite	1-5
Limonite	1-5
Clay minerals	1-5
Section II. Rocks	1-5
Formation processes	1-5
Igneous	1-6
Sedimentary	1-6
Metamorphic	1-8

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	Page
Classification.....	1-9
Igneous	1-10
Granite	1-12
Felsite	1-12
Gabbro and diorite	1-12
Basalt	1-12
Obsidian	1-13
Pumice.....	1-13
Scoria.....	1-13
Sedimentary	1-13
Conglomerate and breccia	1-14
Sandstone	1-15
Shale	1-15
Tuff	1-15
Limestones	1-15
Dolomite	1-15
Chert	1-15
Metamorphic	1-16
Slate.....	1-16
Schist.....	1-16
Gneiss	1-16
Quartzite.....	1-17
Marble.....	1-17
Identification	1-17
Field identification	1-17
General categories.....	1-17
Foliated	1-18
Very fine-grained	1-20
Coarse-grained	1-21
Engineering properties.....	1-21
Toughness.....	1-21
Hardness.....	1-22
Durability	1-22
Crushed shape	1-22
Chemical stability	1-22
Surface character	1-22
Density	1-22

CHAPTER 2. STRUCTURAL GEOLOGY

Section I. Structural features in sedimentary rocks.....	2-1
Bedding planes.....	2-1
Folds.....	2-3
Types	2-4
Symmetry	2-4
Cleavage and schistosity	2-6
Faults.....	2-6
Recognition	2-7
Terminology.....	2-7
Types.....	2-8
Joints	2-8
Formation	2-9

	Page
Significance	2-9
Strike and dip	2-10
Section II. Geologic maps	2-11
Types	2-11
Bedrock or aerial maps	2-13
Surficial maps	2-13
Special purpose maps	2-13
Symbols	2-14
Formations	2-14
Contacts	2-14
Fault lines and fold axes	2-14
Attitudes	2-14
Cross sections	2-14
Outcrop patterns	2-14
Horizontal strata	2-19
Inclined strata	2-22
Domes	2-22
Basins	2-22
Plunging folds	2-22
Faults	2-22
Normal and reverse	2-22
Thrust	2-23
Intrusions	2-23
Surficial deposits	2-23
Section III. Engineering considerations	2-23
Rock distribution	2-23
Rock fragmentation	2-23
Rock slides and slumps	2-24
Weak rocks	2-25
Fault zones	2-25
Groundwater	2-25
Road cut alignment	2-26
Quarry faces	2-26
Rock deformation	2-26
Earthquakes (fault movements)	2-26
Dams	2-29
Tunnels	2-29
Folded strata	2-29
Faulted strata	2-30
Groundwater problems	2-30
Bridges	2-30
Buildings	2-30
Quarry operations	2-30
Section IV. Applied military geology	2-31
Military geographic intelligence	2-32
Maps and terrain models	2-32
Remote imagery	2-32
Terrain classification	2-32

	Page
Geology in resolving military problems	2-32
Maps	2-32
Photographic interpretation	2-34
Reconnaissance	2-34
Remote imagery	2-34
Field data collection	2-34
Boring	2-36
Exploration excavation	2-36
Geophysical exploration	2-36
Equipment for field data collection	2-36
Geological surveying	2-37
Pace-and-compass method	2-37
Plane-table-and-alidade method	2-37
Brunton-compass-and-aerial-photo method	2-37
Plane-table-, mosaic-, and-alidade method	2-37
Photogeology method	2-37

CHAPTER 3. SURFICIAL GEOLOGY 3-1

Fluvial process	3-1
Drainage patterns	3-1
Rectangular	3-2
Parallel	3-2
Dendritic	3-2
Trellis	3-2
Radial	3-2
Annular	3-2
Braided	3-2
Density	3-2
Stream evolution	3-2
Youth	3-2
Maturity	3-5
Old age	3-5
Stream deposits	3-6
Point bars	3-6
Channel bars	3-10
Oxbow lakes	3-10
Natural levees	3-10
Backswamps/floodplains	3-14
Alluvial terraces	3-14
Deltas	3-14
Alluvial fans	3-17
Glacial process	3-18
Types of glaciation	3-18
Continental	3-18
Alpine	3-18
Glacial deposits	3-18
Stratified	3-18
Unstratified	3-27
Eolian process	3-28
Types of eolian erosion	3-30
Deflation	3-30

	Page
Abrasion	3-30
Modes of transportation	3-30
Bed load	3-30
Suspended load	3-30
Eolian features	3-32
Lag deposits or desert pavement	3-32
Sand dunes	3-33
Loess deposits	3-35
Sources of construction aggregate	3-36

CHAPTER 4. SOIL FORMATION AND CHARACTERISTICS	4-1
Section I. Soil formation	4-1
Weathering	4-1
Physical processes	4-1
Unloading	4-1
Frost action	4-1
Organism growth	4-2
Temperature changes	4-2
Crystal growth	4-2
Abrasion	4-2
Chemical processes	4-2
Oxidation	4-2
Hydration	4-2
Hydrolysis	4-2
Carbonation	4-2
Solution	4-2
Discontinuities and weathering	4-2
Effects of climate	4-3
Effects on relief features	4-3
Soil formation methods	4-3
Residual soil	4-3
Transported soil	4-3
Soil profiles	4-4
Section II. Soil Characteristics	4-5
Physical properties	4-5
Grain or particle size	4-6
Determination	4-6
Reports	4-7
Gradation	4-7
Effective size	4-7
Coefficient of uniformity	4-7
Coefficient of curvature	4-7
Well-graded soil	4-7
Poorly graded soil	4-10
Bearing capacity	4-10
Particle shape	4-10
Bulky	4-10
Platy	4-12
Needlelike	4-12
Structure	4-12

	Page
Specific gravity	4-12
Volume ratios	4-12
Weight ratios	4-13
Relative density	4-14
Soil-moisture conditions	4-14
Adsorbed water	4-15
Plasticity and cohesion	4-15
Clay minerals and base exchange	4-16
Capillary phenomena	4-16
Shrinkage	4-17
Swelling and slaking	4-17
Bulking of sands	4-17
Consistency (Atterberg) limits	4-17
Test procedures	4-18
Liquid limit	4-18
Plastic limit	4-18
Plasticity index	4-18
CHAPTER 5. SOIL CLASSIFICATION	5-1
Section I. Unified Soil Classification System	5-1
Soil categories	5-1
Course-grained soils	5-2
Fine-grained soils	5-4
Highly organic soils	5-5
Laboratory testing	5-5
Desirable soil properties for roads and airfields	5-5
Strength	5-6
Coarse-grained soils	5-6
Fine-grained soils	5-6
Frost action	5-13
Compression	5-13
Drainage	5-14
Compaction	5-14
Desirable soil properties for embankments and foundations	5-14
Soil graphics	5-17
Field identification	5-17
Procedures	5-17
Equipment	5-18
Factors	5-18
Tests	5-19
Visual examination test	5-19
Breaking or dry strength test	5-21
Roll or thread test	5-22
Ribbon test	5-23
Wet shaking test	5-23
Odor test	5-24
Bite or grit test	5-24
Slaking test	5-25
Acid test	5-25
Shine test	5-25
Feel test	5-25

	Page
Hasty field identification	5-25
Optimum moisture content (OMC).....	5-29
Section II. Other soil classification systems	5-29
Commonly used systems	5-29
Revised Public Roads System.....	5-29
Basis	5-30
Procedure	5-30
Agricultural Soil Classification System	5-31
Textural classification	5-31
Pedological classification.....	5-31
Geological soil classification.....	5-32
Typical soil classification.....	5-32
Unified Soil Classification System.....	5-33
Soil number 1	5-33
Soil number 2	5-33
Soil number 3	5-33
Soil number 4	5-33
Revised Public Roads Classification System.....	5-35
Soil number 1	5-35
Soil number 2	5-35
Soil number 3	5-35
Soil number 4	5-36
Agricultural Soil Classification System	5-36
Soil number 1	5-36
Soil number 2	5-36
Soil number 3	5-36
Soil number 4	5-36
Comparison of classification systems.....	5-36
CHAPTER 6. CONCEPTS OF SOIL ENGINEERING.....	6-1
Section I. Settlement.....	6-1
Factors.....	6-1
Compressibility	6-1
Compressive load behavior.....	6-1
Cohesionless soils	6-2
Consolidation	6-2
Cohesive soils	6-2
Consolidation tests	6-2
Section II. Shearing resistance.....	6-3
Importance	6-3
Laboratory tests.....	6-3
California Bearing Ratio	6-3
Airfield Index (AI)	6-4
Airfield cone penetrometer.....	6-4
Description	6-4
Operation	6-4
Maintenance.....	6-5
Soil-strength evaluation.....	6-5
Fine-grained soils.....	6-5

	Page
Coarse-grained soils	6-6
Correlation between CBR and AI	6-6
Section III. Bearing capacity	6-7
Importance	6-7
Foundations	6-7
Shallow foundations	6-7
Deep foundations	6-8
Piles	6-8
Piers	6-9
Section IV. Earth-retaining structures	6-9
Purpose	6-9
Types	6-9
Retaining walls	6-9
Backfills	6-11
Drainage	6-11
Frost action	6-13
Timber crib	6-13
Other timber walls	6-14
Gabions	6-14
Excavation bracing system	6-16
Shallow excavations	6-16
Narrow shallow excavations	6-16
Wide shallow excavations	6-17
CHAPTER 7. MOVEMENT OF WATER THROUGH SOILS	7-1a
Section I. Water	7-1a
Hydrologic cycle	7-1a
Surface water	7-1b
Streams	7-1b
Lakes	7-1b
Swamps	7-1b
Springs and seeps	7-1b
Gravity springs and seeps	7-1b
Artesian springs	7-1c
Groundwater	7-1c
Free, or gravitational, water	7-1d
Hygroscopic moisture	7-1d
Capillary moisture	7-1d
Locating groundwater sources	7-2
Hydrogeologic indicators	7-2
Geologic indicators	7-2
Permeability	7-3
Drainage characteristics	7-4
Well-drained soils	7-4
Poorly drained soils	7-4
Impervious soils	7-4
Filter design	7-4
Porosity and permeability of rocks	7-6
Porosity	7-6

	Page
Permeability	7-6
Water table	7-6
Perched water table	7-6
Aquifer	7-6
Saltwater intrusion	7-7
Section II. Frost action	7-7
Problems	7-7
Freezing	7-7
Thawing	7-7
Conditions	7-10
Effects	7-12
Heaving	7-12
Loss of pavement strength	7-12
Rigid pavements (concrete)	7-13
Flexible bituminous pavements	7-13
Slopes	7-13
Investigational procedures	7-13
Control	7-14
Base composition requirements	7-14
Pavement design	7-16
Control of surface deformation	7-16
Provision of adequate bearing capacity	7-17
CHAPTER 8. SOIL COMPACTION	8-1
Section I. Soil properties affected by compaction	8-1
Advantages of soil compaction	8-1
Settlement	8-1
Shearing resistance	8-2
Movement of water	8-2
Volume change	8-2
Section II. Design considerations	8-2
Moisture-density relationships	8-2
Compaction characteristics of various soils	8-3
Other factors that influence density	8-4
Addition of water to soil	8-5
Handling wet soils	8-6
Variation of compactive effort	8-6
Compaction specifications	8-6
CBR design procedure	8-7
Subgrade compaction	8-9
Expansive clays	8-11
Clays and organic soils	8-11
Silts	8-11
Base compaction	8-11
Maintenance of soil density	8-11
Section III. Construction Procedures	8-12
General considerations	8-12
Selection of materials	8-12
Dumping and spreading	8-12

	Page
Compaction of embankments	8-15
Density determinations	8-15
Field control of compaction	8-16
Determination of moisture content	8-16
Field examination	8-16
Field drying	8-16
“Speedy” moisture content test	8-17
Nuclear densimeter	8-17
Determination of water to be added	8-17
Compaction equipment	8-17
Pneumatic-tired roller	8-18
Pneumatic roller	8-18
Self-propelled, pneumatic-tired roller	8-18
Sheepsfoot roller	8-19
Tamping-foot roller	8-20
Steel-wheeled roller	8-20
Self-propelled, smooth-drum vibratory roller	8-20
Other equipment	8-20
Compactor selection	8-20
Availability	8-21
Efficiency	8-21
 Section IV. Quality control	 8-21
Purpose	8-21
Quality-control plan	8-22
Lot size	8-22
Random sampling	8-22
Test tolerance	8-22
Penalty system	8-23
Theater-of-operations quality control	8-23
Corrective actions	8-23
Overcompaction	8-23
Undercompaction	8-23
Too wet	8-24
Too dry	8-24
 CHAPTER 9. SOIL STABILIZATION FOR ROADS AND AIRFIELDS	 9-1
Section I. Methods of stabilization	9-1
Basic considerations	9-1
Mechanical stabilization	9-2
Uses	9-3
Objective	9-3
Limitations	9-3
Soil base requirements	9-4
Soil surface requirements	9-4
Proportioning	9-4
Use of local materials	9-4
Blending	9-5
Numerical proportioning	9-5
Specified gradation	9-5
Graphical proportioning	9-5

	Page
Arithmetical proportioning	9-6
Plasticity requirements	9-8
Field proportioning	9-8
Waterproofing	9-8
Sources of water	9-9
Objectives of waterproofer	9-9
Chemical admixture stabilization	9-10
Cement	9-10
Modification	9-11
Stabilization	9-14
Lime	9-18
Modification	9-19
Stabilization	9-19
Other additives	9-21
Fly-ash	9-21
Class C	9-21
Class F	9-21
Lime-fly ash mixtures	9-21
Lime-cement-fly ash (LCF) mixtures	9-22
Bituminous materials	9-22
Soil gradation	9-22
Types of bitumen	9-22
Mix design	9-23
Section II. Design concepts	9-26
Structural categories	9-26
Stabilized pavement design procedure	9-28
Thickness design procedures	9-29
Roads	9-30
Single-layer	9-30
Multilayer	9-32
Airfields	9-36
Single-layer	9-36
Multilayer	9-42
Examples of design	9-45
Example 1	9-45
Example 2	9-46
Example 3	9-47
Example 4	9-47
Example 5	9-48
Example 6	9-48
Theater-of-operations airfield considerations	9-48
Functions of soil stabilization	9-48
Design requirements for strength improvement	9-51
Section III. Dust control	9-54
Effects of dust	9-54
Dust formation	9-54
Dust palliatives	9-55
Intensity of area use	9-55
Nontraffic areas	9-55

	Page
Occasional-traffic areas	9-55
Traffic areas	9-56
Topography	9-56
Soil type	9-56
Soil surface features	9-56
Loose and dry or slightly damp soil	9-56
Loose and wet or scurry soil	9-56
Firm and dry or slightly damp soil	9-56
Firm and wet soil	9-56
Climate	9-56
Dust-control methods	9-57
Agronomic	9-57
Grasses	9-57
Shelter belts	9-57
Rough tillage	9-57
Surface penetrant	9-57
Bitumens	9-58
Resins	9-59
Salts	9-59
Water	9-60
Admix	9-60
In-place admixing	9-60
Off-site admixing	9-61
Surface blanket	9-61
Minerals (aggregates)	9-62
Prefabricated membrane	9-62
Prefabricated mesh	9-62
Bituminous liquid	9-62
Polyvinyl acetate (DCA 1295) (without reinforcement)	9-62
Polyvinyl acetate (DCA 1295) (with reinforcement)	9-63
Polypropylene-asphalt membrane	9-63
Selection of dust palliatives	9-63
Application rates	9-70
Placement	9-70
Dilution	9-70
Prewetting	9-71
Curing	9-71
Dust control on roads and cantonment areas	9-71
Dust control for heliports	9-71
Control of sand	9-71
Fencing	9-71
Paneling	9-75
Bituminous materials	9-76
Vegetative treatment	9-76
Mechanical removal	9-76
Trenching	9-77
Water	9-77
Blanket covers	9-77
Salt solutions	9-77
Section IV. Construction procedures	9-77

	Page
Mechanical soil stabilization	9-77
On-site blending	9-77
Preparation	9-77
Addition of imported soil materials	9-78
Mixing	9-78
Compaction	9-78
Off-site blending	9-78
Preparation	9-78
Addition of blended soil materials	9-78
Lime stabilization	9-78
Preparation	9-78
Spreading	9-78
Preliminary mixing, watering and curing	9-78
Final mixing and pulverization	9-79
Compaction	9-79
Final curing	9-79
Cement stabilization	9-79
Preparation	9-79
Spreading	9-79
Mixing	9-79
Compaction	9-79
Curing	9-79
Fly-ash stabilization	9-79
Preparation	9-79
Spreading	9-79
Mixing	9-80
Compaction	9-80
Curing	9-80
Bituminous stabilization	9-80
Traveling plant mixer	9-80
Rotary mixer	9-80
Blade mixing	9-80
Central plant construction methods	9-81
Storing	9-81
Mixing	9-81
Hauling	9-81
Placing	9-81
Compacting	9-81
Curing	9-81
Surface waterproofing	9-81
Preparation	9-81
Mixing	9-81
Compaction	9-81
Membrane placement	9-81
CHAPTER 10. SLOPE STABILIZATION	10-1
Geologic features	10-1
Faults	10-1
Bedding plane slope	10-2
Soil mechanics	10-2
Slope gradient	10-2

	Page
Normal force	10-3
Downslope force	10-3
Shear strength	10-3
Groundwater	10-7
Uplift force	10-7
Seepage force	10-8
Slope failure	10-8
Rockfalls and rockslides	10-8
Debris avalanches and debris flows	10-10
Slumps and earthflows	10-11
Surface drainage	10-12
Groundwater level	10-12
Rock riprap or buttresses	10-13
Interceptor drain	10-14
Fills	10-14
Soil creep	10-14
Stable slope construction in bedded sediments	10-16
Sandstone - Type I	10-16
Unstable-slope indicators	10-18
Road-location techniques	10-18
Construction techniques	10-18
Sandstone - Type II	10-20
Unstable-slope indicators	10-20
Road-location techniques	10-21
Construction techniques	10-21
Deeply weathered siltstone	10-21
Unstable-slope indicators	10-21
Road-location techniques	10-22
Construction techniques	10-22
Sandstone adjoining ridges of igneous rock	10-22
Unstable-slope indicators	10-22
Road-location techniques	10-22
Construction techniques	10-22
CHAPTER 11. GEOTEXTILES	11-1
Applications	11-1
Reinforcement	11-1
Separation	11-2
Bypass	11-2
Remove and replace	11-2
Build on directly	11-2
Stabilize	11-2
Drainage	11-2
Filtration	11-2
Unpaved aggregate road design	11-3
Site reconnaissance	11-3
Subgrade soil type and strength	11-3
Subgrade soil permissible load	11-3
Wheel loads, contact pressure, and contact area	11-3
Aggregate base thickness	11-4
Aggregate quality	11-5

	Page
Service life	11-5
Selecting a geotextile	11-5
Roadway construction	11-8
Prepare the site	11-8
Lay the fabric	11-8
Lay the base	11-8
Earth retaining walls	11-9
Construction on sand	11-9
Procedures	11-12
Maintenance	11-12
CHAPTER 12. SPECIAL SOIL PROBLEMS	12-1
Aggregate behavior	12-1
Soil-aggregate mixtures	12-1
Laterites and lateritic soils	12-1
Laterites	12-2
Lateritic soils	12-2
Location	12-2
Profiles	12-2
Engineering classification	12-2
Compacted soil characteristics	12-2
Pavement construction	12-3
Subgrade	12-3
Base course	12-3
Subbase	12-3
Surfacing	12-4
Stabilization	12-4
Slopes	12-5
Coral	12-5
Types	12-5
Pit-run coral	12-5
Coral rock	12-5
Coral sand	12-5
Sources	12-5
Uses	12-6
Fills, subgrades, and base courses	12-6
Surfacing	12-6
Concrete aggregate	12-6
Construction	12-6
Desert soils	12-6
Arctic and subarctic soils	12-7
Surface thawing index	12-7
Ecological impact of construction	12-13
APPENDIX A. CBR DESIGN METHODOLOGY	A-1
APPENDIX B. AVAILABILITY OF FLY ASH	B-1
APPENDIX C. HAZARDS OF CHEMICAL STABILIZERS	C-1
GLOSSARY	Glossary-1
REFERENCES	References-1
INDEX	Index-1

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1-1. <i>Crystal forms</i>	1-2
Figure 1-2. <i>Cleavage</i>	1-2
Figure 1-3. <i>Fractures</i>	1-3
Figure 1-4. <i>The rock cycle</i>	1-7
Figure 1-5. <i>Intrusive and extrusive rock bodies</i>	1-7
Figure 1-6. <i>Cross section of igneous rock</i>	1-8
Figure 1-7. <i>Bedding planes</i>	1-9
Figure 1-8. <i>Contact metamorphism zone</i>	1-9
Figure 1-9. <i>Metamorphic foliation</i>	1-10
Figure 1-10. <i>Jointing in igneous rocks</i>	1-12
Figure 1-11. <i>Cross bedding in sandstone</i>	1-14
Figure 1-12. <i>Metamorphism of existing rocks</i>	1-18
Figure 1-13. <i>Crushed shape</i>	1-22
Figure 2-1. <i>The major plates of the earth's crust</i>	2-2
Figure 2-2. <i>Major features of the plate tectonic theory</i>	2-3
Figure 2-3. <i>Location of rock outcrops</i>	2-3
Figure 2-4. <i>Folding of sedimentary rock layers</i>	2-4
Figure 2-5. <i>Common types of folds</i>	2-5
Figure 2-6. <i>Topographic expression of plunging folds</i>	2-5
Figure 2-7. <i>Fold symmetry</i>	2-6
Figure 2-8. <i>Faulting</i>	2-7
Figure 2-9. <i>Fault zone</i>	2-7
Figure 2-10. <i>Thrust fault with drag folds</i>	2-8
Figure 2-11. <i>Fault terminology</i>	2-8
Figure 2-12. <i>Types of faults</i>	2-9
Figure 2-13. <i>Graben and horst faulting</i>	2-9

	Page
Figure 2-14. <i>Jointing in sedimentary and igneous rock</i>	2-10
Figure 2-15. <i>Strike</i>	2-11
Figure 2-16. <i>Dip</i>	2-11
Figure 2-17. <i>Measuring strike and dip with a Brunton compass</i>	2-12
Figure 2-18. <i>Strike and dip symbols</i>	2-12
Figure 2-19. <i>Strike and dip symbols of sedimentary rocks</i>	2-13
Figure 2-20. <i>Symbolic patterns for rock types</i>	2-17
Figure 2-21. <i>Geologic map symbols</i>	2-18
Figure 2-22. <i>Placement of strike and dip symbols on a geologic map</i>	2-19
Figure 2-23. <i>Geologic map and cross section</i>	2-19
Figure 2-24. <i>Outcrop patterns of horizontal strata</i>	2-20
Figure 2-25. <i>Outcrop patterns of inclined strata</i>	2-20
Figure 2-26. <i>Outcrop patterns of an eroded dome</i>	2-20
Figure 2-27. <i>Outcrop patterns of an eroded basin</i>	2-20
Figure 2-28. <i>Outcrop patterns of plunging folds</i>	2-21
Figure 2-29. <i>Outcrop patterns produced by faulting</i>	2-21
Figure 2-30. <i>Outcrop patterns of intrusive rocks</i>	2-21
Figure 2-31. <i>Outcrop patterns of surficial deposits</i>	2-21
Figure 2-32. <i>Ripping in the direction of dip</i>	2-24
Figure 2-33. <i>Rock drills</i>	2-24
Figure 2-34. <i>Rock slide on inclined bedding plane</i>	2-25
Figure 2-35. <i>Rules of thumb for inclined sedimentary rock cuts</i>	2-25
Figure 2-36. <i>Road cut alignment</i>	2-27
Figure 2-37. <i>Quarry in the direction of strike</i>	2-28
Figure 3-1. <i>Typical drainage patterns</i>	3-3
Figure 3-2. <i>Topographic expression of a braided stream</i>	3-4
Figure 3-3. <i>Stream evolution and valley development</i>	3-5

	Page
Figure 3-4. <i>A youthful stream valley</i>	3-7
Figure 3-5. <i>A mature stream valley</i>	3-8
Figure 3-6. <i>An old age stream valley</i>	3-9
Figure 3-7. <i>Meander erosion and deposition</i>	3-10
Figure 3-8. <i>Point bar deposits designated by gravel symbols</i>	3-11
Figure 3-9. <i>Channel bar deposits, oxbow lakes, and backswamp/floodplain deposits</i>	3-12
Figure 3-10. <i>Meander development and cutoff</i>	3-13
Figure 3-11. <i>Oxbow lake deposits, natural levees, and backswamp deposits</i>	3-13
Figure 3-12. <i>Alluvial terraces</i>	3-14
Figure 3-13. <i>Topographic expression of alluvial terraces</i>	3-15
Figure 3-14. <i>Growth of a simple delta</i>	3-16
Figure 3-15. <i>Arcuate, bird's-foot, and elongate deltas</i>	3-16
Figure 3-16. <i>Alluvial fan and coalescing alluvial fans</i>	3-17
Figure 3-17. <i>Cedar Creek alluvial fan</i>	3-19
Figure 3-18. <i>Coalescing alluvial fans</i>	3-20
Figure 3-19. <i>Major floodplain features</i>	3-21
Figure 3-20. <i>World distribution of fluvial landforms</i>	3-22
Figure 3-21. <i>Ice sheets of North America and Europe</i>	3-23
Figure 3-22. <i>Continental glaciation</i>	3-24
Figure 3-23. <i>Alpine glaciation</i>	3-25
Figure 3-24. <i>Moraine topographic expression with kettle lakes, swamps, and eskers</i>	3-26
Figure 3-25. <i>Valley deposits from melting ice</i>	3-27
Figure 3-26. <i>Idealized cross section of a drumlin</i>	3-28
Figure 3-27. <i>Topographic expression of a drumlin field</i>	3-29
Figure 3-28. <i>Distribution of major groups of glacial landforms across the United States</i>	3-30
Figure 3-29. <i>World distribution of glacial landforms</i>	3-31

	Page
Figure 3-30. <i>Three stages illustrating the development of desert armor.</i>	3-32
Figure 3-31. <i>Cutting of a ventifact</i>	3-33
Figure 3-32. <i>Eolian features</i>	3-33
Figure 3-33. <i>Sand dune types</i>	3-34
Figure 3-34. <i>Loess landforms</i>	3-35
Figure 3-35. <i>Topographic expression of sand dunes and desert pavement.</i>	3-36
Figure 3-36. <i>Worldwide distribution of eolian landforms.</i>	3-37
Figure 4-1. <i>Residual soil forming from the in-place weathering of igneous rock</i>	4-4
Figure 4-2. <i>Soil profile showing characteristic soil horizons</i>	4-5
Figure 4-3. <i>Dry sieve analysis.</i>	4-6
Figure 4-4. <i>Data sheet, example of dry sieve analysis</i>	4-8
Figure 4-5. <i>Grain-size distribution curve from sieve analysis.</i>	4-9
Figure 4-6. <i>Well-graded soil</i>	4-10
Figure 4-7. <i>Uniformly graded soil</i>	4-10
Figure 4-8. <i>Gap-graded soil</i>	4-10
Figure 4-9. <i>Typical grain-size distribution curves for well-graded and poorly graded soils.</i>	4-11
Figure 4-10. <i>Bulky grains.</i>	4-11
Figure 4-11. <i>Volume-weight relationships of a soil mass</i>	4-12
Figure 4-12. <i>Layer of adsorbed water surrounding a soil particle</i>	4-15
Figure 4-13. <i>Capillary rise of water in small tubes.</i>	4-16
Figure 4-14. <i>U-shaped compaction curve.</i>	4-18
Figure 4-15. <i>Liquid limit test</i>	4-18
Figure 5-1. <i>Sample plasticity chart</i>	5-3
Figure 5-2. <i>Graphical summary of grain-size distribution.</i>	5-20
Figure 5-3. <i>Breaking or dry strength test.</i>	5-22
Figure 5-4. <i>Roll or thread test.</i>	5-22

	Page
Figure 5-5. <i>Ribbon test (highly plastic clay)</i>	5-23
Figure 5-6. <i>Wet shaking test.</i>	5-24
Figure 5-7. <i>Suggested procedure for hasty field identification.</i>	5-26
Figure 5-7. <i>Suggested procedure for hasty field identification (continued).</i>	5-27
Figure 5-7. <i>Suggested procedure for hasty field identification (continued).</i>	5-28
Figure 5-8. <i>Group index formula and charts, Revised Public Roads System</i>	5-31
Figure 5-9. <i>Relationship between LL and PI silt-clay groups, Revised Public Roads System</i>	5-32
Figure 5-10. <i>US Department of Agriculture textural classification chart</i>	5-33
Figure 6-1. <i>Laboratory shear tests.</i>	6-3
Figure 6-2. <i>Correlation of CBR and AI.</i>	6-7
Figure 6-3. <i>Typical failure surfaces beneath shallow foundations</i>	6-7
Figure 6-4. <i>Bearing piles</i>	6-8
Figure 6-5. <i>Principal types of retaining walls.</i>	6-10
Figure 6-6. <i>Common types of retaining-wall drainage.</i>	6-12
Figure 6-7. <i>Eliminating frost action behind retaining walls</i>	6-13
Figure 6-8. <i>Typical timber crib retaining wall</i>	6-14
Figure 6-9. <i>Other timber retaining walls</i>	6-15
Figure 6-10. <i>Typical gabion.</i>	6-15
Figure 6-11. <i>Bracing a narrow shallow excavation</i>	6-16
Figure 6-12. <i>Bracing a wide shallow excavation</i>	6-17
Figure 7a. <i>Hydrologic cycle.</i>	7-1b
Figure 7b. <i>Artesian groundwater.</i>	7-1c
Figure 7c. <i>Groundwater zones</i>	7-1d
Figure 7-1. <i>Capillary rise of moisture</i>	7-1e
Figure 7-2. <i>Base drains in an airfield pavement</i>	7-1g
Figure 7-3. <i>Typical subgrade drainage installation.</i>	7-2
Figure 7-4. <i>Mechanical analysis curves for filter material.</i>	7-5

	Page
Figure 7-4a. <i>Porosity in rocks</i>	7-6
Figure 7-5. <i>Determination of freezing index</i>	7-9
Figure 7-6. <i>Formation of ice crystals on frost line</i>	7-10
Figure 7-7. <i>Sources of water that feed growing ice lenses</i>	7-15
Figure 8-1. <i>Typical moisture-density relationship</i>	8-3
Figure 8-2. <i>Moisture-density relationships of seven soils</i>	8-5
Figure 8-3. <i>Moisture-density relationships of two soils</i>	8-7
Figure 8-4. <i>Density, compaction, and moisture content</i>	8-8
Figure 8-5. <i>Density and moisture determination by CBR design method</i>	8-10
Figure 8-6. <i>Self-propelled, pneumatic-tired roller</i>	8-18
Figure 8-7. <i>Compaction by a sheepsfoot roller</i>	8-19
Figure 8-8. <i>Two-axle, tandem steel-wheeled roller</i>	8-20
Figure 8-9. <i>Self-propelled, smooth-drum vibratory roller</i>	8-20
Figure 8-10. <i>Use of test strip data to determine compactor efficiency</i>	8-21
Figure 9-1. <i>Graphical method of proportioning two soils to meet gradation requirements</i>	9-7
Figure 9-2. <i>Arithmetical method of proportioning soils to meet gradation requirements</i>	9-7
Figure 9-3. <i>Graphical method of estimating plasticity characteristics of a combination of two soils</i>	9-9
Figure 9-4. <i>Gradation triangle for use in selecting a stabilizing additive</i>	9-12
Figure 9-5. <i>Group index for determining average cement requirements</i>	9-17
Figure 9-6. <i>Alternate method of determining initial design lime content</i>	9-20
Figure 9-7. <i>Classification of aggregates</i>	9-25
Figure 9-8. <i>Approximate effective range of cationic and anionic emulsion of various types of asphalt</i>	9-25
Figure 9-9. <i>Determination of asphalt grade for expedient construction</i>	9-26
Figure 9-10. <i>Selection of asphalt cement content</i>	9-26
Figure 9-11. <i>Typical sections for single-layer and multilayer design</i>	9-27

	Page
Figure 9-12. <i>Design curve for Class A and Class B single-layer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-31
Figure 9-13. <i>Design curve for Class C single-layer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-31
Figure 9-14. <i>Design curve for Class D single-layer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-31
Figure 9-15. <i>Design curve for Class E single-layer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-32
Figure 9-16. <i>Design curve for Class A and Class B multilayer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-33
Figure 9-17. <i>Design curve for Class C multilayer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-33
Figure 9-18. <i>Design curve for Class D multilayer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-34
Figure 9-19. <i>Design curve for Class E multilayer roads using stabilized soils.</i>	9-34
Figure 9-20. <i>Equivalency factors for soils stabilized with cement, lime, or cement and lime mixed with fly ash.</i>	9-36
Figure 9-21. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in close battle areas.</i>	9-38
Figure 9-22. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in rear areas.</i>	9-39
Figure 9-23. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in rear area 6,000'.</i>	9-40
Figure 9-24. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in tactical rear area.</i>	9-40
Figure 9-25. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in tactical COMMZ areas.</i>	9-41
Figure 9-26. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in liaison COMMZ airfields.</i>	9-42
Figure 9-27. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in COMMZ.</i>	9-43
Figure 9-28. <i>Design curves for single-layer airfields using stabilized soils in semipermanent COMMZ airfields.</i>	9-44
Figure 9-29. <i>Thickness design procedure for subgrades that increase in strength with depth.</i>	9-53
Figure 9-30. <i>Thickness design procedure for subgrades that decrease in strength with depth.</i>	9-54
Figure 9-31. <i>Polypropylene membrane layout for tangential sections.</i>	9-64
Figure 9-32. <i>Polypropylene membrane layout for curved sections.</i>	9-64

	Page
Figure 9-33. <i>Dust control effort required for heliports.</i>	9-73
Figure 9-34. <i>Cross section of dune showing initial and subsequent fences.</i>	9-75
Figure 9-35. <i>Three fences installed to control dune formation</i>	9-75
Figure 9-36. <i>Three types of solid fencing or paneling for control of dune formation</i>	9-76
Figure 9-37. <i>Schematic of dune destruction or stabilization by selective treatment.</i>	9-77
Figure 10-1. <i>Slope of bedding planes</i>	10-2
Figure 10-2. <i>Normal force.</i>	10-4
Figure 10-3. <i>Downslope or driving force</i>	10-5
Figure 10-4. <i>Frictional resistance to sliding</i>	10-6
Figure 10-5. <i>Frictional resistance to sliding with uplift force of groundwater.</i>	10-9
Figure 10-6. <i>Fricitonal resistance to sliding with and without groundwater</i>	10-9
Figure 10-7. <i>Debris avalanche</i>	10-11
Figure 10-8. <i>Backward roation of a slump block.</i>	10-12
Figure 10-9. <i>Jackstrawed trees.</i>	10-12
Figure 10-10. <i>Structural features of a slump.</i>	10-13
Figure 10-11. <i>Road construction across short slopes.</i>	10-13
Figure 10-12. <i>Increasing slope stability with surface drainage</i>	10-14
Figure 10-13. <i>Using rock riprap to provide support for road cuts or fills.</i>	10-15
Figure 10-14. <i>Installing interceptor drains along an existing road</i>	10-15
Figure 10-15. <i>Building a road on a blanket.</i>	10-16
Figure 10-16. <i>Block diagram of a Type I site.</i>	10-17
Figure 10-17. <i>Topographic map of Type I site</i>	10-18
Figure 10-18. <i>Pistol-butted trees.</i>	10-19
Figure 10-19. <i>Tipped trees</i>	10-19
Figure 10-20. <i>Tension cracks</i>	10-19
Figure 10-21. <i>Safe disposal site</i>	10-20

	Page
Figure 11-1. <i>Comparison of aggregate depth requirements with and without a geotextile</i>	11-1
Figure 11-2. <i>Effect of pumping action on base course.</i>	11-2
Figure 11-3. <i>Separating a weak subgrade from a granular subbase with a geofabric.</i>	11-2
Figure 11-4. <i>Determining the soil's shear strength by converting CBR value or Cone Index.</i>	11-3
Figure 11-5. <i>Thickness design curve for single-wheel load on gravel surfaced pavements</i>	11-7
Figure 11-6. <i>Thickness design curve for dual-wheel load on gravel surfaced pavements</i>	11-7
Figure 11-7. <i>Thickness design curve for tandem-wheel load on gravel-surfaced pavements.</i>	11-8
Figure 11-8. <i>Construction sequence using geotextiles.</i>	11-11
Figure 11-9. <i>Constructing an earth retaining wall using geofabrics.</i>	11-13
Figure 11-10. <i>Sand grid.</i>	11-14
Figure 12-1. <i>Maximum depth to permafrost below a road after 5 years in a subarctic region</i>	12-8
Figure 12-2. <i>Thickness of base required to prevent thawing of subgrade</i>	12-9
Figure 12-3. <i>Distribution of mean air thawing indexes ($^{\circ}$)—North America.</i>	12-10
Figure 12-4. <i>Distribution of mean air thawing indexes ($^{\circ}$)—Northern Eurasia</i>	12-11
Figure 12-5. <i>Distribution of mean air thawing index values for pavements in North America ($^{\circ}$)</i>	12-12
Figure 12-6. <i>Determining the depth of thaw beneath pavements with gravel bases.</i>	12-13
Figure 12-7. <i>Determining the depth of freeze beneath pavements with gravel bases.</i>	12-14
Figure 12-8. <i>Permafrost degradation under different surface treatments.</i>	12-15
Figure A-1. <i>CBR design flowchart.</i>	A-2
Figure A-1. <i>CBR design flowchart (continued)</i>	A-3
Figure A-2. <i>Grain size distribution of Rio Meta Plain soil.</i>	A-7
Figure A-3. <i>Plasticity chart plotted with Rio Meta Plain soil data</i>	A-8

	Page
Figure A-4. <i>Density-moisture curve for Rio Meta Plain soil</i>	A-9
Figure A-5. <i>Swelling curve for Rio Meta Plain soil</i>	A-10
Figure A-6. <i>CBR Family of Curves for Rio Meta Plain soil.</i>	A-11
Figure A-7. <i>Density-moisture curve for Rio Meta Plain soil with density and moisture ranges plotted</i>	A-12
Figure A-8. <i>CBR Family of Curves for Rio Meta Plain soil with density range plotted.</i>	A-13
Figure A-9. <i>Design CBR from Rio Meta Plain soil from CBR Family of Curves.</i>	A-14

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1-1. <i>The Mohs hardness scale</i>	1-2
Table 1-2. <i>Classification of igneous rocks</i>	1-11
Table 1-3. <i>Classification of sedimentary rocks</i>	1-14
Table 1-4. <i>Classification of metamorphic rocks.</i>	1-16
Table 1-5. <i>Identification of geologic materials</i>	1-19
Table 1-6. <i>Field-estimating rock hardness</i>	1-22
Table 1-7. <i>Field-estimating rock density</i>	1-23
Table 1-8. <i>Engineering properties of rocks.</i>	1-24
Table 1-9. <i>Aggregate suitability based on physical properties</i>	1-24
Table 1-10. <i>Use of aggregates for military construction missions</i>	1-25
Table 2-1. <i>Geologic time scale</i>	2-15
Table 2-2. <i>Reports for geographic/terrain intelligence.</i>	2-33
Table 2-3. <i>Sources of remote imagery</i>	2-35
Table 3-1. <i>Stream evolution process.</i>	3-6
Table 3-2. <i>Fluvial surficial features.</i>	3-21
Table 3-3. <i>Glacial surficial features.</i>	3-32
Table 3-4. <i>Aggregate types by feature.</i>	3-38
Table 5-1. <i>Unified soil classification (including identification and description)</i>	5-7
Table 5-2. <i>Auxiliary laboratory identification procedure</i>	5-9
Table 5-3. <i>Characteristics pertinent to roads and airfields</i>	5-11
Table 5-4. <i>Characteristics pertinent to embankment and foundation construction.</i>	5-15
Table 5-5. <i>Comparison of the USCS, Revised Public Roads System, and FAA System</i>	5-29
Table 5-6. <i>Revised Public Roads System of soil classification</i>	5-30
Table 5-7. <i>Agricultural Soil Classification System.</i>	5-34
Table 5-8. <i>Classification of four inorganic soil types</i>	5-35
Table 5-9. <i>Comparison of soils under three classification systems.</i>	5-36
Table 7a. <i>Hydrogeologic indicators for groundwater exploration.</i>	7-3
Table 7-1. <i>Frost-susceptible soil groups.</i>	7-11

	Page
Table 8-1. <i>Compaction test comparisons</i>	8-4
Table 8-2. <i>Minimum compaction requirements</i>	8-8
Table 8-3. <i>Soil classification and compaction requirements (average)</i>	8-13
Table 9-1. <i>Numerical example of proportioning.</i>	9-6
Table 9-2. <i>Stabilization methods most suitable for specific applications</i>	9-11
Table 9-3. <i>Guide for selecting a stabilizing additive</i>	9-13
Table 9-4. <i>Minimum unconfined compressive strengths for cement, lime, and combined lime-cement-fly ash stabilized soils</i>	9-14
Table 9-5. <i>Durability requirements.</i>	9-14
Table 9-6. <i>Gradation requirements.</i>	9-15
Table 9-7. <i>Estimated cement requirements for various soil types</i>	9-15
Table 9-8. <i>Average cement requirements for granular and sandy soils</i>	9-16
Table 9-9. <i>Average cement requirements for silty and clayey soils</i>	9-16
Table 9-10. <i>Average cement requirements of miscellaneous materials</i>	9-18
Table 9-11. <i>Recommended gradations for bituminous-stabilized subgrade materials.</i>	9-23
Table 9-12. <i>Recommended gradations for bituminous-stabilized base and subbase materials.</i>	9-23
Table 9-13. <i>Bituminous materials for use with soils of different gradations</i>	9-24
Table 9-14. <i>Emulsified asphalt requirements</i>	9-24
Table 9-15. <i>Thickness design procedures by airfield category.</i>	9-28
Table 9-16. <i>Design determinations</i>	9-29
Table 9-17. <i>Estimated time required for test procedures</i>	9-29
Table 9-18. <i>Road classifications</i>	9-30
Table 9-19. <i>Recommended minimum thickness of pavement and base course for roads in the theater-of-operations.</i>	9-35
Table 9-20. <i>Reduced thickness criteria for permanent and nonexpedient road and airfield design.</i>	9-35
Table 9-21. <i>Airfield categories.</i>	9-37
Table 9-22. <i>Thickness reduction factors for Navy design</i>	9-45
Table 9-23. <i>Equivalency factors for Air Force bases and Army airfields</i>	9-45
Table 9-24. <i>Recommended minimum thickness of pavements and bases for airfields.</i>	9-46

	Page
Table 9-25. <i>Stabilization functions pertinent to theater-of-operations airfields</i>	9-49
Table 9-26. <i>Basic airfield expedient surfacing requirements</i>	9-50
Table 9-27. <i>Design requirements for strength improvement.</i>	9-52
Table 9-28. <i>Recommended aggregate gradation for dust control on airfields and heliports</i>	9-62
Table 9-29. <i>Dust palliative numbers for dust control in nontraffic areas</i>	9-65
Table 9-30. <i>Dust palliative numbers for dust control in occasional-traffic areas.</i>	9-66
Table 9-31. <i>Dust palliative numbers for dust control in traffic areas</i>	9-67
Table 9-32. <i>Dust palliative electives.</i>	9-68
Table 9-33. <i>Roads and cantonment area treatments.</i>	9-72
Table 9-34. <i>Helipad/helicopter maintenance area treatments.</i>	9-74
Table 11-1. <i>Vehicle input parameters</i>	11-4
Table 11-2. <i>Boussinesq theory coefficients.</i>	11-5
Table 11-3. <i>Compacted strength properties of common structural materials</i>	11-6
Table 11-4. <i>Criteria and properties for geotextile evaluation</i>	11-9
Table 11-5. <i>Geotextile survivability for cover material and construction equipment</i>	11-10
Table 11-6. <i>Minimum properties for geotextile survivability</i>	11-10
Table 11-7. <i>Recommended minimum overlap requirements.</i>	11-12
Table 12-1. <i>Gradation requirements for laterite and laterite gravels.</i>	12-3
Table 12-2. <i>Criteria for laterite base course materials</i>	12-4
Table 12-3. <i>Criteria for laterite subbase materials.</i>	12-4
Table 12-4. <i>Measured depth of thaw below various surfaces in the subarctic after 5 years. (Fairbanks, Alaska, mean annual temperature 26 degrees Fahrenheit)</i>	12-8
Table A-1. <i>Recommended maximum permissible values of gradation and Atterberg limit requirements in subbases and select materials.</i>	A-5
Table A-2. <i>Desirable gradation for crushed rock, gravel, or slag and uncrushed sand and gravel aggregates for base courses.</i>	A-5
Table B-1. <i>Percentage of hard and brown coal reserves in major coal-producing countries.</i>	B-1

Preface

SCOPE

Construction in the theater of operations is normally limited to roads, airfields, and structures necessary for military operations. This manual emphasizes the soils engineering aspects of road and airfield construction. The references give detailed information on other soils engineering topics that are discussed in general terms. This manual provides a discussion of the formation and characteristics of soil and the system used by the United States (US) Army to classify soils. It also gives an overview of classification systems used by other agencies. It describes the compaction of soils and quality control, settlement and shearing resistance of soils, the movement of water through soils, frost action, and the bearing capacity of soils that serve as foundations, slopes, embankments, dikes, dams, and earth-retaining structures. This manual also describes the geologic factors that affect the properties and occurrences of natural mineral/soil construction materials used to build dams, tunnels, roads, airfields, and bridges. Theater-of-operations construction methods are emphasized throughout the manual.

PURPOSE

This manual supplies engineer officers and noncommissioned officers with doctrinal tenets and technical facts concerning the use and management of soils during military construction. It also provides guidance in evaluating soil conditions, predicting soil behavior under varying conditions, and solving soil problems related to military operations. Military commanders should incorporate geologic information with other pertinent data when planning military operations, to include standing operating procedures.

The proponent of this publication is the US Army Engineer School. Submit changes for improving this publication on DA Form 2028 and forward it to: Commandant, US Army Engineer School, ATTN: ATSE-TD-D, Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473-6650.

Unless otherwise stated, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

CHAPTER 1

R o c k s a n d M i n e r a l s

The crust of the earth is made up of rock; rock, in turn, is composed of minerals. The geologist classifies rocks by determining their modes of formation and their mineral content in addition to examining certain chemical and physical properties. Military engineers use a simpler diagnostic method that is discussed below. Rock classification is necessary because particular rock types have been recognized as having certain properties or as behaving in somewhat predictable ways. The rock type implies information on many properties that serves as a guide in determining the geological and engineering characteristics of a site. This implied information includes—

- A range of rock strength.
- Possible or expected fracture systems.
- The probability of encountering bedding planes.
- Weak zones.
- Other discontinuities.
- Ease or difficulty of rock excavation.
- Permeability.
- Value as a construction material.
- Trafficability.

This chapter describes procedures for field identification and classification of rocks and minerals. It also explains some of the processes by which rocks are formed. The primary objective of identifying rock materials and evaluating their physical properties is to be able to recommend the most appropriate aggregate type for a given military construction mission.

Section I. Minerals

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

Rocks are aggregates of minerals. To understand the physical properties of rocks, it is necessary to understand what minerals are. A mineral is a naturally occurring, inorganically formed substance having an ordered internal arrangement of atoms. It is a compound and can be expressed by a chemical formula. If the mineral's internal framework of atoms is expressed externally, it forms a crystal. A mineral's characteristic physical properties are controlled by its composition and atomic structure, and these properties are valuable aids in rapid field identification. Properties that can be determined by simple field tests are introduced here to aid in the identification of minerals and indirectly in the identification of rocks. These properties are—

- Hardness.
- Crystal form.
- Cleavage.
- Fracture.
- Luster and color.
- Streak.
- Specific gravity.

Hardness

The hardness of a mineral is a measure of its ability to resist abrasion or scratching by other minerals or by an object of known hardness. A simple scale based on empirical tests has been developed and is called the Mohs

Hardness Scale. The scale consists of 10 minerals arranged in increasing hardness with 1 being the softest. The 10 minerals selected to form the scale of comparison are listed in *Table 1-1*. Hardness kits containing most of the reference minerals are available, but equivalent objects can be substituted for expediency. Objects with higher values on Mobs' scale are capable of scratching objects with lower values. For example, a rock specimen that can be scratched by a copper coin but not by the fingernail is said to have a hardness of about 3. Military engineers describe a rock as either hard or soft. A rock specimen with a hardness of 5 or more is considered hard. The hardness test should be performed on a fresh (unweathered) surface of the specimen.

Table 1-1. The Mohs Hardness Scale.

Mineral	Relative Hardness	Equivalent Objects
Diamond	10	
Corundum	9	
Topaz	8	
Quartz	7	Porcelain (7)
Feldspar	6	Steel file (6.5)
Apatite	5	Window glass (5.5) Knife blade or nail (5)
Fluorite	4	
Calcite	3	Copper coin (3.5)
Gypsum	2	Fingernail (2)
Talc	1	

Crystal Form

Most, but not all, minerals form crystals. The form, or habit, of the crystals can be diagnostic of the mineral and can help to identify it. The minerals galena (a lead ore) and halite (rock salt) commonly crystallize as cubes. Crystals of garnet (a silicate mineral) commonly have 12 or 24 equidimensional faces. Some minerals typically display long needle-like crystals. Minerals showing no crystal form are said to be amorphous. *Figure 1-1* illustrates two of the many crystal forms.

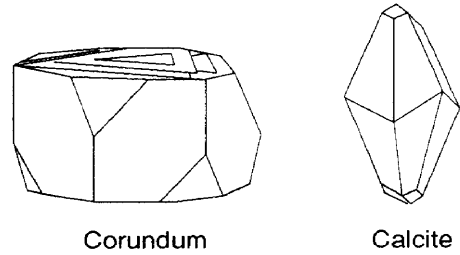


Figure 1-1. Crystal forms.

Cleavage

Cleavage is the tendency of a mineral to split or separate along preferred planes when broken. It is fairly consistent from sample to sample for a given mineral and is a valuable aid in the mineral's identification. Cleavage is described by noting the direction, the degree of perfection, and (for two or more cleavage directions) the angle of intersection of cleavage planes. Some minerals have one cleavage direction; others have two or more directions with varying degrees of perfection. *Figure 1-2* illustrates a mineral with one cleavage direction (mica) and one with three directions (calcite). Some minerals, such as quartz, form crystals but do not cleave.

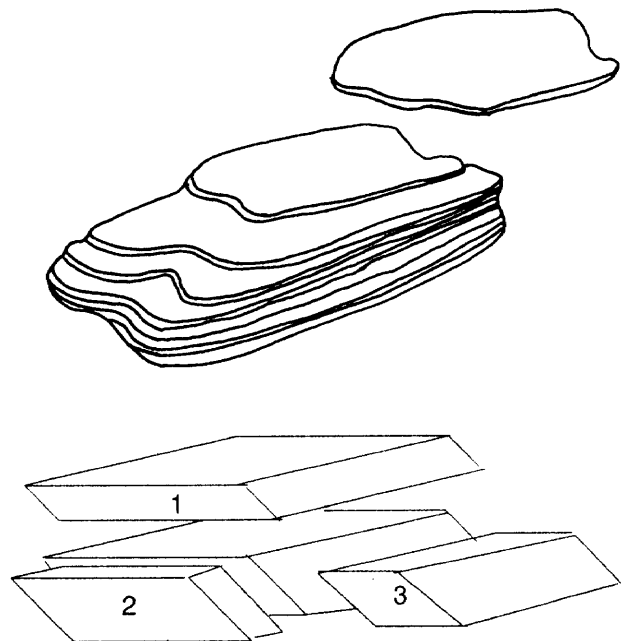


Figure 1-2. Cleavage.