DATA SET DESCRIPTION

Historical hourly station observations of cloud cover, cloud type and cloud height in up to 4 layers for Germany

Version v21.3

Cite data set as:	DWD Climate Data Center (CDC): Historical hourly station observations of cloud cover, cloud type and cloud height in up to 4 layers for Germany, Version v21.3, 2021.
Dataset-ID:	urn:x-wmo:md:de.dwd.cdc::obsgermany-climate-hourly-cloud_type-historical

INTENT OF THE DATASET

These historical data are quality controlled measurements and observations derived from DWD stations and legally and qualitatively equivalent partner stations operated for climatological and climate related applications. Comprehensive station metadata (station relocation, instrument change, time zones, change of algorithms) are included.

POINT OF CONTACT

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DATA DESCRIPTION

Spatial coverage	stations in Germany
Temporal coverage	1949-01-01 until - 2020-12-31
Temporal resolution	hourly
Format(s)	The station observations (produkt_*.txt) are zipped together with the station metadata. The latter are given in *.txt as well as *.html. The file Metadaten_Parameter* contains a listing of the parameters measured at the station (the parameter portfolio) with begin, end, units, measurement procedures, averaging formulas, measurement times and applied time units (e.g., MOZ or UTC) which are all related to the station's ID and the station name valid now. The instrument history is sorted according to the parameters (see file Metadaten_Geraete*). There the history of sensor height, type of instrument and measurement procedure is given, together with the historical station names. The station's ID is unique and does not change over time. For a convenient documentation of station name change, see Metadaten_Stationsname*. The geographical metadata of the station (longitude, latitude, height) is listed in Metadaten_Geographie*.txt together with the Stations_id and the current station name. All these information is combined into a single zip-file for each station: *_[STATIONS_ID]_[from]_[to]_hist.zip An overview over all stations with start and end dates is given in the station list: Stationsliste. Note that for convenience, the list comprises not only stations given here, but also stations with more complicated copyright regulations which may be obtained for certain applications, requiring discussion with the point of contact.
Units	The file produkt*.txt comprises following parameters:
	STATIONS_ID station identification number

MESS_DATUM	date	yyyymmddhh
QN_8	quality level of next columns	coding see paragraph "Quality information"
V_N	total cloud cover	1/8
V_N_I	index how measurement is taken	
	P	by human person
	I	by instrument
V_S1_CS	cloud type of 1. layer	code see overview
V_S1_CSA	abbrev. cloud type 1.layer	code siehe overview
V_S1_HHS	height of 1.layer	meter
V_S1_NS	cloud cover of 1. layer	1/8
V_S2_CS	cloud type of 2. layer	code see overview
V_S2_CSA	abbrev. cloud type 2.layer	code see overview
V_S2_HHS	height of 2.layer	meter
V_S2_NS	cloud cover of 2. layer	1/8
V_S3_CS	cloud type of 3. layer	code see overview
V_S3_CSA	abbrev. cloud type 3.layer	code see overview
V_S3_HHS	height of 3.layer	meter
V_S3_NS	cloud cover of 3. layer	1/8
V_S4_CS	cloud type of 4. layer	code see overview
V_S4_CSA	abbrev. cloud type 4.layer	code see overview
V_S4_HHS	height of 4.layer	meter
V_S4_NS	cloud cover of 4. layer	1/8

overview	V_S*_CS	V_S*_CSA
cloud type	cloud type code	cloud type abbreviation
Cirrus	0	CI
Cirrocumulus	1	CC
Cirrostratus	2	CS
Altocumulus	3	AC
Altostratus	4	AS

Nimbostratus	5	NS
Stratocumulus	6	SC
Stratus	7	ST
Cumulus	8	CU
Cumulonimbus	9	CB
when instrument (not person)	-1	-1
eor	end of record	can be ignored

with missing values are marked as -999. All dates given in this directory are in UTC. All dates given in this directory are in UTC. According to the SYNOP convention, the hour hh refers to the measurement time at hh-10min (e.g., UTC11 is related to the observation of UTC10:50).

Uncertainties

The stations are nowadays selected and operated according to WMO guidelines. In historical times, the visibility values depended on prominent features in the area of the station. For automatic measurements, the range of visibility values is limited by instrument characteristics. Because of these observation methods, the frequency distribution of visibility values is dependent on the station, and probably changing over time.

Quality information

The QUALITAETS_BYTE (QB) denotes whether the value was objected to and/or corrected.

Explanation for QB:
_____
QB = 0 : denotes not flagged,
QB = 1 : had no objections (either checked and not objected, or not checked and not objected, this can be interpreted only when considering QN);
QB = 2 : corrected;
QB = 3 : confirmed with objection rejected;
QB = 4 : added or calculated;
QB = 5 : objected;
QB = 6 : only formally checked;
QB = 7 : formal objection;
QB = -999 : quality flag does not exist.
_____

The QUALITAETS_NIVEAU (QN) shows the quality control procedure applied for a data report (of several parameters) for a certain reporting time.

Explanation for QN:
_____
QN = 1 : only formal control;
QN = 2 : controlled with individually defined criteria;
QN = 3 : automatic control and correction;
QN = 5 : historic, subjective procedures;
QN = 7 : second control done, before correction;
QN = 8 : quality control outside ROUTINE;
QN = 9 : not all parameters corrected;
QN = 10 : quality control finished, all corrections finished.
_____
Data before and including 1980 can reach as best quality check level QN=5. Data after 1980 can reach QN=10 as best quality check level.
_____

DATA ORIGIN

These climate data are from the station networks of Deutschen Wetterdienst which are regularly updated with recent data, and with recovered historical data. From 1997 onwards, the data are collected in the central MIRAKEL data base and archived, see Behrendt et al., 2011, and Kaspar et al., 2013. For details on the currently applied measurement and observation procedures see VuB 3 Beobachterhandbuch (DWD, 2014a), VuB 3 Technikerhandbuch (DWD, 2014b) and VuB 2 Wetterschlüsselhandbuch (DWD, 2013). Note that when going back to historical times, guidelines on observation procedure, instruments and observation times were issued by the authority in charge, and might be incompletely recorded in the metadata.

VALIDATION AND UNCERTAINTY ESTIMATE

Considerations of quality assurance are explained in Kaspar et al., 2013: several steps of quality control, including automatic tests for completeness, temporal and internal consistency, and against statistical thresholds based on the software QualiMet (see Spengler, 2002) and manual inspection had been applied. The electronically collected data has been checked with the software Qualimet from 2003 onwards. Some doubtful values remain, especially in the data before 1979.
The history of instrumental design, observation practice, and possibly changing representativity has to be considered for the individual stations when interpreting changes in the statistical properties of the time series. It is strongly suggested to investigate the records of the station history which are provided together with the data. Note that in the 1990s many stations had the transition from manual to automated stations, entailing possible changes in certain statistical properties. No homogenization has been applied on the provided data.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATIONS

Bevor the 1970s, cloud cover was observed in 1/10, but is converted to 1/8 here. When investigating long term changes or trends, consider the station specific metadata provided Metadaten_Parameter*, Metadaten_Geraete* and Metadaten_Geographie*. Conditions for layer definition: the individual layers were observed dependent on the could cover (for both the instrument readings and person observations). Condition for a 1.layer is V_S1_NS >=1/8, for 2.layer V_S2_NS>=3/8, for 3.layer V_S3_NS>=5/8. The 4. layer is only recorded when cumulonimbus (CB) present (this condition is only valid for person observation, not for instrument readings), independent of cloud cover, this layer is defined according to its height.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For recent data (where quality control is not completed yet), see subdirectories ../recent/. When data from both directories "historical" and "recent" are used together, the difference in the quality control procedure should be considered. There are still issues to be discovered in the historical data. We welcome any hints to improve the data basis (see contact).

REFERENCES

Behrendt, J., et al.: Beschreibung der Datenbasis des NKDZ. Version 3.5, Offenbach, 15.02.2011.

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REVISION HISTORY

This version is a result of a research project. It is possible that errors in the metadata or the data itself are detected and corrected. That will be documented in the file Change_log_REA_OD.txt, however, no versions of the COSMO-REA6 dataset will be saved.

This document is maintained by the Climate Data Center (CDC) of DWD, last edited on 2021-05-10.