

WEATHER OBSERVING QUICK REFERENCE

WIND

Wind direction is denoted by three digits and indicates the direction from which the wind is blowing. Example: 060 indicates a wind coming from 60 degrees.

Wind speed is reported in knots.

A **Gust** should be reported if the observed wind speed varies by at least 10 knots.

Variable Wind Direction may be reported in the following instances:

- Wind speed is 6 knots or less, "**VRB**" may be used for direction.
- Wind direction varies by 60 degrees or more while average wind speed is greater than 6 knots. Directional variation is always recorded in a clockwise direction. Example: 340V040 indicates wind variable between 340 and 040 degrees.

VISIBILITY

Distance you can see

Report any sector whose visibility differs from the prevailing visibility and either the prevailing visibility and/or the sector visibility are less than 3 miles. The horizon circle shall be divided into arcs that have uniform visibility and represent at least one eighth of the horizon circle (45 degrees).

PRESENT WEATHER

Precipitation is reported before obscuration. All precipitation is grouped together with the most significant reported first. No intensity is assigned to ice crystals.

Ex: Light snow with ice crystals.

Ex: Ice crystals with drifting snow.

Ex: Moderate snow grains with patches of fog.

Intensity of Snow or Snow Grains Based on Visibility	
Intensity	Criteria
Light	Visibility > 1/2 mile.
Moderate	Visibility > 1/4 mile but < 1/2 mile.
Heavy	Visibility < 1/4 mile.

SKY CONDITION

Reportable Contractions	Meaning	Summation Amount of Sky Cover
VV	Vertical Visibility	8/8
SKC	SKy Clear	
FEW	FEW	less than 1/8 to 2/8
SCT	SCaTtered	3/8 to 4/8
BKN	BroKeN	5/8 to less than 8/8
OVC	OVeRcast	8/8

Increments of Reportable Values of Sky Cover Height	
Range of Height Values (feet)	Reportable Increment (feet)
Less than 5,000	To nearest 100
Greater than 5,000 less than 10,000	To nearest 500
Greater than 10,000	To nearest 1,000

Obscurations can be considered cloud layers if they are obscuring a significant portion of the celestial dome. In the case of a complete obscuration, the contraction VV is used. If it is a partial obscuration, the appropriate contraction is used and the height is reported as 000. In addition, a remark must be made to identify the 000 layer.

- Ex: There is a scattered layer of clouds at 4500 feet and an overcast layer at 12,000.

SCT045 OVC120

- Ex: Fog is completely obscuring the sky and the vertical visibility is 200 feet. VV002
- Ex: Blowing snow is obscuring 1/8 of the sky and there is a broken layer at 1200 feet.

FEW000 BKN012 and a remark of BLSN FEW000.

SURFACE/HORIZON DEFINITION

Guide to the Degree of Snow Surface Definition

- GOOD(G)** Snow surface features such as sastrugi, drifts, and gullies are easily identified by a shadow. (The sun is usually unobscured).
- FAIR(F)** Snow surface features can be identified by contrast. No definite shadows exist. (The sun is usually ONLY DIMLY VISIBLE).
- POOR(P)** Snow surface features can not be readily identified except from close up. (The sun is usually totally obscured).
- NIL(N)** Snow surface features can not be identified. No shadows or contrast exist. Dark colored objects appear to float in the air. (The sun is totally obscured although the overcast may exhibit considerable glare. The glare appears to be equally bright from surface reflection and from all directions.)

Guide to the Degree of Horizon Definition

- GOOD(G)** The horizon is sharply defined by shadow or contrast.
- FAIR(F)** The horizon may be identified although the contrast between sky and snow surface is not sharply defined.
- POOR(P)** The horizon is barely discernible.
- NIL(N)** Total loss of horizon. The snow surface merges with the whiteness of the sky.