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GRADIENT WIND TABLES

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FOREWORD

If G is the geostrophic wind speed = $\frac{\text{pressure gradient}}{\text{density} \times \text{Coriolis force}}$

V is the actual wind speed

ψ is the angular deviation of the actual wind from the geostrophic, then in horizontal frictionless flow (e.g. Petterssen, p.61)

$$V = G \cos \psi \mp \frac{V^2}{fR}$$

where f is the Coriolis parameter
 R is the numerical value of the radius of curvature of the air trajectory

and the upper sign refers to cyclonic curvature.

The value of V when $\psi = 0$, i.e. when there is no cross-isobar flow, is called the gradient wind.

If the isobaric pattern is moving, without changing its shape, at a speed C and at an angular deviation A from the direction of an isobar, then r , the radius of curvature of the isobars, may be related to R by the equation (e.g. Petterssen 1956, p.31)

$$\frac{1}{R} = \frac{1}{r} (1 - \frac{C \cos A}{V})$$

Hence the gradient wind V is given by

$$V = G \mp \frac{V^2}{fR} (1 - \frac{C \cos A}{V})$$

This is a quadratic equation in V which may be solved for given values of the other quantities. Since f and r appear only as a product, the solution for latitude 50° , say, and radius of curvature 750 is equal to that for latitude L° and radius r where

$$r = r_{50} \frac{\sin 50^\circ}{\sin L^\circ}$$

The equation has been solved, using METEOR, for 10° steps of latitude, 100 n.mile steps of radius of curvature in latitude 50° , and 10 kt steps of G and $C \cos A$. A selection of these solutions is given in the following tables, expressed in terms of the correction $G - V$ to be applied to the measured geostrophic speed. Tabulation of the correction, rather than the actual value V facilitates interpolation for the units figure of G ; moreover, a glance at the tables will often show that the correction is negligibly small or is comparable with errors in measurement.

Care should be exercised in applying very large values of the correction, since on these occasions one or more of the inherent assumptions may be violated (see Pettersen p.65).

On pages 6 and 7 will be found tables to facilitate the assessment of $C \cos A$ from values of G and A .

Reference: S.Petterssen, Weather analysis and forecasting. Vol.I, 1956.

SIMPLIFIED TABLE

The following table contains extracts (rounded to the nearest 5 Kt) from the preceding tables for the particular case of $C \cos A=0$, i.e. a stationary system, or at points in a moving system where the isobars are at right angles to the direction of motion of the system.

Radius of curvature (n.mile)										
Lat	160	330	490	650	820	1220	1630	2040	2450	3250
70	180	350	530	710	880	1330	1770	2210	2650	3540
60	200	400	600	800	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	4000
50	240	480	720	960	1190	1790	2380	2980	3580	4760
40	310	610	920	1230	1530	2300	3060	3830	4600	6130

Cyclonic Curvature - Subtract										
$G(\text{kt})$	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	5	0	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
40	10	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
60	20	15	10	10	5	5	5	5	5	0
80	30	20	15	15	10	10	5	5	5	5
100	40	30	25	20	15	15	10	10	5	5
120	55	40	30	25	25	15	15	10	10	10
140	65	50	40	35	30	25	20	20	15	10
160	80	60	50	45	35	30	25	20	15	15
180	95	70	60	50	45	35	30	25	20	15
200	105	85	70	60	55	40	35	30	25	20

Anticyclonic Curvature - Add										
$G(\text{kt})$	20	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	20	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	-	35	10	5	5	5	0	0	0	0
60	-	-	55	20	15	10	5	5	5	0
80	-	-	-	70	30	15	10	10	5	5
100	-	-	-	-	90	25	15	15	10	5
120	-	-	-	-	-	45	25	20	15	10
140	-	-	-	-	-	80	40	30	20	15
160	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	40	30	20
180	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	55	40	25
200	-	-	-	-	-	-	180	75	55	35



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ANTICYCLONIC CURVATURE

- Add correction

Radius of curvature (in mile)

Lat.	70	60	50	40	30	490	570	650	730	820	900	980	1060	1140	1220	1300	1410
	530	620	710	800	880	970	1060	1150	1240	1330	1410						
	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600						
	720	830	960	1070	1190	1310	1430	1550	1670	1790	1910						
	920	1070	1230	1380	1530	1690	1840	1990	2150	2300	2450						

Radius of curvature (n. mile)

Lat.	70	60	50	40	30	1300	1410	1500	1590	1770	1950	2210	2450	2850	3260	4080	4890	5310
						1600	1700	1800	2000	2200	2500	3000	3500	4000	5000	6000		
						1910	2030	2150	2380	2620	2980	3580	4170	4760	5960	7150		
						2450	2600	2760	3060	3370	3830	4600	5360	6130	7660	9190		

