

SCIENTIFIC CLOUD IDENTIFICATION CHART

Tropospheric Classification Reference

HIGH LEVEL

(>6,000M)

PHOTO

Cirrus (Ci) Detached, delicate, white icy filaments; "mare's tails."

PHOTO

Cirrocumulus (Cc) Small white flakes or ripples without shadows.

PHOTO

Cirrostratus (Cs) Transparent whitish veil; produces halo phenomena.

MID LEVEL

(2,000-6,000M)

PHOTO

Alto cumulus (Ac) White/gray patches or layers; rounded masses or rolls.

PHOTO

Altostratus (As) Striated or uniform sheet; sun appears as through frosted glass.

PHOTO

Nimbostratus (Ns) Dark gray diffuse layer; continuous rain or snow.

LOW LEVEL

(0-2,000M)

PHOTO

Stratocumulus (Sc) Gray or whitish patch; tessellated or rounded elements.

PHOTO

Stratus (St) Uniform gray layer; may produce drizzle or ice prisms.

PHOTO

Cumulus (Cu) Dense, sharp outlines; develops vertically (cauliflower).

VERTICAL

GROWTH

PHOTO

Cumulonimbus (Cb) Heavy, dense towering mass; anvil-shaped top; produces thunderstorms, hail, and tornadoes.

Observation Date: _____ Location: _____ Ref: WMO International Cloud Atlas