Vector Formulas

$$\mathbf{a} \cdot (\mathbf{b} \times \mathbf{c}) = \mathbf{b} \cdot (\mathbf{c} \times \mathbf{a}) = \mathbf{c} \cdot (\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b})$$
$$\mathbf{a} \times (\mathbf{b} \times \mathbf{c}) = (\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{c})\mathbf{b} - (\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b})\mathbf{c}$$
$$(\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}) \cdot (\mathbf{c} \times \mathbf{d}) = (\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{c})(\mathbf{b} \cdot \mathbf{d}) - (\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{d})(\mathbf{b} \cdot \mathbf{c})$$
$$\nabla \times \nabla\psi = 0$$
$$\nabla \cdot (\nabla \times \mathbf{a}) = 0$$
$$\nabla \times (\nabla \times \mathbf{a}) = \nabla(\nabla \cdot \mathbf{a}) - \nabla^2\mathbf{a}$$
$$\nabla \cdot (\psi\mathbf{a}) = \mathbf{a} \cdot \nabla\psi + \psi\nabla \cdot \mathbf{a}$$
$$\nabla \times (\psi\mathbf{a}) = \nabla\psi \times \mathbf{a} + \psi\nabla \times \mathbf{a}$$
$$\nabla(\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b}) = (\mathbf{a} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{b} + (\mathbf{b} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{a} \times (\nabla \times \mathbf{b}) + \mathbf{b} \times (\nabla \times \mathbf{a})$$
$$\nabla \cdot (\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}) = \mathbf{b} \cdot (\nabla \times \mathbf{a}) - \mathbf{a} \cdot (\nabla \times \mathbf{b})$$
$$\nabla \times (\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}) = \mathbf{a}(\nabla \cdot \mathbf{b}) - \mathbf{b}(\nabla \cdot \mathbf{a}) + (\mathbf{b} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{a} - (\mathbf{a} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{b}$$

If $\mathbf{x}$ is the coordinate of a point with respect to some origin, with magnitude $r = |\mathbf{x}|$, $\mathbf{n} = \mathbf{x}/r$ is a unit radial vector, and $f(r)$ is a well-behaved function of r, then

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{x} = 3 \qquad \nabla \times \mathbf{x} = 0$$
$$\nabla \cdot [\mathbf{n}f(r)] = \frac{2}{r} f + \frac{\partial f}{\partial r} \qquad \nabla \times [\mathbf{n}f(r)] = 0$$
$$(\mathbf{a} \cdot \nabla)\mathbf{n}f(r) = \frac{f(r)}{r} [\mathbf{a} - \mathbf{n}(\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{n})] + \mathbf{n}(\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{n}) \frac{\partial f}{\partial r}$$
$$\nabla(\mathbf{x} \cdot \mathbf{a}) = \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{x}(\nabla \cdot \mathbf{a}) + i(\mathbf{L} \times \mathbf{a})$$

where $\mathbf{L} = \frac{1}{i} (\mathbf{x} \times \nabla)$ is the angular-momentum operator.

Theorems from Vector Calculus

In the following ϕ, ψ, and $\mathbf{A}$ are well-behaved scalar or vector functions, V is a three-dimensional volume with volume element d^3x, S is a closed two-dimensional surface bounding V, with area element da and unit outward normal $\mathbf{n}$ at da.

$$\int_V \boldsymbol{\nabla} \cdot \mathbf{A}\, d^3x = \int_S \mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{n}\, da \qquad \text{(Divergence theorem)}$$

$$\int_V \boldsymbol{\nabla}\psi\, d^3x = \int_S \psi\mathbf{n}\, da$$

$$\int_V \boldsymbol{\nabla} \times \mathbf{A}\, d^3x = \int_S \mathbf{n} \times \mathbf{A}\, da$$

$$\int_V (\phi\nabla^2\psi + \boldsymbol{\nabla}\phi \cdot \boldsymbol{\nabla}\psi)\, d^3x = \int_S \phi\mathbf{n} \cdot \boldsymbol{\nabla}\psi\, da \qquad \text{(Green's first identity)}$$

$$\int_V (\phi\nabla^2\psi - \psi\nabla^2\phi)\, d^3x = \int_S (\phi\boldsymbol{\nabla}\psi - \psi\boldsymbol{\nabla}\phi) \cdot \mathbf{n}\, da \qquad \text{(Green's theorem)}$$

In the following S is an open surface and C is the contour bounding it, with line element $d\mathbf{l}$. The normal $\mathbf{n}$ to S is defined by the right-hand-screw rule in relation to the sense of the line integral around C.

$$\int_S (\boldsymbol{\nabla} \times \mathbf{A}) \cdot \mathbf{n}\, da = \oint_C \mathbf{A} \cdot d\mathbf{l} \qquad \text{(Stokes's theorem)}$$

$$\int_S \mathbf{n} \times \boldsymbol{\nabla}\psi\, da = \oint_C \psi\, d\mathbf{l}$$

Where to Find Key Material on Special Functions

Explicit Forms of Vector Operations

Let $\mathbf{e}_1$, $\mathbf{e}_2$, $\mathbf{e}_3$ be orthogonal unit vectors associated with the coordinate directions specified in the headings on the left, and A_1, A_2, A_3 be the corresponding components of $\mathbf{A}$. Then

Cartesian
$(x_1, x_2, x_3 = x, y, z)$

$$\nabla\psi = \mathbf{e}_1 \frac{\partial\psi}{\partial x_1} + \mathbf{e}_2 \frac{\partial\psi}{\partial x_2} + \mathbf{e}_3 \frac{\partial\psi}{\partial x_3}$$

$$\nabla\cdot\mathbf{A} = \frac{\partial A_1}{\partial x_1} + \frac{\partial A_2}{\partial x_2} + \frac{\partial A_3}{\partial x_3}$$

$$\nabla\times\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{e}_1\left(\frac{\partial A_3}{\partial x_2} - \frac{\partial A_2}{\partial x_3}\right) + \mathbf{e}_2\left(\frac{\partial A_1}{\partial x_3} - \frac{\partial A_3}{\partial x_1}\right) + \mathbf{e}_3\left(\frac{\partial A_2}{\partial x_1} - \frac{\partial A_1}{\partial x_2}\right)$$

$$\nabla^2\psi = \frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial x_1^2} + \frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial x_2^2} + \frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial x_3^2}$$

Cylindrical
(ρ, ϕ, z)

$$\nabla\psi = \mathbf{e}_1 \frac{\partial\psi}{\partial\rho} + \mathbf{e}_2 \frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial\phi} + \mathbf{e}_3 \frac{\partial\psi}{\partial z}$$

$$\nabla\cdot\mathbf{A} = \frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial}{\partial\rho}(\rho A_1) + \frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial A_2}{\partial\phi} + \frac{\partial A_3}{\partial z}$$

$$\nabla\times\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{e}_1\left(\frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial A_3}{\partial\phi} - \frac{\partial A_2}{\partial z}\right) + \mathbf{e}_2\left(\frac{\partial A_1}{\partial z} - \frac{\partial A_3}{\partial\rho}\right) + \mathbf{e}_3\frac{1}{\rho}\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial\rho}(\rho A_2) - \frac{\partial A_1}{\partial\phi}\right)$$

$$\nabla^2\psi = \frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial}{\partial\rho}\left(\rho\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial\rho}\right) + \frac{1}{\rho^2}\frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial\phi^2} + \frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial z^2}$$

Spherical
(r, θ, ϕ)

$$\nabla\psi = \mathbf{e}_1 \frac{\partial\psi}{\partial r} + \mathbf{e}_2 \frac{1}{r}\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial\theta} + \mathbf{e}_3 \frac{1}{r\sin\theta}\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial\phi}$$

$$\nabla\cdot\mathbf{A} = \frac{1}{r^2}\frac{\partial}{\partial r}(r^2 A_1) + \frac{1}{r\sin\theta}\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}(\sin\theta A_2) + \frac{1}{r\sin\theta}\frac{\partial A_3}{\partial\phi}$$

$$\nabla\times\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{e}_1\frac{1}{r\sin\theta}\left[\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}(\sin\theta A_3) - \frac{\partial A_2}{\partial\phi}\right] + \mathbf{e}_2\left[\frac{1}{r\sin\theta}\frac{\partial A_1}{\partial\phi} - \frac{1}{r}\frac{\partial}{\partial r}(rA_3)\right] + \mathbf{e}_3\frac{1}{r}\left[\frac{\partial}{\partial r}(rA_2) - \frac{\partial A_1}{\partial\theta}\right]$$

$$\nabla^2\psi = \frac{1}{r^2}\frac{\partial}{\partial r}\left(r^2\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial r}\right) + \frac{1}{r^2\sin\theta}\frac{\partial}{\partial\theta}\left(\sin\theta\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial\theta}\right) + \frac{1}{r^2\sin^2\theta}\frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial\phi^2}$$

$$\left[\text{Note that } \frac{1}{r^2}\frac{\partial}{\partial r}\left(r^2\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial r}\right) \equiv \frac{1}{r}\frac{\partial^2}{\partial r^2}(r\psi).\right]$$