

## WEEK 7\_BALAGANESAN NAVANEETHA

### SOLAR RADIATION

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Solar radiation is radiant energy emitted by the sun from a nuclear fusion reaction that creates electromagnetic energy. The spectrum of solar radiation is close to that of a black body with a temperature of about 5800 K. About half of the radiation is in the visible short-wave part of the electromagnetic spectrum. The other half is mostly in the near-infrared part, with some in the ultraviolet part of the spectrum.

The units of measure are Watts per square meter.

#### DIFFUSE AND DIRECT BEAM SOLAR RADIATION

Solar radiation striking a collector has two components, direct beam radiation and diffuse radiation. Additionally, radiation reflected by the surface in front of a collector contributes to the solar radiation received. But unless the collector is tilted at a steep angle from the horizontal and the ground is highly reflective (e.g: snow), this contribution is small.

Direct beam radiation comes in a direct line from the sun. For sunny days with clear skies, most of the solar radiation is direct beam radiation. On overcast days, the sun is obscured by the clouds and the direct beam radiation is zero.

Diffuse radiation is scattered out of the direct beam by molecules, aerosols, and clouds. Because it comes from all regions of the sky, it is also referred to as sky radiation. The portion of total solar radiation that is diffuse is about 10% to 20% for clear skies and up to 100% for cloudy skies.

#### ABSORPTION OF SOLAR RADIATION

About 23 percent of incoming solar energy is absorbed in the atmosphere by water vapor, dust, and ozone, and 48 percent passes through the atmosphere and is absorbed by the surface. Thus, about 71 percent of the total incoming solar energy is absorbed by the Earth system.

Solar radiation absorption is due to some atmospheric components, especially ozone, water and carbon dioxide. Stratospheric ozone absorbs almost all the ultraviolet component of the solar radiation for wavelength less than 0.29  $\mu\text{m}$ , water vapor has important absorption bands in the infrared field, centered at 1.0, 1.4, and 1.8  $\mu\text{m}$ . Over 2.5  $\mu\text{m}$  the atmosphere becomes practically opaque to solar radiation for the strong absorption due to water and carbon dioxide.

#### AIR MASS

For a path length  $L$  through the atmosphere, and solar radiation incident at angle  $Z$  relative to the normal to the Earth's surface, the air mass coefficient is

$$AM = \frac{L}{L_0}$$

where  $L_0$  is the path length at zenith (i.e., normal to the Earth's surface) at sea level.

The air mass number is thus dependent on the Sun's elevation path through the sky and therefore varies with time of day and with the passing seasons of the year, and with the latitude of the observer.

## SOLAR RADIATION DENSITY

The maximum yearly average solar radiation density is the solar constant, which is the solar irradiance, its value is 1367 W/m<sup>2</sup>.

## SOLAR RADIATION: AVAILABILITY

Solar energy is spread out and is available in all places around the world. Its intensity varies significantly according to the place on the earth's surface and for the same place according to the time of the day, the time of the year and the existing meteorological conditions. It is very spread out, in dilute concentration. As a very important renewable energy source solar radiation parameters and solar-earth angles are of importance for the estimation of the energy reaching the earth's surface.







