

1 | a plane through the origin

If we have a normal vector \vec{n} , then the plane is just all vectors that are orthogonal to that vector:

$$\vec{r} : \vec{r} \cdot \vec{n} = 0$$

In cartesian form:

$$xn_x + yn_y + zn_z = 0$$

2 | a plane through \vec{p}_0

We can just add \vec{p} to everything:

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{p} + \vec{r} : \vec{r} \cdot \vec{n} &= 0 \\ \therefore \vec{r} : (\vec{r} - \vec{p}) \cdot \vec{n} &= 0\end{aligned}$$

In cartesian form:

$$\begin{aligned}xn_x - p_x n_x + yn_y - p_y n_y + zn_z - p_z n_z &= 0 \\ xn_x + yn_y + zn_z &= p_x n_x + p_y n_y + p_z n_z \\ xn_x + yn_y + zn_z &= \vec{p} \cdot \vec{n}\end{aligned}$$

3 | the distance

The distance vector is some multiple of the normal (because the distance is perpendicular to the plane)

Thus, we just need to find the magnitude of some $\lambda \vec{n}$ such that $\lambda \vec{n}$ lies in the plane. In other words, find

$$\lambda \vec{n} : (\lambda \vec{n} - \vec{p}_0) \cdot \vec{n}$$

We can solve for λ like so:

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda \vec{n} \cdot \vec{n} - \vec{p}_0 \cdot \vec{n} &= 0 \\ \lambda \vec{n} \cdot \vec{n} &= \vec{p}_0 \cdot \vec{n} \\ \lambda &= \frac{\vec{p}_0 \cdot \vec{n}}{\vec{n} \cdot \vec{n}} \\ \lambda &= \frac{\vec{p}_0 \cdot \vec{n}}{|\vec{n}|^2}\end{aligned}$$

Finally, we need to multiply by the magnitude of \vec{n} :

$$\begin{aligned}d &= \lambda |\vec{n}| \\ &= \frac{\vec{p}_0 \cdot \vec{n}}{|\vec{n}|}\end{aligned}$$