



Figure 1: Cartesian, cylindrical, and spherical coordinate systems.

The differential line elements associated with each of the three coordinate systems considered are, respectively, $d\bar{x} = (dx, dy, dz)$, $d\bar{x} = (dr, r d\theta, dz)$ and $d\bar{x} = (dr, r d\theta, r \sin\theta d\phi)$. The coefficients that premultiply each of the differentials in the above expressions are the so-called scale factors (h_1, h_2, h_3) , which reduce to $(h_1 = 1, h_2 = 1, h_3 = 1)$ for cartesian coordinates, to $(h_1 = 1, h_2 = r, h_3 = 1)$ for cylindrical coordinates, and to $(h_1 = 1, h_2 = r, h_3 = r \sin\theta)$ for spherical coordinates.

The gradient of a scalar function Φ is in general given by

$$\nabla\Phi = \left(\frac{1}{h_1} \frac{\partial\Phi}{\partial x_1}, \frac{1}{h_2} \frac{\partial\Phi}{\partial x_2}, \frac{1}{h_3} \frac{\partial\Phi}{\partial x_3} \right), \quad (1)$$

while its laplacian can be expressed in the form

$$\nabla^2\Phi = \frac{1}{h_1 h_2 h_3} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial x_1} \left(\frac{h_2 h_3}{h_1} \frac{\partial\Phi}{\partial x_1} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_2} \left(\frac{h_1 h_3}{h_2} \frac{\partial\Phi}{\partial x_2} \right) + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_3} \left(\frac{h_1 h_2}{h_3} \frac{\partial\Phi}{\partial x_3} \right) \right]. \quad (2)$$

Similarly, the divergence of a vector function $\mathbf{a} = a_1 \bar{e}_1 + a_2 \bar{e}_2 + a_3 \bar{e}_3$ is

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{a} = \frac{1}{h_1 h_2 h_3} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial x_1} (h_2 h_3 a_1) + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_2} (h_1 h_3 a_2) + \frac{\partial}{\partial x_3} (h_1 h_2 a_3) \right], \quad (3)$$

while its curl is given by

$$\nabla \wedge \mathbf{a} = \frac{1}{h_1 h_2 h_3} \begin{vmatrix} h_1 \bar{e}_1 & h_2 \bar{e}_2 & h_3 \bar{e}_3 \\ \frac{\partial}{\partial x_1} & \frac{\partial}{\partial x_2} & \frac{\partial}{\partial x_3} \\ h_1 a_1 & h_2 a_2 & h_3 a_3 \end{vmatrix} = \frac{1}{h_2 h_3} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial x_2} (h_3 a_3) - \frac{\partial}{\partial x_3} (h_2 a_2) \right] \bar{e}_1 + \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{1}{h_1 h_3} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial x_3} (h_1 a_1) - \frac{\partial}{\partial x_1} (h_3 a_3) \right] \bar{e}_2 + \frac{1}{h_1 h_2} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial x_1} (h_2 a_2) - \frac{\partial}{\partial x_2} (h_1 a_1) \right] \bar{e}_3.$$

Also, the gradient of a vector function produces a tensor according to

$$(\nabla \mathbf{a})_{ii} = \frac{1}{h_i} \frac{\partial a_i}{\partial x_i} + \sum_{k \neq i} \frac{a_k}{h_i h_k} \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial x_k} \quad \text{and} \quad (\nabla \mathbf{a})_{ij} = \frac{1}{h_i} \frac{\partial a_j}{\partial x_i} - \frac{a_i}{h_i h_j} \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial x_j} \quad \text{if } i \neq j, \quad (5)$$

while the divergence of a tensor $\nabla \cdot \bar{\bar{A}}$ gives a vector function of components

$$(\nabla \cdot \bar{\bar{A}})_i = \frac{h_i}{h} \sum_j \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} \left(\frac{h A_{ij}}{h_i h_j} \right) + \sum_j \frac{A_{ij} + A_{ji}}{h_i h_j} \frac{\partial h_i}{\partial x_j} - \sum_j \frac{A_{jj}}{h_i h_j} \frac{\partial h_j}{\partial x_i}, \quad (6)$$

where $h = h_1 h_2 h_3$.

For a constant-density fluid, the viscous stress tensor takes the form

$$\bar{\tau}' = \mu[(\nabla\mathbf{v}) + (\nabla\mathbf{v})^T] \quad (7)$$

Cartesian coordinates

$$\begin{aligned} \tau'_{xx} &= 2\mu \frac{\partial v_x}{\partial x} & \tau'_{xy} &= \mu \left(\frac{\partial v_x}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v_y}{\partial x} \right) \\ \tau'_{yy} &= 2\mu \frac{\partial v_y}{\partial y} & \tau'_{yz} &= \mu \left(\frac{\partial v_y}{\partial z} + \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial y} \right) \\ \tau'_{zz} &= 2\mu \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial z} & \tau'_{zx} &= \mu \left(\frac{\partial v_x}{\partial z} + \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial x} \right) \end{aligned}$$

Cylindrical coordinates

$$\begin{aligned} \tau'_{rr} &= 2\mu \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial r} & \tau'_{r\theta} &= \mu \left[r \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{v_\theta}{r} \right) + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} \right] \\ \tau'_{\theta\theta} &= 2\mu \left(\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \theta} + \frac{v_r}{r} \right) & \tau'_{\theta z} &= \mu \left(\frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial z} + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial \theta} \right) \\ \tau'_{zz} &= 2\mu \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial z} & \tau'_{zr} &= \mu \left(\frac{\partial v_r}{\partial z} + \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial r} \right) \end{aligned}$$

Spherical coordinates

$$\begin{aligned} \tau'_{rr} &= 2\mu \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial r} & \tau'_{r\theta} &= \mu \left[r \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{v_\theta}{r} \right) + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} \right] \\ \tau'_{\theta\theta} &= 2\mu \left(\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \theta} + \frac{v_r}{r} \right) & \tau'_{\theta\phi} &= \mu \left[\frac{\sin \theta}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \left(\frac{v_\phi}{\sin \theta} \right) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \phi} \right] \\ \tau'_{\phi\phi} &= 2\mu \left(\frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial \phi} + \frac{v_r}{r} + \frac{v_\theta \cot \theta}{r} \right) & \tau'_{\phi r} &= \mu \left[\frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \phi} + r \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{v_\phi}{r} \right) \right] \end{aligned}$$

Navier-Stokes equations for ρ and μ constants

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} = 0, \quad \rho \frac{D\mathbf{v}}{Dt} = -\nabla p + \mu \nabla^2 \mathbf{v} + \rho \mathbf{f}_m$$

CARTESIAN COORDINATES (x, y, z)

Continuity equation

$$\frac{\partial v_x}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_y}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial z} = 0$$

Momentum equation

$$\begin{aligned} \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_x}{\partial t} + v_x \frac{\partial v_x}{\partial x} + v_y \frac{\partial v_x}{\partial y} + v_z \frac{\partial v_x}{\partial z} \right) &= -\frac{\partial p}{\partial x} + \mu \left[\frac{\partial^2 v_x}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_x}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_x}{\partial z^2} \right] + \rho f_{m_x} \\ \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_y}{\partial t} + v_x \frac{\partial v_y}{\partial x} + v_y \frac{\partial v_y}{\partial y} + v_z \frac{\partial v_y}{\partial z} \right) &= -\frac{\partial p}{\partial y} + \mu \left[\frac{\partial^2 v_y}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_y}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_y}{\partial z^2} \right] + \rho f_{m_y} \\ \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_z}{\partial t} + v_x \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial x} + v_y \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial y} + v_z \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial z} \right) &= -\frac{\partial p}{\partial z} + \mu \left[\frac{\partial^2 v_z}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_z}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_z}{\partial z^2} \right] + \rho f_{m_z} \end{aligned}$$

CYLINDRICAL COORDINATES (r, θ, z)

Continuity equation

$$\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial r v_r}{\partial r} + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \theta} + \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial z} = 0$$

Momentum equation

$$\begin{aligned} \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_r}{\partial t} + v_r \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial r} + \frac{v_\theta}{r} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} - \frac{v_\theta^2}{r} + v_z \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial z} \right) &= \\ &= -\frac{\partial p}{\partial r} + \mu \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r v_r) \right) + \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial^2 v_r}{\partial \theta^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_r}{\partial z^2} - \frac{2}{r^2} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \theta} \right] + \rho f_{m_r} \\ \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial t} + v_r \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial r} + \frac{v_\theta}{r} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \theta} + \frac{v_r v_\theta}{r} + v_z \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial z} \right) &= \\ &= -\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial p}{\partial \theta} + \mu \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r v_\theta) \right) + \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial^2 v_\theta}{\partial \theta^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_\theta}{\partial z^2} + \frac{2}{r^2} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} \right] + \rho f_{m_\theta} \\ \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_z}{\partial t} + v_r \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial r} + \frac{v_\theta}{r} \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial \theta} + v_z \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial z} \right) &= -\frac{\partial p}{\partial z} + \mu \left[\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(r \frac{\partial v_z}{\partial r} \right) + \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial^2 v_z}{\partial \theta^2} + \frac{\partial^2 v_z}{\partial z^2} \right] + \rho f_{m_z} \end{aligned}$$

SPHERICAL COORDINATES (r, θ, ϕ)

Continuity equation

$$\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r^2 v_r) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (v_\theta \sin \theta) + \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial \phi} = 0$$

Momentum equation

$$\begin{aligned} \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_r}{\partial t} + v_r \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial r} + \frac{v_\theta}{r} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} + \frac{v_\phi}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \phi} - \frac{v_\theta^2 + v_\phi^2}{r} \right) = & -\frac{\partial p}{\partial r} + \mu \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r^2 v_r) \right) + \right. \\ & \left. \frac{1}{r^2 \sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \left(\sin \theta \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} \right) + \frac{1}{r^2 \sin^2 \theta} \frac{\partial^2 v_r}{\partial \phi^2} - \frac{2}{r^2 \sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (v_\theta \sin \theta) - \frac{2}{r^2 \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial \phi} \right] + \rho f_{m_r} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial t} + v_r \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial r} + \frac{v_\theta}{r} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \theta} + \frac{v_\phi}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \phi} + \frac{v_r v_\theta}{r} - \frac{v_\phi^2 \cot \theta}{r} \right) = & -\frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial p}{\partial \theta} + \mu \left[\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(r^2 \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial r} \right) + \right. \\ & \left. \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \left(\frac{1}{\sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (v_\theta \sin \theta) \right) + \frac{1}{r^2 \sin^2 \theta} \frac{\partial^2 v_\theta}{\partial \phi^2} + \frac{2}{r^2} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \theta} - \frac{2 \cot \theta}{r^2 \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial \phi} \right] + \rho f_{m_\theta} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial t} + v_r \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial r} + \frac{v_\theta}{r} \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial \theta} + \frac{v_\phi}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial \phi} + \frac{v_r v_\phi}{r} + \frac{v_\theta v_\phi \cot \theta}{r} \right) = & -\frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \frac{\partial p}{\partial \phi} + \mu \left[\frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \left(r^2 \frac{\partial v_\phi}{\partial r} \right) + \right. \\ & \left. \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \left(\frac{1}{\sin \theta} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (v_\phi \sin \theta) \right) + \frac{1}{r^2 \sin^2 \theta} \frac{\partial^2 v_\phi}{\partial \phi^2} + \frac{2}{r^2 \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_r}{\partial \phi} + \frac{2 \cot \theta}{r^2 \sin \theta} \frac{\partial v_\theta}{\partial \phi} \right] + \rho f_{m_\phi} \end{aligned}$$