
Goal: Find the distribution of the electric scalar potential inside and outside a sphere $R = \alpha$, with volume charge density: $\rho = \rho_o R/\alpha$, where R is the radial coordinate of the spherical coordinate system.

Steps:

1. Choose a coordinate system.

Solution: Spherical coordinate system.

2. Find the total charge inside the sphere.

Solution:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Total charge enclosed by sphere of radius } R &= \int_0^R \int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^\pi \frac{\rho_o R'}{\alpha} R'^2 \sin \theta d\theta' d\phi' dR' \\ &= \frac{\rho_o}{\alpha} (2\pi)(2) \frac{1}{4} R^4 \\ &= \rho_o \alpha^3 \pi \quad \text{for } R = \alpha\end{aligned}$$

3. Find the voltage in the region $R \geq \alpha$.

Solution:

$$V(R) = \frac{\rho_o \alpha^3}{4\epsilon_o R} \quad \text{for } R \geq \alpha$$

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4. Using Gauss' Law, find the electric inside the sphere.

Solution: Use the spherical symmetry of the problem. Use

$$\begin{aligned}\int \mathbf{E} \cdot d\mathbf{s} &= \frac{Q_{\text{enclosed}}}{\epsilon_o} \\ E_R(4\pi R^2) &= \frac{1}{\epsilon_o} \left(\frac{\rho_o}{\alpha} \pi R^4 \right) \\ E_R &= \frac{\rho_o R^2}{4\epsilon_o \alpha}\end{aligned}$$

5. Find the electric potential (voltage) inside the sphere, appropriately choosing the reference point.

Solution:

$$V(R) = \frac{\rho_o \alpha^2}{3\epsilon_o} \left(1 - \frac{R^3}{4\alpha^3} \right), \quad \text{for } R < \alpha$$

Answer:

$$V(R) = \frac{\rho_o \alpha^3}{4\epsilon_o R} \quad \text{for } R \geq \alpha$$
$$V(R) = \frac{\rho_o \alpha^2}{3\epsilon_o} \left(1 - \frac{R^3}{4\alpha^3} \right), \quad \text{for } R < \alpha$$