

Skills Card









Assessing wind speed

This is the normal and very useful way of describing wind strength and its effects on sheltered waters.

The scale is from 0 (calm) up to 12 (hurricane). Force 8 is known as Gale Force, but Force 6 is often called a small boat gale. Generally Scout boating should not take place if the local wind is greater than Force 4.

Brought to you by the Scout Team
in conjunction with the Sea Scout
Team



Force	Name	Wind speed (kts)	Appearance at sea	Appearance on land	Appearance at sea
0	Calm	<1	Mirror smooth	Smoke rises vertically	
1	Light air	1 to 3	Ripples on water	Smoke moves but not on a wind vane	
2	Light breeze	4 to 6	Pennant moves. Very small waves.	Felt on face. Leaves rustle	
3	Gentle breeze	7 to 10	Light flag extends, Crests on small waves	Leaves and twigs move, flag extended	
4	Moderate breeze	11 to 16	Small waves with some white horses	Small branches moved, papers lifted	
5	Fresh breeze	17 to 21	Small waves with some white horses	Small trees begin to sway	
6	Strong breeze	22 to 27	*Small craft warning* Large waves white foam crests everywhere	Large branches move, umbrellas difficult to use	
7	Near gale	28 to 32	Sea heaps up with white foam blown into streaks for breakers	Whole trees move, difficult to walk	
8	Gale	33 to 40	Sea very rough and disturbed with well-marked streaks of foam	Twigs break off, very difficult to walk	