University Physics with Modern Physics Electromagnetism Problems

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Contents

21 Electric Charge and Electric Field

21.3 Coulomb's Law

21.3.1 Example 21.1

The magnitude of electric repulsion between two α particles is given by

$$F_e = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q^2}{r^2}$$

and the magnitude of gravitational attraction is given by

$$F_g = \frac{Gm^2}{r^2}$$

. The ratio of the two values is

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{F_e}{F_g} &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q^2}{r^2}\frac{r^2}{Gm^2} \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q^2}{Gm^2} \\
&= 3.1 \times 10^{35}
\end{aligned}$$

showing that the electric repulsion is significantly stronger than the gravitational attraction.

21.3.2 Example 21.2

a) The magnitude of the force that q_1 exerts on q_2 is

$$\begin{aligned}
F &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q_1 q_2}{r^2} \\
&= (9.0 \times 10^9)\frac{|(25 \times 10^{-9})(-75 \times 10^{-9})|}{0.030^2} \\
&= 1.9 \times 10^{-2}\,\text{N}.
\end{aligned}$$

Since q_1 and q_2 have opposite charge, the force is attractive (from q_2 to q_1).

b) The magnitude of the force that q_2 exerts on q_1 is the same as in part a, but the direction is reversed (from q_1 to q_2).

21.3.3 Example 21.3

By the principle of superposition of forces, the net force exerted on q_3 is equal to the vector sum of the forces exerted on it by q_1 and q_2 separately.

Both q_1 and q_3 have positive charge so they repel each other. q_1 is to the right of q_3 so q_3 experiences a force to the left of magnitude

$$\begin{aligned}
F_{1\text{ on }3} &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_1 q_3|}{r^2} \\
&= (9.0 \times 10^9)\frac{|(1.0 \times 10^{-9})(5.0 \times 10^{-9})|}{0.020^2} \\
&= 1.1 \times 10^{-4}\,\text{N}.
\end{aligned}$$

However q_2 has a negative charge so it attracts q_3. It is also to the right of q_3 so q_3 experiences a force to the right of magnitude

$$
\begin{aligned}
F_{2\text{ on }3} &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_2 q_3|}{r^2} \\
&= (9.0\times10^9)\frac{|(-3.0\times10^{-9})(5.0\times10^{-9})}{0.040^2} \\
&= 8.4\times10^{-5}\,\text{N}.
\end{aligned}
$$

The net force experienced by q_3 is therefore

$$
\begin{aligned}
F &= -F_{1\text{ on }3} + F_{2\text{ on }3} \\
&= -1.1\times10^{-4} + 8.4\times10^{-5} \\
&= -2.6\times10^{-5}\,\text{N}.
\end{aligned}
$$

21.3.4 Example 21.4

Since q_1 and q_2 are of equal charge and are symmetric about the x axis on which Q lies, the vertical components of their forces cancel leaving only the horizontal.

The horizontal component of q_1's force on Q is given by

$$
\begin{aligned}
F_{1\text{ on Q, x}} &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q_1 Q}{r_{1,\text{Q}}^2}\cos\alpha \\
&= (9.0\times10^9)\frac{(2.0\times10^{-6})(4.0\times10^{-6})}{\sqrt{0.30^2+0.40^2}^2}\frac{0.40}{0.50} \\
&= 0.23\,\text{N}.
\end{aligned}
$$

Again, since q_1 and q_2 are of equal charge and symmetric about the x axis, $F_{1\text{ on Q, x}} = F_{2\text{ on Q, x}}$ and the total force experienced by Q is in the positive x direction of magnitude

$$
F = 2F_{1\text{ on Q, x}} = 0.46\,\text{N}.
$$

21.4 Electric Field and Electric Forces

21.4.1 Example 21.5

The magnitude of the electric field vector is given by

$$
\begin{aligned}
E &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q|}{r^2} \\
&= (9.0\times10^9)\frac{|4.0\times10^{-9}|}{2.0^2} \\
&= 9.0\,\text{N/C}.
\end{aligned}
$$

21.4.2 Example 21.6

The magnitude of the electric field vector is given by

$$
\begin{aligned}
E &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q|}{r^2} \\
&= (9.0\times10^9)\frac{|-8.0\times10^{-9}|}{1.2^2+1.6^2} \\
&= 18\,\mathrm{N/C}
\end{aligned}
$$

and it is directed towards the origin. If θ is the angle between the positive x axis and $\hat{\mathbf{r}}$ then the component form of $\mathbf{E}$ is

$$
\begin{aligned}
E &= -E\left(\cos\theta\hat{\mathbf{i}}+\sin\theta\hat{\mathbf{j}}\right) \\
&= -E\left(\frac{x}{r}\hat{\mathbf{i}}+\frac{-y}{r}\hat{\mathbf{j}}\right) \\
&= \frac{-18}{\sqrt{1.2^2+1.6^2}}\left(1.2\hat{\mathbf{i}}+1.6\hat{\mathbf{j}}\right) \\
&= (-11\,\mathrm{N/C})\hat{\mathbf{i}}-(14\,\mathrm{N/C})\hat{\mathbf{j}}.
\end{aligned}
$$

21.4.3 Example 21.7

a) Electrons have a negative charge and the electric field is directed upwards, so the electron will move downwards. The magnitude of its acceleration is

$$
\begin{aligned}
a &= \frac{F}{m} \\
&= \frac{eE}{m} \\
&= \frac{(1.60\times10^{-19})(1.00\times10^4)}{9.11\times10^{-31}} \\
&= 1.76\times10^{15}\,\mathrm{m/s^2}.
\end{aligned}
$$

b) Its acceleration is constant between the plates, so its final speed is

$$
\begin{aligned}
v^2 &= v_0^2+2a(x-x_0) \\
&= 2ax \\
v &= \sqrt{2ax} \\
&= \sqrt{2(1.76\times10^{15})(0.01)} \\
&= 5.9\times10^6\,\mathrm{m/s^2}
\end{aligned}
$$

and thus its final kinetic energy is

$$\begin{aligned} K &= \frac{1}{2}mv^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(9.11 \times 10^{-31})(5.9 \times 10^6)^2 \\ &= 1.6 \times 10^{-17}\,\mathrm{J}. \end{aligned}$$

c) We can find the time it takes for the electron to travel this distance by rearranging the kinematic equation

$$v = v_0 + at$$

to

$$\begin{aligned} t &= \frac{v - v_0}{a} \\ &= \frac{5.9 \times 10^6}{1.76 \times 10^{15}} \\ &= 3.4 \times 10^{-9}\,\mathrm{s}. \end{aligned}$$

21.5 Electric-Field Calculations

21.5.1 Example 21.8

a) At point a the electric field caused by q_1 points to the right and has magnitude

$$\begin{aligned} E_1 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_1|}{r^2} \\ &= (9.0 \times 10^9)\frac{12 \times 10^{-9}}{(0.060)^2} \\ &= 3.0 \times 10^4\,\mathrm{N/C}. \end{aligned}$$

The electric field caused by q_2 also points to the right and it has magnitude

$$\begin{aligned} E_2 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_2|}{r^2} \\ &= (9.0 \times 10^9)\frac{|-12 \times 10^{-9}|}{(0.040)^2} \\ &= 6.8 \times 10^4\,\mathrm{N/C}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus the total field points to the right and has magnitude

$$E = E_1 + E_2 = 9.8 \times 10^4\,\mathrm{N/C}.$$

b) At point b the electric field caused by q_1 points to the left and has magnitude

$$\begin{aligned} E_1 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_1|}{r^2} \\ &= (9.0\times 10^9)\frac{12\times 10^{-9}}{(0.040)^2} \\ &= 6.8\times 10^4\,\mathrm{N/C}. \end{aligned}$$

The electric field caused by q_2 points to the right and has magnitude

$$\begin{aligned} E_2 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_2|}{r^2} \\ &= (9.0\times 10^9)\frac{|-12\times 10^{-9}|}{(0.140)^2} \\ &= 0.55\times 10^4\,\mathrm{N/C}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus the total electric field points to the left and has magnitude

$$E = E_1 - E_2 = 6.3\times 10^4\,\mathrm{N/C}.$$

c) At point c the electric field caused by q_1 points from q_1 to c and has magnitude

$$\begin{aligned} E_1 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_1|}{r^2} \\ &= (9.0\times 10^9)\frac{|12\times 10^{-9}|}{0.130^2} \\ &= 6.4\times 10^3\,\mathrm{N/C}. \end{aligned}$$

The electric field caused by q_2 points from c to q_2 and has magnitude

$$\begin{aligned} E_2 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{|q_2|}{r^2} \\ &= (9.0\times 10^9)\frac{|-12\times 10^{-9}|}{0.130^2} \\ &= 6.4\times 10^3\,\mathrm{N/C} \\ &= E_1. \end{aligned}$$

The vertical components of $\mathbf{E_1}$ and $\mathbf{E_2}$ cancel, leaving only a horizontal component pointing to the right of magnitude

$$
\begin{aligned}
E &= 2E_1 \cos\alpha \\
&= 2(6.4 \times 10^3)\frac{0.050}{0.130} \\
&= 4.9 \times 10^3\,\mathrm{N/C}.
\end{aligned}
$$

21.5.2 Example 21.9

By symmetry, each point on the ring has a corresponding point on the opposite side. The components of their electric fields perpendicular to the axis of the ring cancel, leaving only a component parallel to the axis of the ring. Thus the total magnetic field at P is parallel to the axis of the ring and can be calculated as

$$
\begin{aligned}
E &= \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{\lambda}{r^2}\cos\alpha\,d\theta \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Qx}{2\pi(a^2+x^2)^{3/2}}\int_0^{2\pi} d\theta \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Qx}{(a^2+x^2)^{3/2}}.
\end{aligned}
$$

21.5.3 Example 21.10

By symmetry, each point on the line has a corresponding point on the opposite side of the x-axis. The y components of their electric fields cancel, leaving only the x components. Thus the total magnetic field at P only has an x component and can be calculated as

$$
\begin{aligned}
E &= \int_{-a}^{a} \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{\lambda}{r^2}\cos\alpha\,dy \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Qx}{2a}\int_{-a}^{a}\frac{1}{(x^2+y^2)^{3/2}}\,dy \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Qx}{2a}\left[\frac{y}{x^2\sqrt{x^2+y^2}}\right]_{-a}^{a} \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Q}{2ax}\left(\frac{a}{\sqrt{x^2+a^2}}+\frac{a}{\sqrt{x^2+(-a)^2}}\right) \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Q}{x\sqrt{x^2+a^2}}.
\end{aligned}
$$

21.5.4 Example 21.11

By symmetry, each point on the disk has a corresponding point 180° rotation around the x-axis. The y and z components of their electric fields cancel, leaving only the x components. Thus the total magnetic field at P only has an x component and can be calculated as

$$\begin{aligned}
E &= \int_0^R \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\sigma}{r^2} s \cos\alpha \, d\theta \, ds \\
&= \frac{\sigma}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_0^R \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{s}{s^2+x^2} \frac{x}{\sqrt{s^2+x^2}} \, d\theta \, ds \\
&= \frac{\sigma x}{2\epsilon_0} \int_0^R \frac{s}{(s^2+x^2)^{3/2}} \, ds \\
&= \frac{\sigma x}{2\epsilon_0} \left[-\frac{1}{\sqrt{s^2+x^2}} \right]_0^R \\
&= \frac{\sigma x}{2\epsilon_0} \left(-\frac{1}{\sqrt{R^2+x^2}} + \frac{1}{x} \right) \\
&= \frac{\sigma}{2\epsilon_0} \left(1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{(R/x)^2+1}} \right).
\end{aligned}$$

21.5.5 Example 21.12

From Example 21.11 we know that the electric field produced by an infinite plane sheet of charge is

$$E = \frac{\sigma}{2\epsilon_0}.$$

Therefore the electric field outside the sheets is $\mathbf{0}$ and between the sheets is σ/ϵ_0 towards the negative sheet.

21.6 Electric Dipoles

21.6.1 Example 21.13

a) The electric field is uniform so the net force exerted on the dipole is $\mathbf{0}$

b) The electric dipole moment is directed from the negative charge to the positive charge and has magnitude

$$p = qd = (1.6 \times 10^{-19})(0.125 \times 10^{-9}) = 2.0 \times 10^{-29}\,\mathrm{C \cdot m}$$

c) The torque aligns the electric dipole moment with the electric field so it is directed out of the page and has magnitude

$$\tau = qEd \sin\phi = (1.6\times10^{-19})(5.0\times10^5)(0.125\times10^{-9}) \sin 35 = 5.7\times10^{-24}\,\mathrm{N{\cdot}m}$$

d) The potential energy of an electric dipole in a uniform electric field is given by

$$U = -qdE\cos\phi = (2.0 \times 10^{-29})(5.0 \times 10^5)\cos 35 = 8.2 \times 10^{-24}\,\mathrm{J}$$

21.6.2 Example 21.14

As P is on the y-axis, the electric fields of the electric dipole's point charges have no x component and thus the net electric field is directed along the y-axis.

By the principle of superposition of electric fields, the magnitude of the electric field at P is

$$\begin{aligned}
E &= E_- + E_+ \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{-q}{(y-(-d/2))^2} + \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q}{(y-d/2)^2} \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}q\left(\frac{1}{(y-d/2)^2} - \frac{1}{(y+d/2)^2}\right) \\
&= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q}{y^2}\left(\left(1-\frac{d}{2y}\right)^{-2} - \left(1+\frac{d}{2y}\right)^{-2}\right) \\
&\approx \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{q}{y^2}\left(1+\frac{d}{y} - 1 + \frac{d}{y}\right) \\
&= \frac{qd}{2\pi\epsilon_0 y^3} \\
&= \frac{p}{2\pi\epsilon_0 y^3}.
\end{aligned}$$