

The Beaufort Scale: A simple way to estimate wind speed

Wind force number (Beaufort number)	Description	Approximate speed at 20 ft (6.1 m) above the ground				Observation/Specification
		mph	km/h	knots	m/s	
0	Calm	< 1	< 1	< 1	< 0.5	Smoke rises vertically
1	Light Air	1-3	1-5	1-3	0.5-1.7	Smoke drifts slowly; wind vanes and flags stay still
2	Slight Breeze	4-7	6-11	4-6	1.8-3.5	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; flags stir; wind vanes move
3	Gentle Breeze	8-12	12-19	7-10	3.6-5.7	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; flags are unfurled and flap
4	Moderate Breeze	13-18	20-29	11-16	5.8-8.4	Dust and loose paper blow around; small branches move; flags flap
5	Fresh Breeze	19-24	30-39	17-21	8.5-11.1	Small trees with leaves begin to sway; flags ripple
6	Strong Breeze	25-31	40-50	22-27	11.2-14.2	Large branches sway; flags beat; air whistles around telephone and power wires
7	Moderate Gale	32-38	51-61	28-33	14.3-17.3	Whole trees sway; flags extended; it can be hard to walk into the wind
8	Fresh Gale	39-46	62-74	34-40	17.4-20.9	Twigs break off trees; walking is hindered
9	Strong Gale	47-54	75-85	41-47	21.0-24.5	Branches break off trees; slight damage to buildings (shingles blow off roofs)
10	Whole Gale	55-63	89-101	48-55	24.6-28.5	Trees broken or uprooted; buildings definitely damaged
11	Storm	64-73	102-118	56-63	28.6-33.0	Widespread damage to buildings; trees blow across the ground
12	Hurricane	74+	119+	64+	33.1+	Extreme destruction; trees and power lines knocked down

Adapted from Meteorology Education and Training website, <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/>