



- resources**
- [Resource Library](#)
- [Career Center](#)
- [Advice from an Expert](#)
- [FAQ/Wind Web Tutorial](#)
- [Financing](#)
- [Projects \(US\)](#)
- [Industry Standards](#)
- [Wind Energy Web Links](#)
- [Resources Home](#)

- areas of interest**
- [Online Bookstore](#)
- [AWEA Events Calendar](#)

- Page Tools**
- [Printer-friendly page](#)

resources

**Wind Energy FAQ**

**Basic Principles of Wind Resource Evaluation**

Wind resource evaluation is a critical element in projecting turbine performance at a given site. The energy available in a wind stream is proportional to the cube of its speed, which means that doubling the wind speed increases the available energy by a factor of eight. Furthermore, the wind resource itself is seldom a steady, consistent flow. It varies with the time of day, season, height above ground, and type of terrain. Proper siting in windy locations, away from large obstructions, enhances a wind turbine's performance.

In general, annual average wind speeds of 5 meters per second (11 miles per hour) are required for grid-connected applications. Annual average wind speeds of 3 to 4 m/s (7-9 mph) may be adequate for non-connected electrical and mechanical applications such as battery charging and water pumping. Wind resources exceeding this speed are available in many parts of the world.

**Wind Power Density** is a useful way to evaluate the wind resource available at a potential site. The wind power density, measured in watts per square meter, indicates how much energy is available at the site for conversion by a wind turbine. **Classes of wind power density** for two standard wind measurement heights are listed in the table below. Wind speed generally increases with height above ground.

**Classes of Wind Power Density at 10 m and 50 m<sup>(a)</sup>**

Wind Power Class	10 m (33 ft)		50 m (164 ft)	
	Wind Power Density (W/m <sup>2</sup> )	Speed <sup>(b)</sup> m/s (mph)	Wind Power Density (W/m <sup>2</sup> )	Speed <sup>(b)</sup> m/s (mph)
<b>1</b>	<100	<4.4 (9.8)	<200	<5.6 (12.5)
<b>2</b>	100 - 150	4.4 (9.8)/5.1 (11.5)	200 - 300	5.6 (12.5)/6.4 (14.3)
<b>3</b>	150 - 200	5.1 (11.5)/5.6 (12.5)	300 - 400	6.4 (14.3)/7.0 (15.7)
<b>4</b>	200 - 250	5.6 (12.5)/6.0 (13.4)	400 - 500	7.0 (15.7)/7.5 (16.8)
<b>5</b>	250 - 300	6.0 (13.4)/6.4 (14.3)	500 - 600	7.5 (16.8)/8.0 (17.9)
<b>6</b>	300 - 400	6.4 (14.3)/7.0 (15.7)	600 - 800	8.0 (17.9)/8.8 (19.7)
<b>7</b>	>400	>7.0 (15.7)	>800	>8.8 (19.7)

(a) Vertical extrapolation of wind speed based on the 1/7 power law

(b) Mean wind speed is based on the Rayleigh speed distribution of equivalent wind power density. Wind speed is for standard sea-level conditions. To maintain the same power density, speed increases 3%/1000 m (5%/5000 ft) of elevation. (from the Battelle Wind Energy Resource Atlas)

In general, sites with a Wind Power Class rating of 4 or higher are now preferred for large scale wind plants. Research conducted by industry and the U.S. government is expanding the applications of grid-connected wind technology to areas with more moderate wind speeds.

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- [Residential Applications](#)
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- [Property Values](#)
- [Wind Resource Evaluation](#)
- [Wind Resource Maps](#)
- [Small Wind Turbine Manufacturers](#)
- [State-by-State Info](#)
- [Resource Maps](#)
- [Power in the Wind](#)
- [Wind Turbine Power Production](#)
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➔ AWEA Wind Class  
Need 11 mph for grid connected