

CLOUD IDENTIFICATION CHART

Weather Science & Observation Guide

HIGH ALTITUDE (ABOVE 20,000 FT)

Cirrus

Thin, wispy "mare's tails" made of ice crystals. Indicates fair weather but changing patterns.

ICEWINDY

Cirrocumulus

Small white ripples or patches. Often looks like fish scales (mackerel sky).

STORM PRECURSOR

MIDDLE ALTITUDE (6,500 - 20,000 FT)

Alto cumulus

Gray or white sheets with round masses. Common on warm, sticky mornings.

THUNDERSTORMS LATER

Altostratus

Gray/blue-gray clouds covering the whole sky. Sun may shine through dimly.

STEADY RAIN

LOW ALTITUDE (BELOW 6,500 FT)

Cumulus

Fluffy, white cotton balls with flat bases. Distinct outlines.

FAIR WEATHER

Stratus

Uniform gray layer covering the sky like a heavy blanket.

DRIZZLEOVERCAST

Cumulonimbus

Towering vertical clouds with an anvil-shaped top.

HEAVY RAINSTORM

Field Observation Notes:
