

BEAUFORT SCALE  
 DOC N°558 WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION  
 APPENDIX I.5

Beaufort number	Descriptive term	Wind speed equivalents		Specifications for observations on board ship (open sea)
		Metres/second	Knots	
0	calm	0–0.2	<1	Sea like a mirror
1	Light air	0.3–1.5	1–3	Ripples with the appearance of scales are formed, but without foam crests
2	Light breeze	1.6–3.3	4–6	Small wavelets, still short but more pronounced; crests have a glassy appearance and do not break
3	Gentle breeze	3.4–5.4	7–10	Large wavelets; crests begin to break; foam of glassy appearance; perhaps scattered white horses
4	Moderate breeze	5.5–7.9	11–16	Small waves, becoming longer; fairly frequent white horses
5	Fresh breeze	8.0–10.7	17–21	Moderate waves, taking a more pronounced long form; many white horses are formed (chance of some spray)
6	Strong breeze	10.8–13.8	22–27	Large waves begin to form; the white foam crests are more extensive everywhere (probably some spray)
7	Near gale	13.9–17.1	28–33	Sea heaps up and white foam from breaking waves begins to be blown in streaks along the direction of the wind
8	Gale	17.2–20.7	34–40	Moderately high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break into the spindrift; the foam is blown in well-marked streaks along the direction of the wind
9	Strong gale	20.8–24.4	41–47	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
10	Storm	24.5–28.4	48–55	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 a white appearance; the tumbling of the sea becomes heavy and shock-like; visibility affected
11	Violent storm	28.5–32.6	56–63	exceptionally high waves (small and medium-sized ships might be for a time lost to view behind the waves); the sea is completely covered with long white patches of foam flying along the direction of the wind; everywhere the edges of the wave crests are blown into front; visibility affected
12	Hurricane	32.7 and over	64 and over	The air is filled with foam and spray; sea completely white with driving spray; visibility very seriously affected