

Beaufort Scale

Estimating the strength of the
wind

Force 0 - Calm

- Sea like a mirror
- 0 knots



Force 1 – Light Air



- Ripples with the appearance of scales are formed, but without foam crests.
- 1-3 knots

Force 2 – Light Breeze



- Small wavelets, still short, but more pronounced. Crests have a glassy appearance and do not break.
- 4 – 6 knots

Force 3 – Gentle Breeze



- Large wavelets. Crests begin to break. Foam of glassy appearance. Perhaps scattered white horses.
- 7 – 10 knots

Force 4 – Moderate Breeze



- Small waves, becoming larger; fairly frequent white horses.
- 11 – 16 knots

Force 5 – Fresh Breeze



- Moderate waves, taking a more pronounced long form; many white horses are formed. Chance of some spray.
- 17 – 21 knots

Force 6 – Strong Breeze



- Large waves begin to form; the white foam crests are more extensive everywhere. Probably some spray.
- 22 – 27 knots

Force 7 – Near Gale



- Sea heaps up and white foam from breaking waves begins to be blown in streaks along the direction of the wind.
28 – 33 knots

Force 8 – Gale



- Moderately high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break into spindrift. The foam is blown in well-marked streaks along the direction of the wind.
- 34 – 40 knots

Force 9 – Strong Gale



- High waves. Dense streaks of foam along the direction of the wind. Crests of waves begin to topple, tumble and roll over. Spray may affect visibility.
- 41 – 47 knots

Force 10 – Storm



- Very high waves with long overhanging crests. The resulting foam, in great patches, is blown in dense white streaks along the direction of the wind. On the whole the surface of the sea takes on a white appearance. The 'tumbling' of the sea becomes heavy and shock-like. Visibility affected.
- 48 – 55 knots

Force 11 – Violent Storm



- Exceptionally high waves (small and medium-size ships might be for a time lost to view behind the waves). The sea is completely covered with long white patches of foam lying along the direction of the wind. Everywhere the edges of the wave crests are blown into froth. Visibility affected.
- 56 – 63 knots

Force 12 – Hurricane



- The air is filled with foam and spray. Sea completely white with driving spray; visibility very seriously affected.
- 64 knots and over





















