

## Cloud Genus Descriptions

Family	Form	Genus	Description
<b>High</b>  Above 16,500 feet (5,000 meters)	Cirriiform	Cirrus	Detached elements that are white, delicate, and wispy, in patches or narrow bands. Composed of ice crystals.
	Stratiform	Cirrostratus	Usually appearing as a whitish veil, smooth, or with fibers which may cover the entire sky. This form of cirrus sometimes produces partial or complete haloes. Composed of ice crystals.
	Cumuliform	Cirrocumulus	Cloud with very small elements in ripples, waves, or grainy patches. Composed of ice crystals and some supercooled water droplets.
<b>Middle</b>  Between 6,500 and 16,500 feet (2,000 – 5,000 meters)	Cumuliform	Alto cumulus	Patches or layers with waves or elements with rounded masses or rolls and sharp outlines, occasionally with diffuse edges. Composed of water or supercooled water droplets that evaporate quickly near the edges created the sharp outline.
	Stratiform	Altostratus	A layer cloud that is gray or bluish in color with a uniform appearance. It frequently covers the entire sky but may have spots thin enough to reveal the location of the Sun. Haloes do not occur. Precipitation falls from Altostratus so virga may be present making the base indistinct. Rain, snow, and ice pellets may be found in the cloud but if any reaches the ground it is usually quite light.
		Nimbostratus	A gray, dark cloud with continuously falling rain, snow or sleet but without lightning, thunder, or hail. Composed of water droplets, supercooled water droplets, or snowflakes. This cloud may be several thousand feet thick.
<b>Low</b>  Below 6,500 feet (2,000 meters)	Stratiform	Stratocumulus	A cloud with rounded or roll-shaped elements in a layer that features orderly groups, lines or undulations.
		Stratus	A gray layer cloud typically with a uniform base. It usually does not produce precipitation but if it does it is in the form of drizzle or small ice crystals or snow grains. Composed of widely dispersed water droplets, supercooled water droplets, and on occasion ice crystals.
	Cumuliform	Cumulonimbus	Mountainous, towering clouds with lightning, thunder, and often heavy precipitation. The cloud top becomes smooth with fibers and flattens into an anvil. Usually composed of all forms of water and ice.
		Cumulus	Cloud with individual detached elements and vertical development. It usually develops dense sharply outlined rising domes, mounds, and towers with a cauliflower shape.

