Learn how to classify high-level clouds (with a base 6 km or more above the Earth’s surface) using this flow chart from the International Cloud Atlas. The name under each image refers to the cloud’s genus followed by its species, variety or other feature; the code appears in parentheses. This makes it possible to classify the view of the sky more precisely.

START HERE

Is Cirrocumulus predominant?

Cirrocumulus (C-9)
Granular shaped elements, sometimes with small wavelets.

Is Cirrus invading the sky?

Cirrus spissatus (C-2)
Dense patches or entangled sheaves.

Cirrocumulus (C-9)
Granular shaped elements, sometimes with small wavelets.

Is Cirrostratus present?

Cirrostratus nebulosus (C-7)
Light, uniform and nebulous veil, may produce halo phenomena.

Has Cirrus originated from Cumulonimbus?

Cirrus spissatus cumulonimbogenitus (C-3)
Dense remains of the upper part of a Cumulonimbus.

Is Cirrus invading the sky?

Cirrus uncinus / fibratus invading the sky (C-4)
Hooks and filaments, thickening as a whole.

Cirrus uncinus / fibratus invading the sky (C-4)
Hooks and filaments, thickening as a whole.

Cirrostratus (C-8)
Edge of the veil may be clear cut or frayed.

Is Cirrostratus covering the whole sky?

Cirrostratus covering the whole sky

Edge of the veil may be clear cut or frayed.

Is Cirrostratus veil more than 45° in the sky?

Cirrostratus > 45° (C-6)
Cirrostratus or Cirrostratus + Cirrus.

Is Cirrostratus veil constant or decreasing?

Cirrostratus ≤ 45° (C-5)
Cirrostratus or Cirrostratus + Cirrus.

Cirrus fibratus / uncinus (C-1)
Filaments, strands or hooks.

Cirrus fibratus / uncinus (C-1)
Filaments, strands or hooks.