

Here are some general notes on physics

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1 Expand the plane wave in terms of spherical harmonics

Here I'm going to show how to expand a plane wave in terms on spherical harmonic s (or legendre polynomials) and then show what this goes to as $r \rightarrow \infty$. Expanding a plane wave in the spherical harmonic basis gives

$$e^{i\mathbf{k}\cdot\mathbf{r}} = \sum_l C_l Y_l^0(\theta). \quad (1)$$

There is no ϕ dependance here because the plane wave only depend on θ the angle between \mathbf{k} and \mathbf{r} , since the plane wave is propagating in the z direction. Now solving for the expansion coefficients C_l using the orthogonality relationship

$$\int_0^\pi \int_0^{2\pi} Y_l^m Y_{l'}^{m'*} d\Omega = \delta_{ll'} \delta_{mm'}, \quad (2)$$

gives us

$$C_l = 2\pi \int_0^\pi e^{ikr \cos \theta} Y_l^0(\theta) \sin \theta d\theta. \quad (3)$$

Now writting the spherical harmonics in terms of legendre polynomials

$$Y_l^m(\theta, \phi) = \sqrt{\frac{2l+1(l-m)!}{4\pi(l+m)!}} P_l^m(\cos \theta) e^{im\phi}, \quad (4)$$

or for $m = 0$,

$$Y_l^0(\theta) = \sqrt{\frac{2l+1}{4\pi}} P_l(\cos \theta) \quad (5)$$

we get,

$$C_l = \pi \int_0^\pi e^{ikr \cos \theta} \sqrt{\frac{2l+1}{4\pi}} P_l(\cos \theta) \sin \theta d\theta. \quad (6)$$

Now if you use an identity relating the spherical bessel functions of the first kind to the legendre polynomials (an identity which I found online and proved with Mathematica)

$$j_l(kr) = \frac{1}{2i^l} \int_0^\pi e^{ikr \cos \theta} P_l \cos \theta, \quad (7)$$

we can get an expansion of the plane wave in terms of spherical bessel functions and legendre polynomials.

$$e^{i\mathbf{k}\cdot\mathbf{r}} = \sum_l 2i^l \sqrt{\pi} \sqrt{2l+1} j_l(kr) Y_l^0(\theta) \quad (8)$$

Often we want to look at these things in the scattering or radiation limit where r is large. We can use the expansion of the spherical bessel function as given by Jackson eq. 9.89 to be

$$\lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} j_l(kr) = \frac{1}{kr} \sin \left(kr - \frac{l\pi}{2} \right) = \frac{i}{2kr} (e^{-i(kr - \frac{l\pi}{2})} - e^{i(kr - \frac{l\pi}{2})}). \quad (9)$$

We can thus write the expansion in the asymptotic limit as

$$e^{i\mathbf{k}\cdot\mathbf{r}} \approx \sum_l \frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{kr} \sqrt{2l+1} i^{l+1} \left(e^{-i(kr - \frac{l\pi}{2})} - e^{i(kr - \frac{l\pi}{2})} \right) Y_l^0(\theta). \quad (10)$$

This is equation 3.1.1 in Siemens.