

Devised by British Rear-Admiral, Sir Francis Beaufort in 1805 based on observations of the effects of the wind.

Wind Force (Knots)	WMO Classification	Appearance of Wind Effects	
		On the Water	On Land
0	Less than 1 Calm	Sea surface smooth and mirror-like	Calm, smoke rises vertically Smoke drift indicates wind direction, still wind vanes
1	1-3 Light Air	Scaly ripples, no foam crests	Wind felt on face, leaves rustle, vanes begin to move
2	4-6 Light Breeze	Small wavelets, crests glassy, no breaking	Leaves and small twigs constantly moving, light flags extended
3	7-10 Gentle Breeze	Large wavelets, crests begin to break, scattered whitecaps	Dust, leaves, and loose paper lifted, small tree branches move
4	11-16 Moderate Breeze	Small waves 1-4 ft. becoming longer, numerous whitecaps	
5	17-21 Fresh Breeze	Moderate waves 4-8 ft taking longer form, many whitecaps, some spray	Small trees in leaf begin to sway
6	22-27 Strong Breeze	Larger waves 8-13 ft, whitecaps common, more spray	Larger tree branches moving, whistling in wires
7	28-33 Near Gale	Sea heaps up, waves 13-20 ft, white foam streaks off breakers	Whole trees moving, resistance felt walking against wind
8	34-40 Gale	Moderately high (13-20 ft) waves of greater length, edges of crests begin to break into spindrift, foam blown in streaks	Whole trees in motion, resistance felt walking against wind
9	41-47 Strong Gale	High waves (20 ft), sea begins to roll, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	Slight structural damage occurs, slate blows off roofs
10	48-55 Storm	Very high waves (20-30 ft) with overhanging crests, sea white with densely blown foam, heavy rolling, lowered visibility	Seldom experienced on land, trees broken or uprooted, "considerable structural damage"
11	56-63 Violent Storm	Exceptionally high (30-45 ft) waves, foam patches cover sea, visibility more reduced	
12	64+ Hurricane	Air filled with foam, waves over 45 ft, sea completely white with driving spray, visibility greatly reduced	