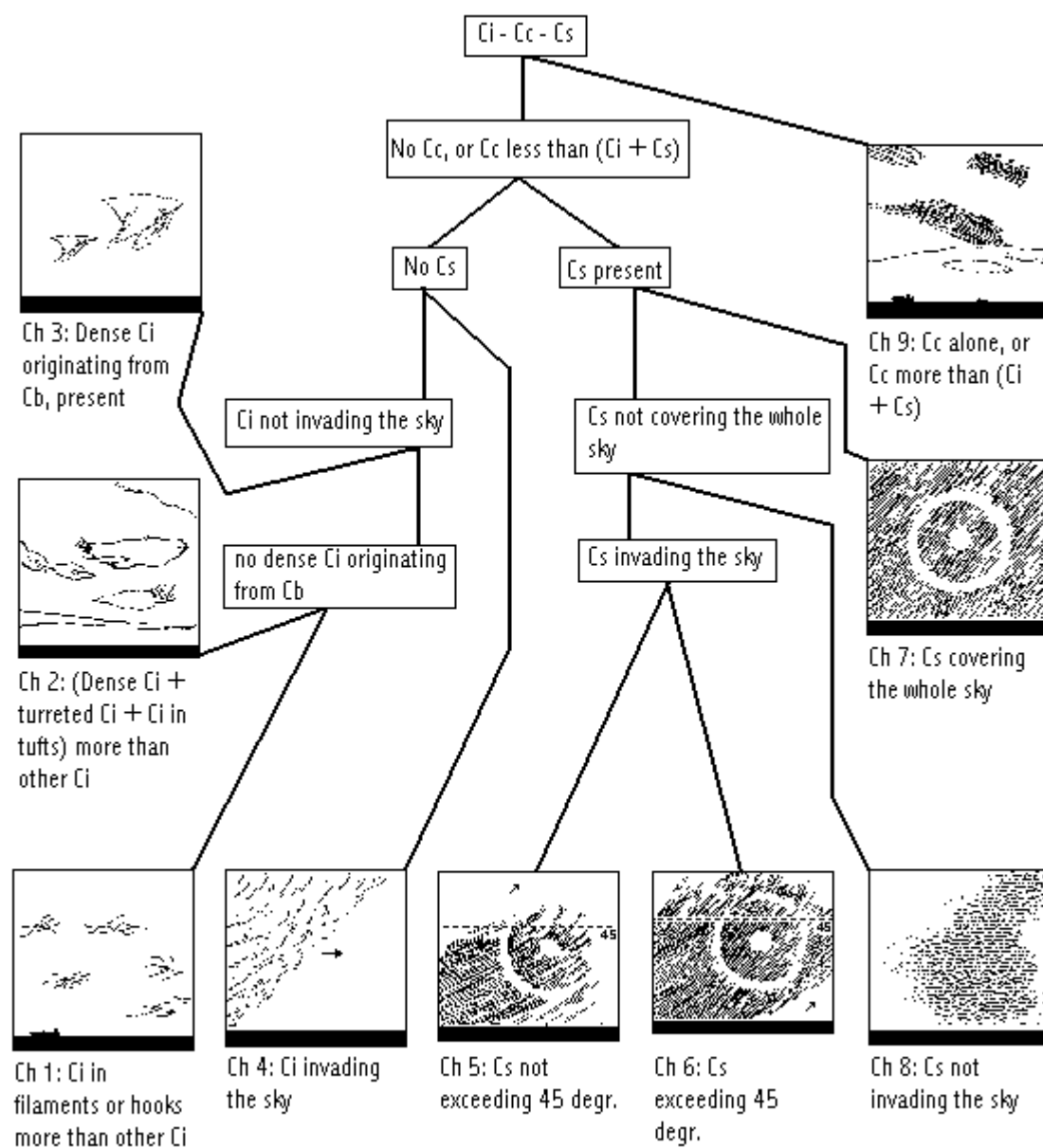


Ch pictorial guide



legend

Cb = Cumulonimbus
Cc = Cirrocumulus
Ci = Cirrus
Cs = Cirrostratus

In order to find the correct code figure, the following procedure is used.

- (a) Start from the box at the top of the diagram and follow one of the two lines leading out of this box.
- (b) Proceed from box to box as long as all successive boxes contain criteria which are applicable to the observed sky.
- (c) When this procedure leads to a box with a criterion which is not applicable to the observed sky, go back to this previous box and follow the other line leading out of this box.
- (d) If this line leads to a box, repeat the procedure described under (b) and (c). If the line leads to a picture, the code figure below this picture is the correct code to be reported.
- (e) If all the successive boxes contain criteria which are applicable to the observed sky, the procedure will finally lead to a box from which two or more lines terminate in pictures. Read the criteria below these pictures to obtain the correct code figure.

Ch 1



Cirrus* in the form of filaments, strands, or hooks, not progressively invading the sky.

*Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

Ch 2



Dense Cirrus*, in patches or entangled sheaves, which usually do not increase and sometimes seem to be the remains of the upper part of a Cumulonimbus**; or Cirrus with sproutings in the form of small turrets or battlements, or Cirrus having the appearance of cumuliform tufts.

*Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

**Heavy and dense cloud, with a considerable vertical extent, in the form of a mountain or huge towers. At least part of its upper portion is usually smooth, or fibrous or striated, and nearly always flattened; this part often spreads out in the shape of an anvil or vast plume. Under the base of this cloud, which is often very dark, there are frequently low ragged clouds either merged with it or not, and precipitation sometimes in the form of virga.

Ch 3

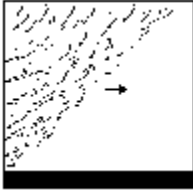


Dense Cirrus*, often in the form of an anvil, being the remains of the upper part of Cumulonimbus**.

*Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

**Heavy and dense cloud, with a considerable vertical extent, in the form of a mountain or huge towers. At least part of its upper portion is usually smooth, or fibrous or striated, and nearly always flattened; this part often spreads out in the shape of an anvil or vast plume. Under the base of this cloud, which is often very dark, there are frequently low ragged clouds either merged with it or not, and precipitation sometimes in the form of virga.

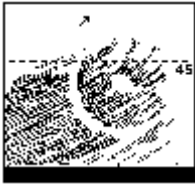
Ch 4



Cirrus* in the form of hooks or of filaments, or both, progressively invading the sky they generally become denser as a whole.

*Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

Ch 5



Cirrus* (often in bands converging towards one point or two opposite points of the horizon) and Cirrostratus**, or Cirrostratus alone; in either case, they are progressively invading the sky, and generally growing denser as a whole, but the continuous veil does not reach 45 degrees above the horizon.

*Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

**Transparent whitish cloud veil of fibrous (hair-like) or smooth appearance, totally or partly covering the sky, and generally producing halo phenomena.

Ch 6



Cirrus* (often in bands converging towards one point or two opposite points of the horizon) and Cirrostratus**, or Cirrostratus alone; in either case, they are progressively invading the sky, and generally growing denser as a whole; the continuous veil extends more than 45 degrees above the horizon, without the sky being totally covered.

*Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

**Transparent whitish cloud veil of fibrous (hair-like) or smooth appearance, totally or partly covering the sky, and generally producing halo phenomena.

Ch 7



Veil of Cirrostratus* covering the celestial dome.

*Transparent whitish cloud veil of fibrous (hair-like) or smooth appearance, totally or partly covering the sky, and generally producing halo phenomena.

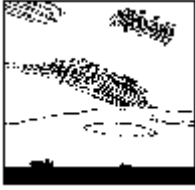
Ch 8



Cirrostratus* not progressively invading the sky and not completely covering the celestial dome.

*Transparent whitish cloud veil of fibrous (hair-like) or smooth appearance, totally or partly covering the sky, and generally producing halo phenomena.

Ch 9



Cirrocumulus* alone, or Cirrocumulus accompanied by Cirrus** or Cirrostratus***, or both, but Cirrocumulus predominant.

*Thin, white patch, sheet, or layer of cloud without shading, composed of very small elements in the form of grains, ripples, etc., merged, or separate, and more or less regularly arranged; most of the elements have an apparent width of less than one degree.

**Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or almost white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

***Transparent whitish cloud veil of fibrous (hair-like) or smooth appearance, totally or partly covering the sky, and generally producing halo phenomena.

Cirrostratus

Transparent, whitish cloud veil of fibrous (hairlike) or smooth appearance, totally or partly covering the sky, and generally producing Halo* phenomena.

Main differences between Cirrostratus and similar clouds of other genera

(a) Cirrus

Cirrostratus is distinguished from Cirrus by the fact that it occurs in the form of a veil which is usually of great horizontal extent.

(b) Cirrocumulus and Altocumulus

Cirrostratus has a diffuse general aspect and does not exhibit such features as grains, ripples, laminae, rounded masses, rolls, etc., which are characteristic of Cirrocumulus and Altocumulus.

(c) Altostratus

Cirrostratus differs from Altostratus by its thinness and by the fact that it may show Halo phenomena. Cirrostratus near the horizon may be mistaken for Altostratus. The slowness of the apparent movement and the slowness of the variations in thickness and in appearance, both characteristic of Cirrostratus, give useful guidance in distinguishing this cloud from Altostratus and also from Stratus.

(d) Stratus

Cirrostratus may be confused with very thin Stratus which, at angular distances of less than 45 degrees from the sun, may appear very white. Cirrostratus differs, however, from Stratus by being whitish throughout, and by the fact that it may have a fibrous appearance. Moreover, Cirrostratus often displays Halo phenomena, whereas Stratus does not, except occasionally at very low temperatures.

(e) Haze

Cirrostratus differs from a veil of haze by the fact that the latter is opalescent or has a dirty yellowish to brownish color. It is sometimes difficult to discern Cirrostratus through haze.

*An optical phenomenon in the form of a ring, arc, pillar, or bright spot, produced by the refraction of light by ice crystals suspended in the atmosphere (cirriform clouds, ice fog, etc.). This phenomenon, when formed by refraction of the light of the sun, may show colors, while a halo phenomenon produced by the light of the moon is always white.

Cirrocumulus

Thin, white patch, sheet, or layer of cloud without shading, composed of very small elements in the form of grains, ripples, etc., merged, or separate, and more or less regularly arranged; most of the elements have an apparent width of less than one degree.

Main differences between Cirrocumulus and similar clouds of other genera

(a) Cirrus and Cirrostratus

Cirrocumulus in rounded tufts or in the form of small, rounded turrets rising from a common base may be confused with Cirrus presenting a similar appearance. The distinguishing criterion is that the Cirrocumulus tufts or turrets, in contrast with those of Cirrus, have an apparent width of less than one degree, when observed at an angle of more than 30 degrees above the horizon. A sheet of Cirrocumulus differs from Cirrus and Cirrostratus in that it is rippled or subdivided into very small cloudlets; it may include fibrous, silky, or smooth portions (characteristic of Cirrus and Cirrostratus) which, however, do not collectively constitute its greater part.

(b) Altocumulus

Cirrocumulus differs from Altocumulus in that most of its elements are very small (by definition, of an apparent width less than one degree when observed at an angle of more than 30 degrees above the horizon) and without shading.

Cirrus

Detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments or white or mostly white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a fibrous (hair-like) appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

Main differences between Cirrus and similar clouds of other genera

(a) Cirrocumulus

Cirrus in rounded tufts or in the form of small, rounded turrets or battlements rising from a common base may be confused with Cirrocumulus presenting a similar appearance. The distinguishing criterion is that the Cirrus tufts or turrets, in contrast with those of Cirrocumulus, have an apparent width exceeding one degree when observed at an angle of more than 30 degrees above the horizon.

(b) Cirrostratus

Cirrus clouds are distinguished from Cirrostratus by their discontinuous structure or, if they are in patches or bands, by their small horizontal extent or the narrowness of their continuous parts. Cirrus near the horizon may be difficult to distinguish from Cirrostratus, owing to the effect of perspective.

(c) Altocumulus

Cirrus in rounded tufts or in the form of small, rounded turrets or battlements rising from a common base is distinguished from Altocumulus presenting a similar appearance by the fact that its texture is more silky or fibrous than that of Altocumulus.

(d) Altostratus

Thick Cirrus patches are distinguished from Altostratus patches by their smaller horizontal extent and their mostly white appearance.

Marine Observers Handbook

Making the observations

The aspect of the sky is continually changing and the cloud formations in evidence at one particular time may not be typical, that is to say they may not be easily recognizable from the standard descriptions. If, however, the observer watches the sky over a period of time he will often find that doubtful cloud forms may be referred to a previous state of development that was typical. Hence the first rule in cloud observing watch the sky as often as possible and not merely at the time of observation.