

1-1-1989

Determining Cloud Type

United States National Weather Service

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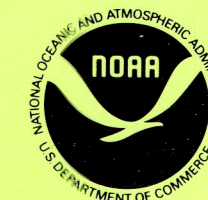
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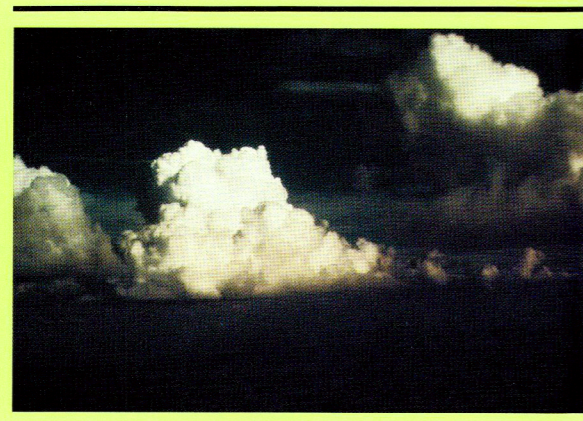
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DETERMINING CLOUD TYPE

Lower Levels (To 6,500 Feet (2 km)) — Cumulus, Stratus, Stratocumulus, Cumulonimbus



C_L = 1: Cumulus with little vertical extent



C_L = 2: Cumulus with moderate or greater vertical extent



C_L = 3: Cumulonimbus, tops not fibrous, outline not completely sharp, no anvil



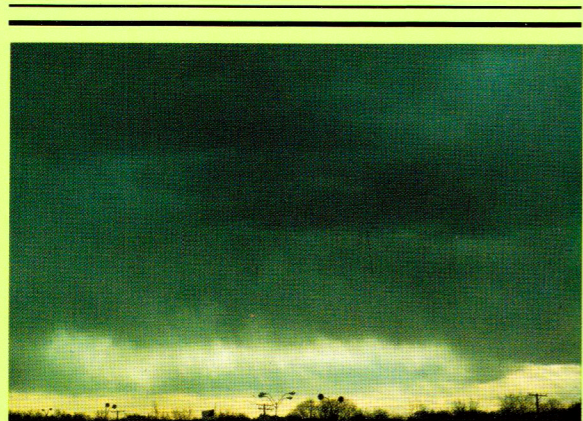
C_L = 4: Stratocumulus from the spreading of cumulus



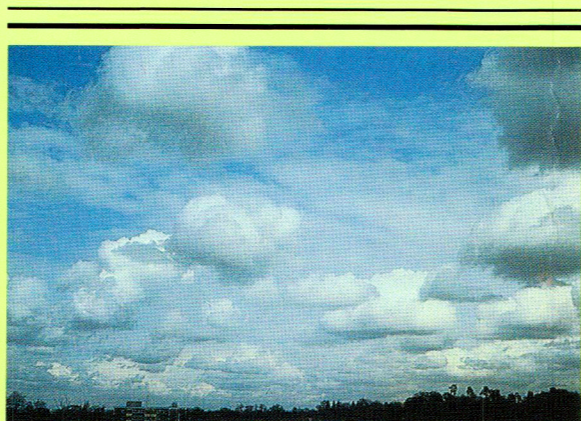
C_L = 5: Stratocumulus not formed from spreading cumulus



C_L = 6: Stratus in a sheet and/or layer



C_L = 7: Stratus fractus and/or cumulus fractus of bad weather



C_L = 8: Cumulus and stratocumulus not from spreading of cumulus, bases at different levels



C_L = 9: Cumulonimbus with fibrous top, often with an anvil

NOTE: When more than one type of C_L cloud is observed, the priority order for reporting is C_L = 9,3,4,8,2. C_L = 1,5,6,7 have equal reporting priority. C_L = 2,3,9 have bases in the lower levels, but will extend into the middle or high levels.

Locations of United States Port Meteorological Officers

New York, New York
Newark, New Jersey
Baltimore, Maryland
Norfolk, Virginia
Jacksonville, Florida
Miami, Florida
New Orleans, Louisiana
Houston, Texas
Los Angeles, California
Oakland, California
Seattle, Washington
Anchorage, Alaska
Valdez, Alaska
Kodiak, Alaska
Honolulu, Hawaii
Chicago, Illinois
Cleveland, Ohio

See the Mariners Weather Log or NWS Observing Handbook No. 1 for PMO phone numbers and mailing addresses.

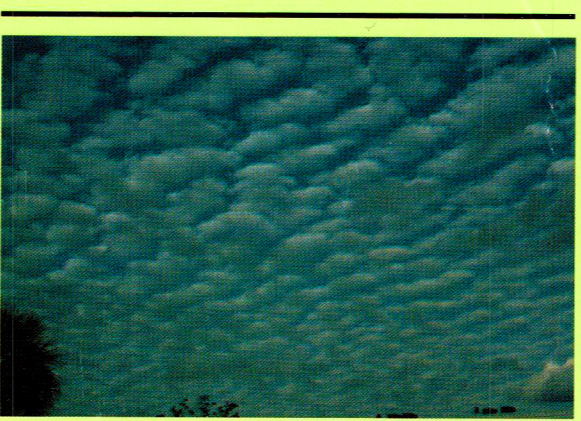
Middle Levels (6,500 Feet (2 km) To 25,000 Feet (8 km)) — Altostratus, Altocumulus, Nimbostratus



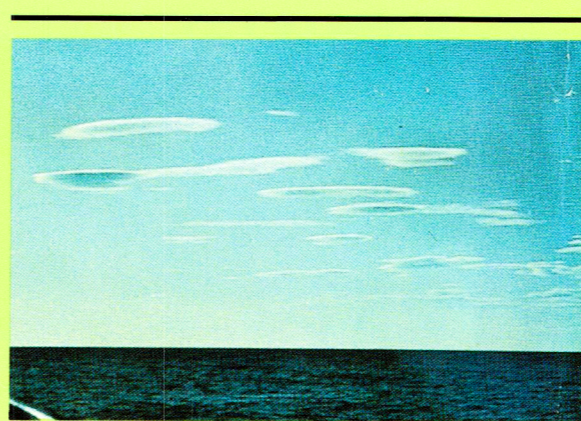
C_M = 1: Altostratus, semi-transparent, sun or moon dimly visible



C_M = 2: Altostratus, dense enough to hide sun or moon, or nimbostratus



C_M = 3: Altocumulus, semi-transparent, cloud elements change slowly, one level



C_M = 4: Altocumulus patches, semi-transparent, multilevel, elements changing. Also altocumulus lenticular



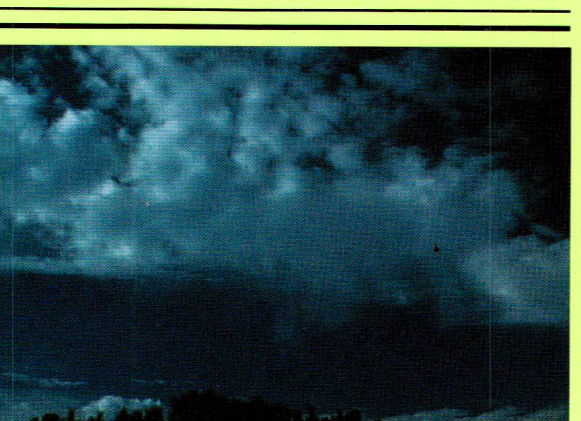
C_M = 5: Altocumulus, one or more bands or layers, expanding, thickening



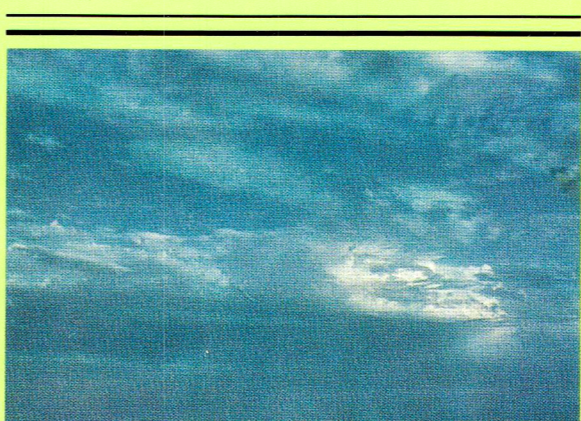
C_M = 6: Altocumulus from the spreading of cumulus or cumulonimbus



C_M = 7: Altocumulus, one or more layers, mainly opaque, not expanding, or altocumulus with altostratus or nimbostratus



C_M = 8: Altocumulus with tower like sproutings



C_M = 9: Altocumulus of a chaotic (heavy, broken, cloud sheets) sky, usually at several levels

NOTE: When more than one type of C_M cloud is observed, the priority order for reporting is C_M = 9,8,7,6,5,4,7 (opaque altocumulus), 3 (semi-transparent altocumulus), 2,1.

Weather reporting schedule: 0000, 0600, 1200, 1800 Zulu from all areas
Every 3 Hours from the Great Lakes, from within 300 miles of named tropical storms, and from within 200 miles of the U.S. and Canadian coastlines. Send special reports at any time to alert the NWS to weather significantly worse than forecast.

See Radio Stations Accepting Ships Weather and Oceanographic Reports for an international listing of where to send weather reports without charge to your vessel.

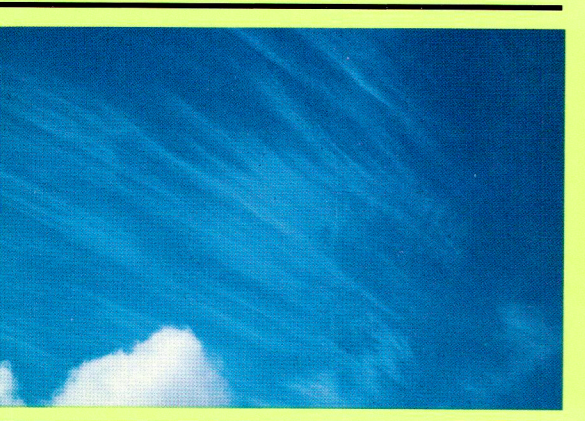
Elements of the Ships Synoptic Code

D...D—Radio call sign
YY—Day of the month
GG—Time of observation
i_w—Wind indicator
L_aL_aL_a—Latitude
Q_c—Quadrant
L_oL_oL_oL_o—Longitude
i_R—Precipitation data indicator
i_x—Weather data indicator
h—Cloud base height
VV—Visibility
N—Cloud cover
dd—Wind direction
ff—Wind speed
s_n—Sign of temperature
TTT—Dry bulb temperature
T_dT_dT_d—Dew point temperature
PPPP—Sea level pressure
a—3-hour pressure tendency
ppp—3-hour pressure change
ww—Present weather
W₁—Past weather (primary)
W₂—Past weather (secondary)
N_h—Lowest cloud cover
C_L—Low cloud type
C_M—Middle cloud type
C_H—High cloud type
D_s—Ship's course
V_s—Ship's average speed
T_wT_wT_w—Sea surface temp.
P_wP_w—Sea period
H_wH_w—Sea height
d_{w1}d_{w1}—Primary swell direction
d_{w2}d_{w2}—Secondary swell direction
P_{w1}P_{w1}—Primary swell period
H_{w1}H_{w1}—Primary swell height
P_{w2}P_{w2}—Secondary swell period
H_{w2}H_{w2}—Secondary swell height
I_s—Ice accretion cause
E_sE_s—Ice accretion thickness
R_s—Ice accretion rate
c_i—Sea ice concentration
S_i—Sea ice development
b_i—Icebergs (land origin)
D_i—Ice edge bearing
z_i—Ice trend

Group indicators 99, 0-8, and 222 are a part of the weather message and must be transmitted with the report.

See NWS Observing Handbook No. 1 for a complete explanation of the ship's synoptic code.

High Levels (10,000 Feet (3 km) To 60,000 Feet (18 km)) — Cirrus, Cirrostratus, Cirrocumulus



C_H = 1: Cirrus filaments, strands, hooks, not expanding



C_H = 2: Dense cirrus, patches or sheaves, not increasing, or cirrus like cumuliform tufts



C_H = 3: Dense cirrus, often the anvil remaining from cumulonimbus



C_H = 4: Cirrus hooks or filaments, increasing, becoming denser



C_H = 5: Cirrus bands, and/or cirrostratus, increasing, growing denser, veil below 45°



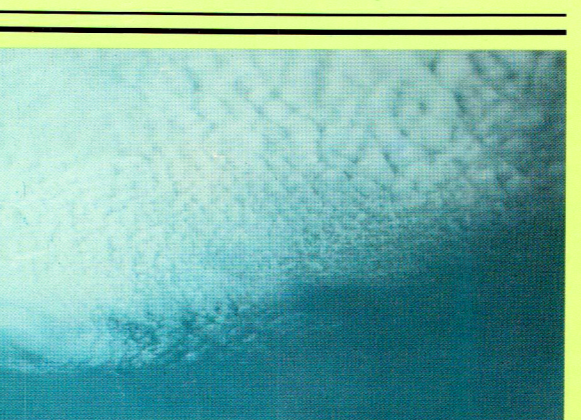
C_H = 6: Cirrus bands and/or cirrostratus, increasing, growing denser, veil above 45°



C_H = 7: Cirrostratus covering whole sky



C_H = 8: Cirrostratus, not increasing, not covering whole sky



C_H = 9: Cirrocumulus alone, and/or cirrus and cirrostratus

NOTE: When more than one type of C_H cloud is present, the priority order for reporting is C_H = 9,8,7,6,5,4,3,1,2.

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