

RC2: Static Electric Fields

1 Electrostatics in Free Space

1.1 Basic Concepts

Electrostatics:

- i. electric charges are **at rest (not moving)**;
- ii electric field **do not change with time**.

Static electric charges (source) in free space → electric field

1.2 Electric field intensity *vector*

$$\mathbf{E} = \lim_{q \rightarrow 0} \frac{\mathbf{F}}{q} \quad (\text{V/m})$$

1.3 Fundamental Postulates of Electrostatics

- Differential form:

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = \frac{\rho}{\epsilon_0} \quad (\text{divergence})$$

↗ *not solenoidal*
 ↙ *dielectric is not vacuous*
 $\epsilon_r \epsilon_0 = \epsilon$
 $\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = 0 \quad (\text{curl})$ ↗ *irrotational*

where ρ is the volume charge density of free charges (C/m^3), ϵ_0 is the permittivity of free space, a universal constant.

- Integral form:

$$\oint_S \mathbf{E} \cdot d\mathbf{s} = \frac{Q}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\oint_C \mathbf{E} \cdot d\ell = 0$$



where Q is the total charge contained in volume V bounded by surface S . Also, the scalar line integral of the static electric field intensity around any closed path vanishes.

\mathbf{E} is **not solenoidal** (unless $\rho = 0$), but **irrotational (conservative)**

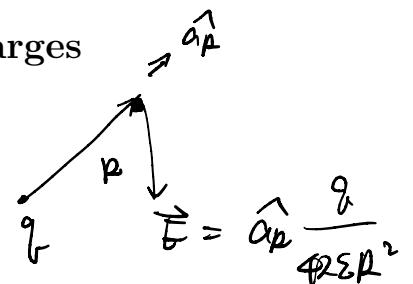


2 Coulomb's Law

2.1 Electric Field due to a System of Discrete Charges

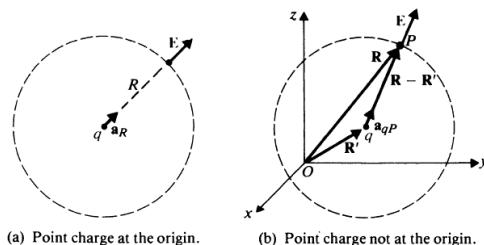
- a single point charge (charge on the origin):

$$\mathbf{E} = \mathbf{a}_R E_R = \mathbf{a}_R \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2} \quad (\text{V/m})$$



- a single point charge (charge is not on the origin):

$$\mathbf{E}_p = \frac{q(\mathbf{R} - \mathbf{R}')}{4\pi\epsilon_0 |\mathbf{R} - \mathbf{R}'|^3} \quad (\text{V/m})$$



$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\mathbf{R} - \mathbf{R}'}{(\mathbf{R} - \mathbf{R}')^2}$$

FIGURE 3-2
Electric field due to a point charge.

When a point charge q_2 is placed in the field of another point charge q_1 at the origin, a force \mathbf{F}_{12} is experienced by q_2 due to the electric field intensity \mathbf{E}_{12} of q_1 at q_2 . Then we have:

$$\mathbf{F}_{12} = q_2 \mathbf{E}_{12} = \mathbf{a}_R \frac{q_1 q_2}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2}$$

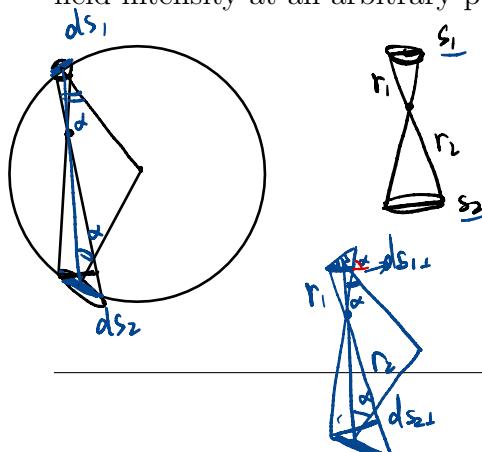
$$\mathbf{F} = q\mathbf{E}$$

- several point charges:

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \sum_{k=1}^n \frac{q_k(\mathbf{R} - \mathbf{R}'_k)}{|\mathbf{R} - \mathbf{R}'_k|^3}$$

Ex.1:

A total charge Q is uniformly put on a thin spherical shell of radius b . Determine the electric field intensity at an arbitrary point inside the shell.



$$\frac{s_1}{s_2} = \frac{r_1^2}{r_2^2}$$

$$\frac{ds_{1\perp}}{ds_1} = \cos\alpha$$

$$\frac{ds_{2\perp}}{ds_2} = \cos\alpha$$

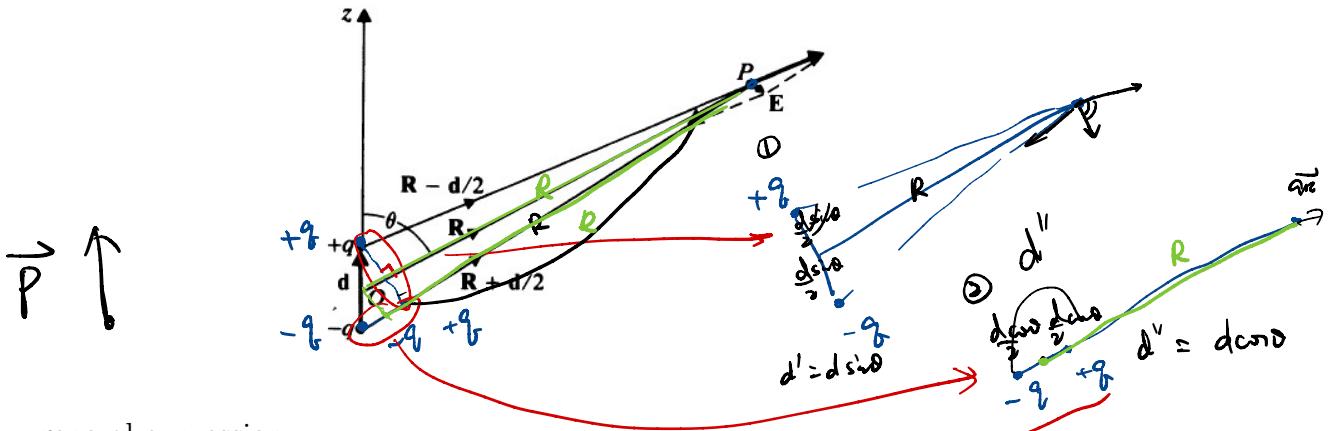
$$\frac{ds_{1\perp}}{ds_{2\perp}} = \frac{r_1^2}{r_2^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} ds_1 \cdot \mathbf{E}_1 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\sigma(ds_1)}{r_1^2} \\ ds_2 \cdot \mathbf{E}_2 &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\sigma(ds_2)}{r_2^2} \end{aligned}$$

$$\mathbf{E} = \mathbf{E}_1 - \mathbf{E}_2 = 0$$

2.2 Electric Dipole

- Electric Field



general expression:

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left\{ \frac{\mathbf{R} - \frac{\mathbf{d}}{2}}{|\mathbf{R} - \frac{\mathbf{d}}{2}|^3} - \frac{\mathbf{R} + \frac{\mathbf{d}}{2}}{|\mathbf{R} + \frac{\mathbf{d}}{2}|^3} \right\}$$

if $d \ll R$:

$$\mathbf{E} \approx \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^3} \left[3 \frac{\mathbf{R} \cdot \mathbf{d}}{R^2} \mathbf{R} - \mathbf{d} \right]$$

- Electric Dipole Moment

Definition:

$$\mathbf{p} = q\mathbf{d}$$

where q is the charge, vector \mathbf{d} goes from $-q$ to $+q$.

$$\mathbf{p} = \mathbf{a}_z p = p (\mathbf{a}_R \cos \theta - \mathbf{a}_\theta \sin \theta)$$

$$\mathbf{R} \cdot \mathbf{p} = Rp \cos \theta$$

- Electric Field: (spherical coordinate)

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{p}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^3} (\mathbf{a}_R 2 \cos \theta + \mathbf{a}_\theta \sin \theta) \quad (\text{V/m})$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{q}{(R - \frac{d'}{2})^2} - \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{q}{(R + \frac{d'}{2})^2} \\ &= \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2} \left[\left(\frac{1}{(1 - \frac{d'}{2R})^2} - \frac{1}{(1 + \frac{d'}{2R})^2} \right) \right] \\ &= \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2} \left[\left(1 + \frac{d'^2}{4R^2} \right)^{-2} - \left(1 - \frac{d'^2}{4R^2} \right)^{-2} \right] \\ &= \frac{2qd'^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^3} = \frac{2qd \cos \theta}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^3} \\ &= \frac{2p \cos \theta}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^3} \mathbf{a}_R \end{aligned}$$

2.3 Electric Field due to a Continuous Distribution of Charge

- General Differential Element:

$$d\mathbf{E} = \mathbf{a}_R \frac{\rho dv'}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2}$$

$$dq \rightarrow \underline{\underline{dE}}$$

, where dv' is the differential volume element.

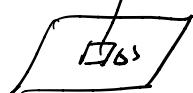
- Line Charge:

$$\Delta l \rightarrow \rho_l \Delta l = dq$$

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{L'} \mathbf{a}_R \frac{\rho_l dl}{R^2} \quad (\text{V/m})$$

$$\begin{aligned} \int dE &= \frac{\rho}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2} \underline{\underline{dv}} \\ &= \frac{\rho dv}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2} \end{aligned}$$

$$P(x, y, z)$$



- Surface Charge:

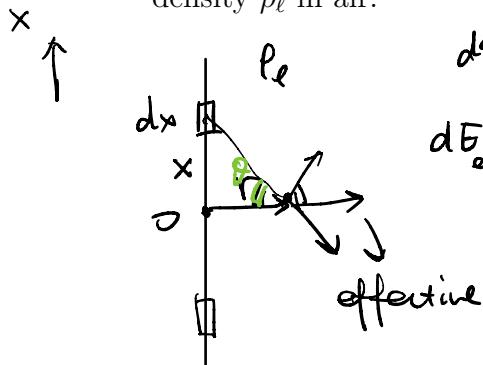
$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{S'} \mathbf{a}_R \frac{\rho_s}{R^2} d\mathbf{s}' \quad (\text{V/m})$$

- Volume Charge:

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{V'} \mathbf{a}_R \frac{\rho}{R^2} dv' \quad (\text{V/m})$$

Ex.2

Determine the electric field intensity of an infinitely long, straight, line charge of a uniform density ρ_l in air.



$$dq = \rho_l dx$$

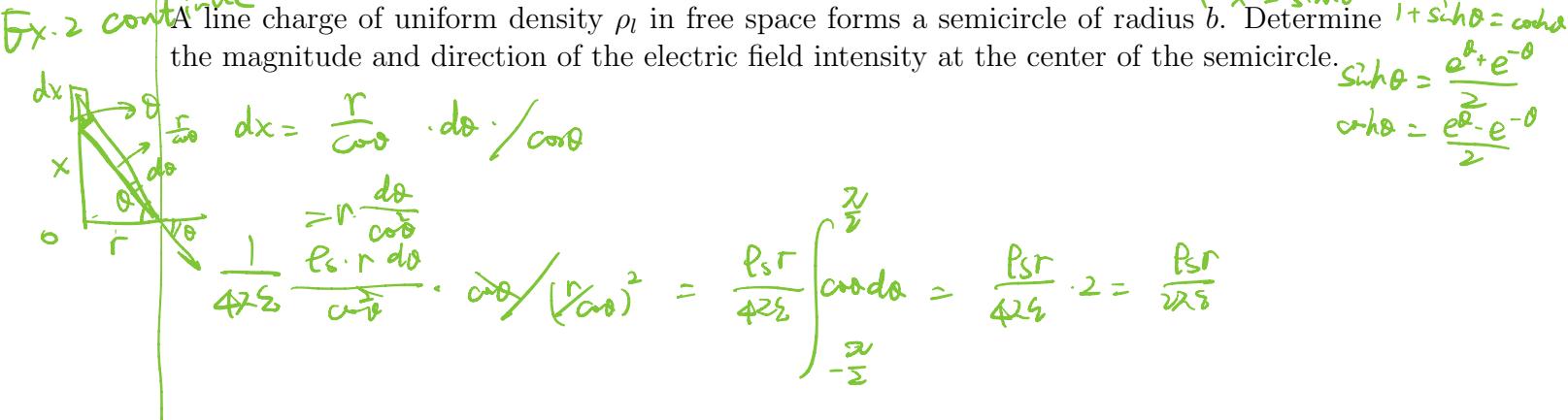
$$dE_{\text{eff}} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\rho_l dx}{x^2 + r^2} \cdot \frac{r}{\sqrt{x^2 + r^2}} = \frac{\rho_l r}{4\pi\epsilon_0} (x^2 + r^2)^{-\frac{3}{2}} dx$$

$$\int (x^2 + r^2)^{-\frac{3}{2}} dx = \frac{1}{r^2} \left(\frac{x^2}{r^2} + 1 \right)^{-\frac{3}{2}} d(\frac{x}{r}) \rightarrow m = \frac{x}{r}$$

$$= \frac{1}{r^2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} (m^2 + 1)^{-\frac{3}{2}} dm \quad (1+m^2)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

Ex.3

A line charge of uniform density ρ_l in free space forms a semicircle of radius b . Determine the magnitude and direction of the electric field intensity at the center of the semicircle.



Ex.4 (An interesting Question)

How can you use a solid ball to create a uniform field somewhere? (you may)

- Surface Charge:

$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{S'} \mathbf{a}_R \frac{\rho_s}{R^2} ds' \quad (\text{V/m})$$

- Volume Charge:

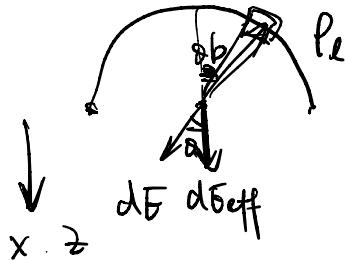
$$\mathbf{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{V'} \mathbf{a}_R \frac{\rho}{R^2} dv' \quad (\text{V/m})$$

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$$\begin{aligned} d\vec{E}_{\text{eff}} &= \frac{d\vec{q}}{4\pi\epsilon_0 b^2} \cdot \hat{r} \\ d\vec{q} &= \underline{bd\theta} \cdot \underline{\rho_l} \\ d\vec{E}_{\text{eff}} &= \frac{\underline{\rho_l} \underline{bd\theta} \cdot \hat{r}}{4\pi\epsilon_0 b^2} = \frac{\underline{\rho_l} \underline{bd\theta}}{4\pi\epsilon_0 b} \\ \vec{E}_{\text{eff}} &= \left. \frac{\underline{\rho_l} \underline{bd\theta}}{4\pi\epsilon_0 b} \right|_1^\pi = \frac{\underline{\rho_l} \pi}{2\pi\epsilon_0 b} \hat{x} \end{aligned}$$

Ex.4 (An interesting Question)

How can you use a solid ball to create a uniform field somewhere? (you may)

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{E}_p &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\frac{4}{3}\pi R^3 \cdot \rho}{R^2} \hat{R} = \frac{\rho}{3\epsilon_0} \hat{R} \\ \vec{E}_{-p} &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\frac{4}{3}\pi r^3 \cdot (-\rho)}{R^2} \cdot \frac{\hat{R}}{R^2} = -\frac{\rho}{3\epsilon_0} \frac{\hat{R}}{r} \\ \vec{E} &= \vec{E}_p + \vec{E}_{-p} = \frac{\rho}{3\epsilon_0} (\hat{R} - \frac{\hat{R}}{r}) = \frac{\rho}{3\epsilon_0} \hat{R}' \end{aligned}$$

3 Gauss's Law and Application

3.1 Definition

The total outward flux of the E-field over any closed surface in free space is equal to **the total charge enclosed in the surface** divided by ϵ_0 . (Note that we can choose arbitrary surface S for our convenience.)

$$\oint_S \mathbf{E} \cdot d\mathbf{s} = \frac{Q}{\epsilon_0}$$



3.2 Application

$$\mathbf{E} \cdot \mathbf{s}$$

- Conditions for Maxwell's Integral Equations:

There is **a high degree of symmetry** in the charge distribution or in the electrical field (i.e., spherically symmetric, planar, line charge, etc.).

Ex.5

Determine the electric field intensity of an infinitely long, straight, line charge of a uniform density ρ_s in air.

$$|\vec{E}_r| \cdot 2\pi r \cdot dr = \frac{\rho_s \cdot dr}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\Rightarrow |\vec{E}_r| = \frac{\rho_s}{2\pi\epsilon_0 r}$$

$$\vec{E}_r = \frac{\rho_s}{2\pi\epsilon_0 r} \hat{r}$$

Ex.6

Determine the electric field intensity of an infinite planar charge with a uniform surface charge density ρ_s .

$$|\vec{E}_r| \cdot 2ds = \frac{\rho_s \cdot ds}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\Rightarrow |\vec{E}_r| = \frac{\rho_s}{2\epsilon_0}$$

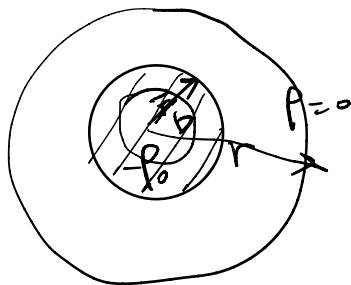
$$\sigma_+ = \frac{\sigma}{2}$$

$$\sigma_- = \frac{\sigma}{2}$$

$$E = E_+ + E_- = \frac{\sigma}{2\epsilon_0}$$

Ex.7

Determine the \mathbf{E} field caused by a spherical cloud of electrons with a volume charge density $\rho = -\rho_o$ for $0 \leq R \leq b$ (both ρ_o and b are positive) and $\rho = 0$ for $R > b$.



$$\textcircled{1} \quad 0 \leq r \leq b$$

$$\mathbf{F}(r) \cdot d\mathbf{r} = -\frac{\rho_o \cdot \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\Rightarrow \overrightarrow{E(r)} = \frac{-\rho_o r}{3\epsilon_0} \hat{r}$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad r > b$$

$$\mathbf{F}(r) \cdot d\mathbf{r} = -\frac{\rho_o \cdot \frac{4}{3}\pi b^3}{\epsilon_0}$$

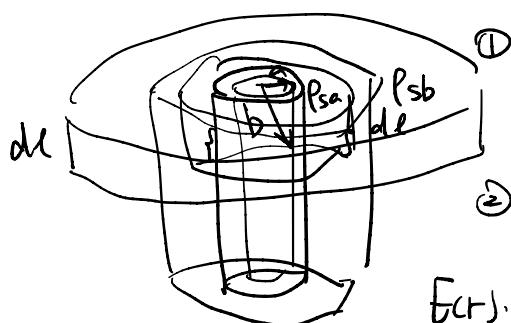
$$\Rightarrow \overrightarrow{E(r)} = \frac{-\rho_o b^3}{3\epsilon_0 r^2} \hat{r}$$

Ex.8

Two ~~infinite~~ long coaxial cylindrical surfaces, $r = a$ and $r = b$ ($b > a$), carry surface charge densities ρ_{sa}, ρ_{sb} , respectively.

a) Determine \mathbf{E} everywhere.

b) What must be the relation between a and b in order that \mathbf{E} vanishes for $r > b$?



$$\textcircled{1} \quad r < a$$

$$\mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\textcircled{2} \quad a \leq r \leq b$$

$$\mathbf{F}(r) \cdot d\mathbf{r} = \frac{\rho_{sa} \cdot 2\pi a \cdot dr}{\epsilon_0} \Rightarrow \overrightarrow{E(r)} = \frac{\rho_{sa} \cdot a}{\epsilon_0 r} \hat{r}$$

$$\textcircled{3} \quad r > b$$

$$\mathbf{F}(r) \cdot d\mathbf{r} = \frac{\rho_{sa} \cdot 2\pi a \cdot dr + \rho_{sb} \cdot 2\pi b \cdot dr}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\Rightarrow \overrightarrow{E(r)} = \frac{\rho_{sa} \cdot a + \rho_{sb} \cdot b}{\epsilon_0 r} \hat{r}$$

$$\textcircled{4b}) \quad \frac{\rho_{sa} \cdot a + \rho_{sb} \cdot b}{\epsilon_0 r} = 0 \quad \forall r \quad \rho_{sa} \cdot a + \rho_{sb} \cdot b = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\rho_{sa}}{\rho_{sb}} = -\frac{b}{a} \quad 6$$

3.3 Several Useful Models (Paste on your CTPP!)

Note: The charge distribution should be **uniform**.

different models	E(magnitude)
infinitely long, line charge	$E = \frac{\rho_e}{2\pi r \epsilon_0}$
infinite planar charge	$E = \frac{\rho_s}{2\epsilon_0}$
uniform spherical surface charge with radius R	$\begin{cases} E = 0 & (r < R) \\ E = \frac{Q}{4\pi r^2 \epsilon_0} & (r > R) \end{cases}$
uniform sphere charge with radius R	$\begin{cases} E = \frac{Qr}{4\pi R^3} & (r < R) \\ E = \frac{Q}{4\pi r^2 \epsilon_0} & (r > R) \end{cases}$
infinitely long, cylindrical charge with radius R	$\begin{cases} E = \frac{\rho_v r}{2\epsilon_0} & (r < R) \\ E = \frac{\rho_v R^2}{2r\epsilon_0} & (r > R) \end{cases}$

4 Electric Potential

- Expression:

$$V_{ba} = - \int_a^b \mathbf{E} \cdot d\ell$$

$\mathbf{E} = -\nabla V$

$\nabla V = -\mathbf{E}$

the reason for the negative sign: consistent with the convention that in going against the \mathbf{E} field, the electric potential V increases.

- Electric Potential Difference:

$$V_2 - V_1 = - \int_{P_1}^{P_2} \mathbf{E} \cdot d\ell$$

- Electric Potential due to a Charge Distribution

- Line Charge:

$$V = \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R}$$

$\mathbf{E} = \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 R^2} \hat{r}$

$$V = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{L'} \frac{\rho_e d\ell'}{R} \quad (V)$$

$$-\int_{-\infty}^R \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} dr = \frac{q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r} \Rightarrow V$$

- Surface Charge:

$$V = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{S'} \frac{\rho_s ds}{R} \quad (V)$$

- Volume Charge:

$$V = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{V'} \frac{\rho dv}{R} \quad (V)$$

Ex.9

A finite line charge of length L carrying uniform line charge density ρ_l is coincident with the x-axis.

- Determine V in the plane bisecting the line charge.
- Determine \mathbf{E} on the bisecting plane from ρ_l directly by applying Coulomb's law.
- Check the answer in part (b) with $-\nabla V$.

(a) $dl = \frac{r}{\cos\theta} \cdot d\theta \cdot \frac{1}{\cos\theta} = \frac{r d\theta}{\cos^2\theta} \quad \checkmark$

$$dV = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\rho_l \cdot dl}{(r/\cos\theta)} = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\frac{r d\theta}{\cos^2\theta}}{r/\cos\theta} = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{-\theta_0}^{\theta_0} \frac{d\theta}{\cos^2\theta}$$

$\tan\theta_0 = \frac{L}{r} = \frac{L}{2r}$

$\theta_0 = \tan^{-1} \frac{L}{2r}$

$\frac{x}{r} = m$

$V = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{-\frac{L}{2r}}^{\frac{L}{2r}} \frac{dx \cdot \rho_l}{\sqrt{x^2 + r^2}}$

$V = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{-\frac{L}{2r}}^{\frac{L}{2r}} \frac{dx}{\sqrt{1+m^2}}$

$d\sin\theta = \frac{dx}{\cos\theta}$

$1 + \sin^2\theta = \csc^2\theta$

$\theta = \sinh^{-1}(m)$

$\sinh\theta = \frac{L}{2r} = k$

$V = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \sinh^{-1}\left(\frac{L}{2r}\right) = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \sinh^{-1}\left(\frac{L}{2r}\right)$

$\sinh^{-1}\left(\frac{L}{2r}\right) = \theta = \ln\left(\frac{L}{2r} + \sqrt{\left(\frac{L}{2r}\right)^2 + 1}\right)$

$V = \frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \sinh^{-1}\left(\frac{L}{2r}\right)$

or $\frac{\rho_l}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \ln\left(\frac{L}{2r} + \sqrt{\left(\frac{L}{2r}\right)^2 + 1}\right)$

$e^\theta - e^{-\theta} = 2k$

$e^\theta = n$

$n^2 + 1 = 2kn$

$\Rightarrow n^2 - 2kn + 1 \approx 0 \Rightarrow n = k \pm \sqrt{k^2 + 1}$

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- Determine V in the plane bisecting the line charge.
- Determine \mathbf{E} on the bisecting plane from ρ_l directly by applying Coulomb's law.
- Check the answer in part (b) with $-\nabla V$.

(b)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{E} &= \int_{-\frac{L}{2}}^{\frac{L}{2}} \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\rho_s dx}{\sqrt{x^2+r^2}} \cdot \frac{r}{\sqrt{x^2+r^2}} = \frac{\rho_s r}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{dx}{(\frac{L}{2r})^2} \\ &= \frac{\rho_s k}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} \int_{-\frac{L}{2r}}^{\frac{L}{2r}} \frac{dx}{(1+(\frac{x}{r})^2)^{\frac{3}{2}}} \\ &= \frac{\rho_s \frac{L}{r}}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r \sqrt{(\frac{L}{2r})^2 + 1}} = \frac{\rho_s L}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2 \sqrt{\frac{L^2}{4r^2} + 1}} \end{aligned}$$

$\frac{d \sinh^{-1}(x)}{dx} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{x^2+1}}$

(c) $-\nabla V = -\frac{\rho_s}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{(\frac{L}{2r})^2 + 1}} \cdot \frac{\partial \frac{L}{2r}}{\partial r} = +\frac{\rho_s}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{1}{\sqrt{(\frac{L}{2r})^2 + 1}} (+\frac{L}{2r^2})$

$E = -\nabla V \text{ is verified} \Rightarrow \frac{\rho_s}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} \frac{1}{\sqrt{(\frac{L}{2r})^2 + 1}}$

$$\frac{d \sinh^{-1}(x)}{dx} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{x^2+1}} \rightarrow \text{prove:}$$

$$\sinh^{-1}(x) = t$$

$$\Leftrightarrow \frac{e^t - e^{-t}}{2} = x$$

$$t = \ln(x + \sqrt{x^2+1})$$

$$\frac{dt}{dx} = \frac{1 + 2\frac{x}{x^2+1}}{x + \sqrt{x^2+1}} = \frac{(1 + \frac{x}{\sqrt{x^2+1}})(\sqrt{x^2+1} - x)}{1} = \sqrt{x^2+1} - x + x - \frac{x^2}{\sqrt{x^2+1}}$$

$$> \frac{1}{\sqrt{x^2+1}}$$