

# Chapter 4: Electrostatic Fields in Matter

4.1 Polarization

4.2 The Field of a Polarized Object

4.3 The Electric Displacement

4.4 Self-Consistency of Electric Field  
and Polarization; Linear Dielectrics

# 4.1 Polarization

4.1.1 Dielectrics

4.1.2 Induced Dipoles and Polarizability

4.1.3 Alignment of polar molecules

4.1.4 Polarization and Susceptibility

# 4.1 Polarization

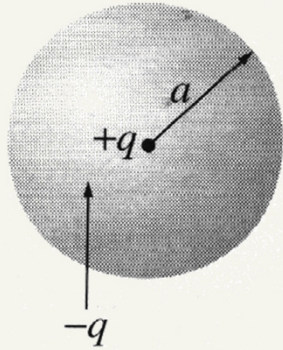
## Dielectrics

According to their response to electrostatic field, most materials belong to two classes:

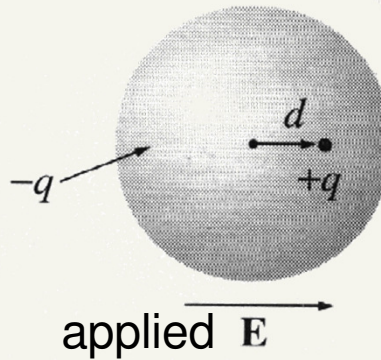
- conductors: charges free to move in the material
- insulators (or dielectrics): all charges are attached to specific atoms or molecules.

Stretching and rotating are the two principle mechanisms by which electric fields can distort the charge distribution of a dielectric atom or molecule.

## 4.1.2 Induced Dipoles and Polarizability



A neutral atom



Polarized atom

Induced dipole

$$p = qd$$

$$\vec{p} = \alpha \vec{E}$$

Atomic polarizability

A simple estimate:

The field at a distance  $d$  from the center of a uniform charge sphere

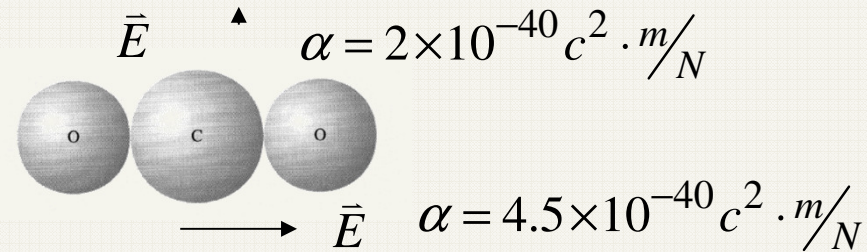
$$E_e = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{q_{in}}{d^2} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{q}{d^2} \frac{d^3}{a^3} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{qd}{a^3}$$

At equilibrium,

$$E = E_e = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{qd}{a^3} = \frac{p}{4\pi\epsilon_0 a^3}$$

$$\alpha = 4\pi\epsilon_0 a^3 = 3\epsilon_0 v \quad (v \text{ is the volume of the atom})$$

In case of a molecule it is more complex, their polarization may not be isotropic:



Generally:

$$\vec{P} = \alpha_{\perp} \vec{E}_{\perp} + \alpha_{\parallel} \vec{E}_{\parallel}$$

the most general linear relation

$$\vec{P} = \vec{\alpha} \cdot \vec{E} \quad (\vec{\alpha} \text{ is polarizability tensor})$$

or in (x,y,z)

$$P_x = \alpha_{xx} E_x + \alpha_{xy} E_y + \alpha_{xz} E_z$$

$$P_y = \alpha_{yx} E_x + \alpha_{yy} E_y + \alpha_{yz} E_z$$

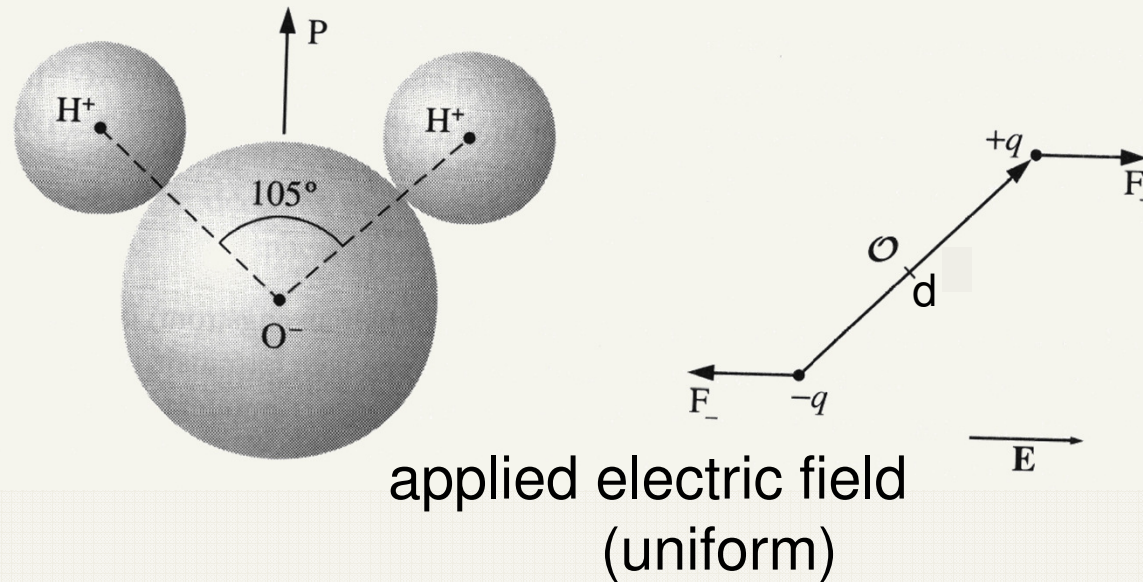
$$P_z = \alpha_{zx} E_x + \alpha_{zy} E_y + \alpha_{zz} E_z$$

$\alpha_{ij}$  depend on the orientation of the axis you chose.

It's possible to select axes such that  $\alpha_{ij} = 0$  for  $i \neq j$

## 4.1.3 Alignment of Polar Molecules

Polar molecules have built-in, permanent dipole moments



$$\begin{aligned}\text{Torque } \vec{N} &= (\vec{r}_+ \times \vec{F}_+) + (\vec{r}_- \times \vec{F}_-) \\ &= \left[ \left( \frac{\vec{d}}{2} \right) \times (q\vec{E}) \right] + \left[ \left( -\frac{\vec{d}}{2} \right) \times (-q\vec{E}) \right] = q\vec{d} \times \vec{E} \\ \boxed{\vec{N} = \vec{P} \times \vec{E}} \quad & (q\vec{d} = \vec{P})\end{aligned}$$

## 4.1.3

If the applied electric field is nonuniform,  
the total force is not zero.

$$\vec{F} = \vec{F}_+ + \vec{F}_- = q(\vec{E}_+ - \vec{E}_-) = q(\Delta\vec{E})$$

for short dipole,

$$dE_x = (\nabla E_x) \cdot \vec{d} = d_x \frac{\partial E_x}{\partial x}$$

$$dE_y = (\nabla E_y) \cdot \vec{d} = d_y \frac{\partial E_y}{\partial y}$$

$$dE_z = (\nabla E_z) \cdot \vec{d} = d_z \frac{\partial E_z}{\partial z}$$

$$d\vec{E} = (\vec{d} \cdot \nabla) \vec{E}$$

$$\vec{F} = (\vec{P} \cdot \nabla) \vec{E}$$



## 4.1.4 Polarization and Susceptibility

The polarization of a polarized dielectric

$\vec{P} \equiv$  dipole moment per unit volume

$\vec{P} = \epsilon_0 \vec{X}_e \cdot \vec{E}$        $\vec{X}_e$  is electric susceptibility tensor

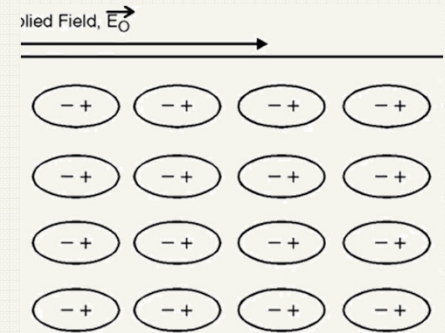
$$P_x = \epsilon_0 (X_{e_{xx}} E_x + X_{e_{xy}} E_y + X_{e_{xz}} E_z)$$

$$P_y = \epsilon_0 (X_{e_{yx}} E_x + X_{e_{yy}} E_y + X_{e_{yz}} E_z)$$

$$P_z = \epsilon_0 (X_{e_{zx}} E_x + X_{e_{zy}} E_y + X_{e_{zz}} E_z)$$

for linear dielectric

$\vec{P} = \epsilon_0 \chi_e \vec{E}$        $\chi_e$  is electric susceptibility





## **4.2 The Field of a Polarized Object**

4.2.1 Bound charges

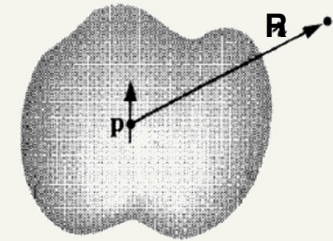
4.2.2 Physical Interpretation of Bound Charge

4.2.3 The Field Inside a Dielectric

## 4.2 The Field of a Polarized Object

### Bound charges:

Divide the material into infinitesimal dipoles and sum up



$$\begin{aligned} V &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \vec{P} \cdot \frac{\hat{R}}{R^2} d\tau = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \vec{P} \cdot \nabla \left( \frac{1}{R} \right) d\tau \\ &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left[ \int_V \nabla \cdot \left( \frac{1}{R} \vec{P} \right) d\tau - \int_V \frac{1}{R} (\nabla \cdot \vec{P}) d\tau \right] \\ &= \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{surf} \frac{1}{R} \vec{P} \cdot d\vec{a} - \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \frac{1}{R} (\nabla \cdot \vec{P}) d\tau \end{aligned}$$

bound charges:	surface charge	$\sigma_b = \vec{P} \cdot \hat{n}$
	volume charge	$\rho_b = -\nabla \cdot P$

$$V = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_{surf} \frac{1}{R} \sigma_b da + \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_V \frac{1}{R} \rho_b d\tau$$

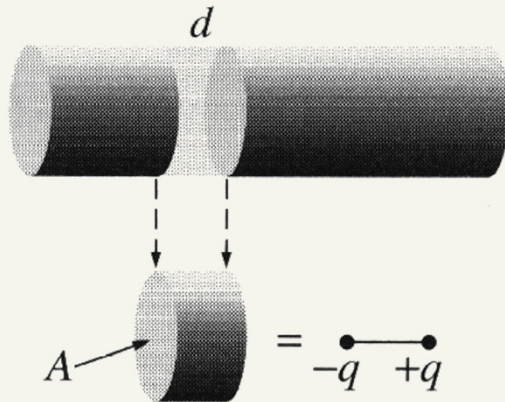
## 4.2.2 Physical Interpretation of Bound Charge

$\rho_b$  and  $\sigma_b$  represent perfectly genuine accumulations of charge.

for uniformly distributed dipoles



for a uniform polarization and perpendicular cut



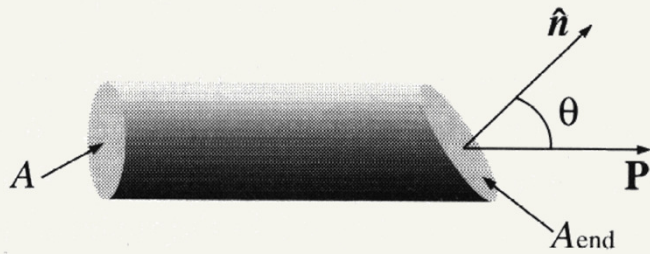
$$\text{dipole moment} = P(Ad) = qd$$

$$q = PA$$

$$\sigma_b = \frac{q}{A} = P$$

## 4.2.2 (2)

for a uniform polarization and oblique cut



$$q = PA$$

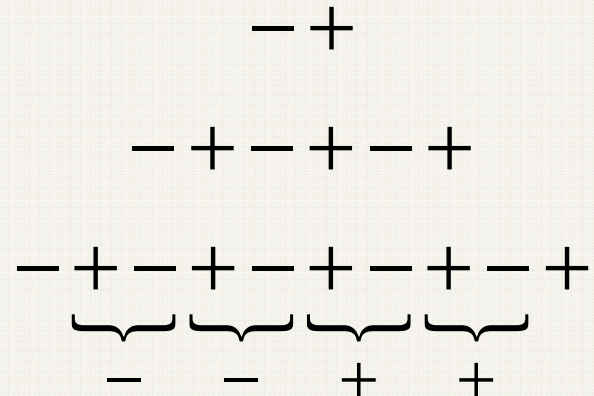
$$\sigma_b = \frac{q}{A_{end}} = P \cdot \cos \theta = \vec{P} \cdot \hat{n}$$

$$\sigma_b = \vec{P} \cdot \hat{n} \quad \rho_b = ?$$

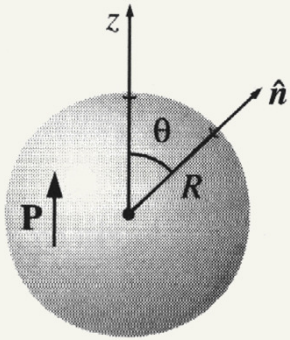
If the polarization is nonuniform ,

$$\delta q = -\frac{\delta P}{\delta x} \quad \rho_b d\tau = -\frac{\delta}{\delta x} (P d\tau)$$

In 3D this is  $\rho_b = -\nabla \cdot \vec{P}$



**Example: Find the field of a uniformly polarized sphere of radius R**



$$\rho_b = \nabla \cdot \vec{P} = 0$$

$$\sigma_b = \vec{P} \cdot \hat{n} = P \cos \theta$$

Ex.9 of chapter 3

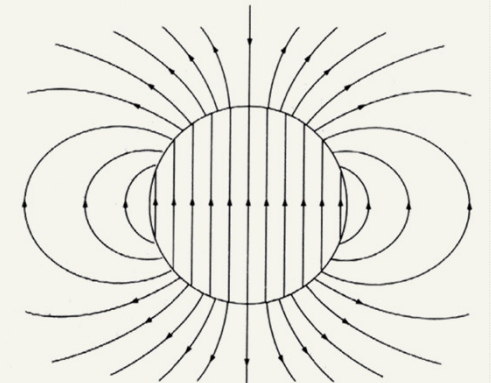
$$V(r, \theta) = \begin{cases} \frac{P}{3\epsilon_0} r \cos \theta & \text{for } r \leq R \\ \frac{P}{3\epsilon_0} \frac{R^3}{r^2} \cos \theta & \text{for } r \geq R \end{cases}$$

$$\because r \cos \theta = z$$

for  $r \leq R$   $V = \frac{P}{3\epsilon_0} z$

$$\vec{E} = -\nabla V = -\frac{P}{3\epsilon_0} \hat{z} = -\frac{1}{3\epsilon_0} \vec{P}$$

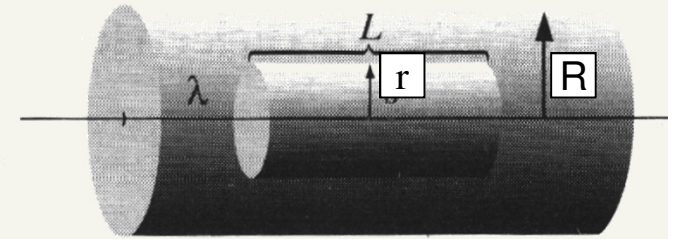
for  $r \geq R$   $V = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{4\pi}{3} R^3 \frac{1}{r^2} \vec{p} \cdot \hat{r}$



Similar to a potential of a dipole moment  $\vec{p} = \frac{4\pi}{3} R^3 \vec{P}$



Example: A long wire with linear charge  $\lambda$  is covered with an insulation of radius  $a$ . Find the electrical displacement.



$$\oint_{\text{surface}} \vec{D} \cdot d\vec{a} = Q_{\text{enc.}}$$

$$D \cdot (2\pi rL) = \lambda L$$

$$\vec{D} = \frac{\lambda}{2\pi r} \hat{r}$$

inside  $\vec{E} = ?$   $\because$  need to know  $\vec{P}$

$$\text{outside } \vec{E} = \frac{1}{\epsilon_0} \vec{D} = \frac{\lambda}{2\pi\epsilon_0 r} \hat{r} \quad \text{for } r > R$$



## 4.3.2 A Deceptive Parallel

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{E} = \frac{\rho}{\epsilon_0} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \vec{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int \rho \frac{\hat{R}}{R^2} d\tau$$

$\Downarrow$   
 $\nabla \times \vec{E} = 0$

since  $\nabla \times \vec{A} = 0$  this solution is unique

(Helmholtz theorem:  $\vec{V}(\mathbf{r}) = \nabla(\nabla \cdot \vec{V}(\mathbf{r})) - \nabla \times (\nabla \times \vec{V}(\mathbf{r}))$ )

But  $\nabla \times \vec{D} = \epsilon_0(\nabla \times \vec{E}) + \nabla \times \vec{P}$      $\nabla \times \vec{P}$  is not always zero

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{D} = \rho_f \quad \text{but} \quad \vec{D} \neq \frac{1}{4\pi} \int \rho_f \frac{\hat{R}}{R^2} d\tau$$

And in general there is no potential for D (cannot be written as a gradient of a scalar)

# Permittivity, Dielectric Constant:

for linear dielectrics  $\vec{P} = \epsilon_0 \chi_e \vec{E}$

$\chi_e$  Electric susceptibility

$$\vec{D} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \vec{P} = \epsilon_0 \vec{E} + \epsilon_0 \chi_e \vec{E} = \epsilon_0 (1 + \chi_e) \vec{E}$$

$$\vec{D} = \epsilon \vec{E}$$

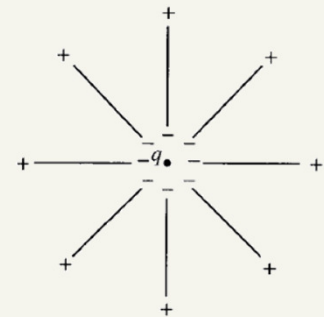
$$\epsilon = \epsilon_0 (1 + \chi_e)$$

permittivity  $\uparrow$   $\uparrow$  permittivity of free space

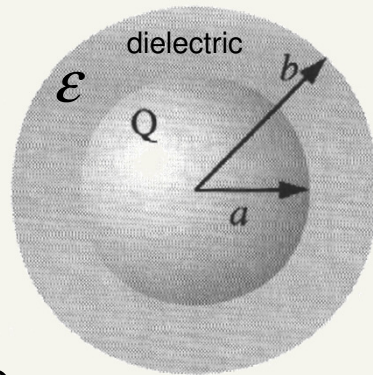
dielectric constant or relative permittivity  $\epsilon_r = 1 + \chi_e = \frac{\epsilon}{\epsilon_0}$

$$\rho_b = -\nabla \cdot \vec{P} = -\nabla \cdot \left( \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi_e}{\epsilon} \vec{D} \right) = -\left( \frac{\chi_e}{1 + \chi_e} \right) \nabla \cdot \vec{D} = -\left( \frac{\chi_e}{1 + \chi_e} \right) \rho_f$$

$$\rho = \rho_b + \rho_f = \left( 1 - \frac{\chi_e}{1 + \chi_e} \right) \rho_f = \frac{\rho_f}{1 + \chi_e} = \frac{\rho_f}{\epsilon_r}$$



Example: A metal sphere of radius  $a$  has a charge  $Q$ . It is surrounded by a liner dielectric material of permittivity  $\epsilon$ . Find the potential at the center, and bound charges of the medium ( $\rho_b, \sigma_b$ ).



$$V_{center} = ?$$

$$\vec{E} = \vec{P} = \vec{D} = 0 \quad \text{for } r < a$$

$$\vec{D} = \frac{Q}{4\pi r^2} \hat{r} \quad \text{for } r > a$$

$$\vec{E} = \begin{cases} \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon r^2} \hat{r} & \text{for } b > r > a \\ \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} \hat{r} & \text{for } r > b \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{aligned} V_{center} = V_a &= -\int_{\infty}^a \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{\ell} = -\int_{\infty}^b \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r^2} dr - \int_b^a \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon r^2} dr \\ &= \frac{Q}{4\pi} \left( \frac{1}{\epsilon_0 b} + \frac{1}{\epsilon a} - \frac{1}{\epsilon b} \right) \end{aligned}$$

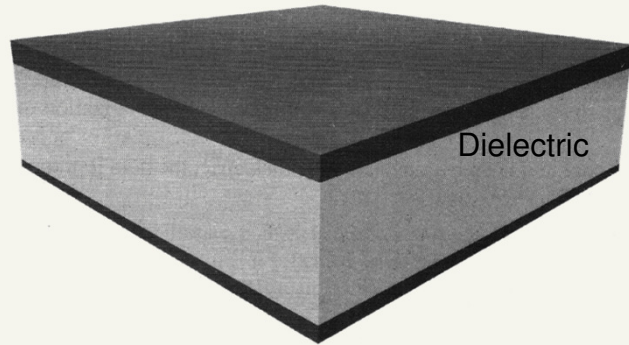
$$\vec{P} = \epsilon_0 \chi_e \vec{E} = \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi_e Q}{4\pi \epsilon r^2} \hat{r} \quad \text{for } b > r > a$$

$$\rho_b = -\nabla \cdot \vec{P} = 0$$

$$(\because \nabla \cdot \vec{P} = \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} r^2 P_r + \dots = 0)$$

$$\sigma_b = \vec{P} \cdot \hat{n} = \begin{cases} \frac{\epsilon_0 \chi_e Q}{4\pi \epsilon b^2} & \text{at } r = b \\ -\frac{\epsilon_0 \chi_e Q}{4\pi \epsilon a^2} & \text{at } r = a \end{cases}$$

Example: A parallel plate capacitor is filled with an insulating material of dielectric constant  $\epsilon$ . What is the effect of the dielectric on its capacitance?



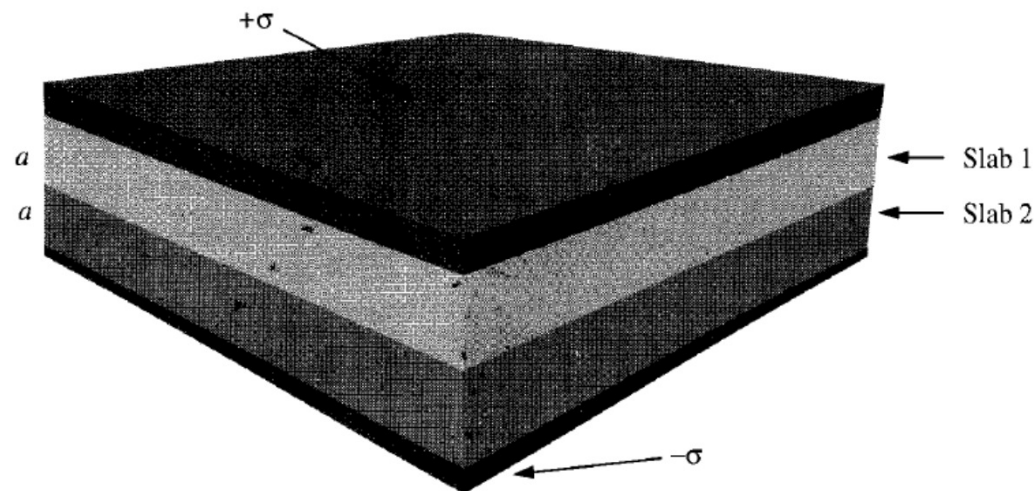
without dielectric  $V_{vac} = E \cdot d$

the dielectric reduces E to  $\frac{E}{\epsilon_r}$  so  $V_{d.e.} = \frac{E}{\epsilon} d$

since  $C = \frac{Q}{V}$       $C_{d.e.} = \epsilon_r C_{vac}$

**Problem 4.18** The space between the plates of a parallel-plate capacitor (Fig. 4.24) is filled with two slabs of linear dielectric material. Each slab has thickness  $a$ , so the total distance between the plates is  $2a$ . Slab 1 has a dielectric constant of 2, and slab 2 has a dielectric constant of 1.5. The free charge density on the top plate is  $\sigma$  and on the bottom plate  $-\sigma$ .

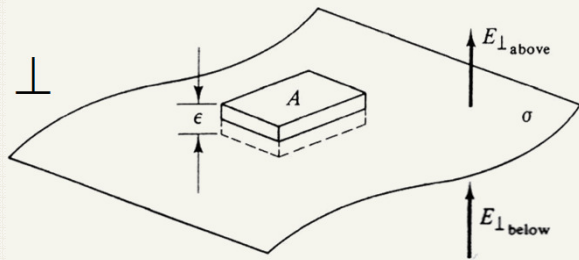
- (a) Find the electric displacement  $\mathbf{D}$  in each slab.
- (b) Find the electric field  $\mathbf{E}$  in each slab.
- (c) Find the polarization  $\mathbf{P}$  in each slab.
- (d) Find the potential difference between the plates.
- (e) Find the location and amount of all bound charge.
- (f) Now that you know all the charge (free and bound), recalculate the field in each slab, and confirm your answer to (b).





# Boundary Conditions:

Field normal ( $\perp$ ) to surface:

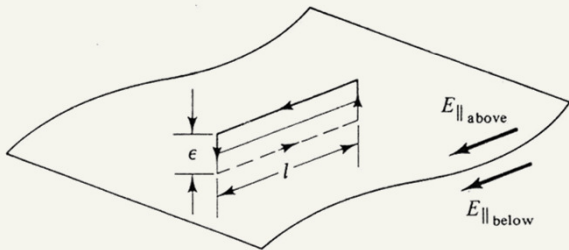


$$\oint_{\text{surface}} \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{a} = \frac{Q_{enc}}{\epsilon_0} = \frac{\sigma A}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$= E_{\perp above} \cdot A - E_{\perp below} \cdot A$$

$$E_{\perp above} - E_{\perp below} = \frac{\sigma}{\epsilon_0}$$

Field parallel ( $\parallel$ ) to surface:



$$\oint \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{l} = 0 \quad (\text{ie. } \nabla \times \vec{E} = 0)$$

$$E_{\text{above}} = E_{\text{below}}$$

$$\boxed{E_{\parallel above} - E_{\parallel below}}$$

In case of D above conditions become:

$$D_{\perp above} - D_{\perp below} = \sigma_f \Rightarrow \epsilon_{above} \frac{\partial V_{above}}{\partial n} - \epsilon_{below} \frac{\partial V_{below}}{\partial n} = \sigma_f$$

$$\boxed{D_{\parallel above} - D_{\parallel below} = P_{\parallel above} - P_{\parallel below}}$$

$$\boxed{V_{above} = V_{below}}$$



Example: Dielectric sphere in a uniform electric field, find the electric field inside the sphere.

$$V_{in} = V_{out} \quad \text{at } r = R$$

$$\epsilon \frac{\partial V_{in}}{\partial r} = \epsilon_{out} \frac{\partial V_{out}}{\partial r} \quad \text{at } r = R \text{ (no free charges at the surface)}$$

$$V_{out} \rightarrow -E_0 z = -E_0 \cos \theta \quad \text{for } r \gg R$$

inside the sphere: 
$$V(r, \theta) = \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} A_l r^l P_l(\cos \theta)$$

outside the sphere: 
$$V(r, \theta) = -E_0 R \cos \theta + \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{B_l}{r^{l+1}} P_l(\cos \theta)$$

boundary condition (i) 
$$\sum_{l=0}^{\infty} A_l R^l P_l(\cos \theta) = -E_0 R \cos \theta + \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{B_l}{R^{l+1}} P_l(\cos \theta)$$

so 
$$A_1 R = -E_0 R + \frac{B_1}{R^2} \quad \text{and} \quad A_l R^l = \frac{B_l}{R^{l+1}} \text{ for } l \neq 1$$

boundary condition (i) 
$$\sum_{l=0}^{\infty} A_l R^l P_l(\cos \theta) = -E_0 R \cos \theta + \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{B_l}{R^{l+1}} P_l(\cos \theta)$$

so  $A_1 R = -E_0 R + \frac{B_1}{R^2}$  and  $A_l R^l = \frac{B_l}{R^{l+1}}$  for  $l \neq 1$

boundary condition (ii) 
$$\epsilon_r \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} l A_l R^{l-1} P_l(\cos \theta) = -E_0 \cos \theta - \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \frac{(l+1) B_l}{R^{l+1}} P_l(\cos \theta)$$

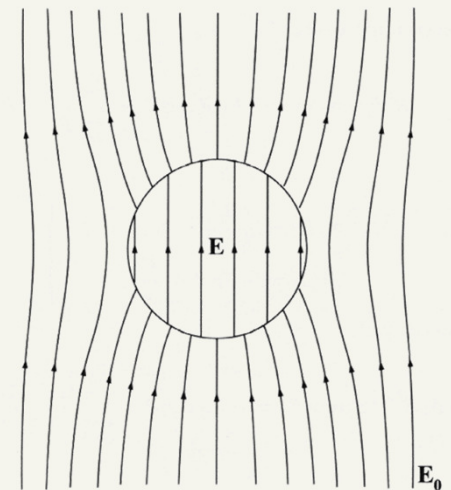
so  $\epsilon_r A_1 = -E_0 - \frac{2B_1}{R^3}$  and  $\epsilon_r l A_l R^{l-1} = -\frac{(l+1) B_l}{R^{l+2}}$  for  $l \neq 1$

$$\epsilon_r l A_l R^l = -\frac{(l+1) B_l}{R^{l+1}} \Rightarrow \epsilon_r l = -(l+1) \text{ for } l \neq 1$$

this can not be true, so  $A_l = B_l = 0$  for  $l \neq 1$ ;

$$A_1 = -\frac{3E_0}{\epsilon_r + 2} r \cos \theta, \quad A_1 = \frac{\epsilon_r - 1}{\epsilon_r + 2} R^3 E_0$$

$$V_{in}(r, \theta) = -\frac{3E_0}{\epsilon_r + 2} r \cos \theta = -\frac{3E_0}{\epsilon_r + 2} z \Rightarrow \vec{E}(r, \theta) = \frac{3\vec{E}_0}{\epsilon_r + 2}$$



## 4.4.3 Energy in a Dielectric System

Energy of a charged capacitor  $W = \frac{1}{2} CV^2$

If the capacitor is filled with a dielectric  $C = \epsilon_r C_{vac}$

So the stored energy should increase by the same factor:

energy stored in any electrostatic system (vacuum)  $W = \frac{\epsilon_0}{2} \int E^2 d\tau$

with linear dielectric  $W = \epsilon_r \left( \frac{\epsilon_0}{2} \int E^2 d\tau \right) = \frac{1}{2} \int \vec{D} \cdot \vec{E} d\tau$

which suggests the energy in the dielectric is  $= \frac{1}{2} \int \vec{D} \cdot \vec{E} d\tau$

### 4.4.3 Energy in Dielectric media (formal proof)

Suppose we are gradually building up charge in a dielectric medium

$$\begin{aligned}
 \delta W &= \int (\delta \rho_f) V d\tau & \nabla \cdot \bar{D} = \rho_f &\Rightarrow \Delta \rho_f = \nabla \cdot \Delta \bar{D} \\
 &= \int (\nabla \cdot \delta \bar{D}) V d\tau & \nabla \cdot (\delta \bar{D} V) &= (\nabla \cdot \delta \bar{D}) V + \delta \bar{D} \cdot (\nabla V) \\
 &= \int \nabla \cdot (\delta \bar{D} V) d\tau - \int \delta \bar{D} \cdot \nabla V d\tau \\
 &= \int_s \delta \bar{D} V \cdot d\bar{a} + \int \delta \bar{D} \cdot \bar{E} d\tau \\
 &\quad \swarrow \text{or } S \rightarrow \infty
 \end{aligned}$$

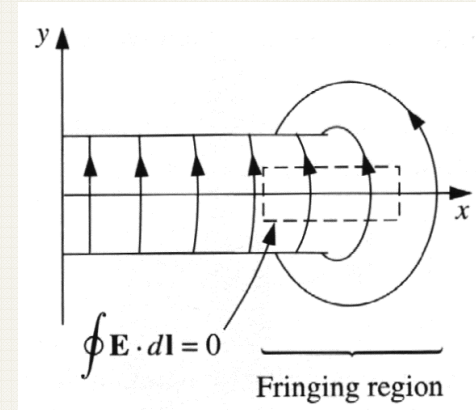
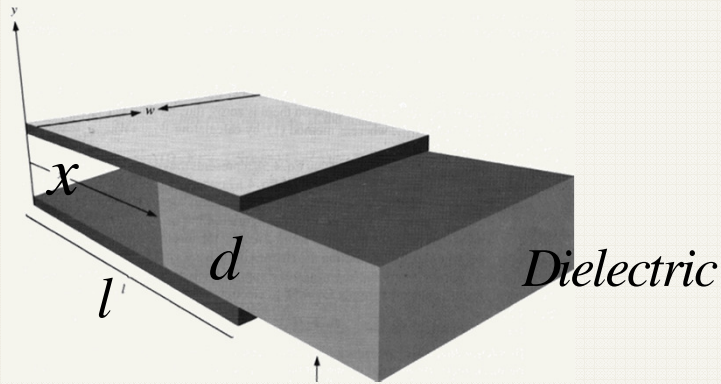
for linear dielectric,  $\bar{D} = \epsilon \bar{E} \Rightarrow \delta \bar{D} \cdot \bar{E} = \delta \epsilon \bar{E} \cdot \bar{E} = \frac{1}{2} \delta(\epsilon E^2) = \frac{1}{2} \delta(\bar{D} \cdot \bar{E})$

$$= \int \delta \left( \frac{1}{2} \bar{D} \cdot \bar{E} \right) d\tau$$

$$= \delta \left[ \frac{1}{2} \int \bar{D} \cdot \bar{E} d\tau \right]$$

$$\therefore W = \frac{1}{2} \int \bar{D} \cdot \bar{E} d\tau$$

## 4.4.4 Forces on dielectrics



with  $Q$  constant  $dW = F_{ex} dx$

$$W = \frac{1}{2} CV^2 = \frac{1}{2} \frac{Q^2}{C} \quad \vec{F} = -F_{ex} = -\frac{dW}{ds} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{Q^2}{C^2} \frac{dC}{dx} = \frac{1}{2} V^2 \frac{dC}{dx}$$

$$C = \frac{Q}{V} = \frac{\epsilon A}{d} = \frac{\epsilon_0 w}{d} (\epsilon_r \cdot l - \chi_e x) \Rightarrow \frac{dC}{dx} = -\frac{\epsilon_0 \chi_e w}{d}$$

$$\vec{F} = -\frac{\epsilon_0 \chi_e w}{2d} V^2 \quad \text{note we used} \quad W = \frac{1}{2} \frac{Q^2}{C} \quad \text{not} \quad W = \frac{1}{2} CV^2$$

If  $V$  is kept constant:

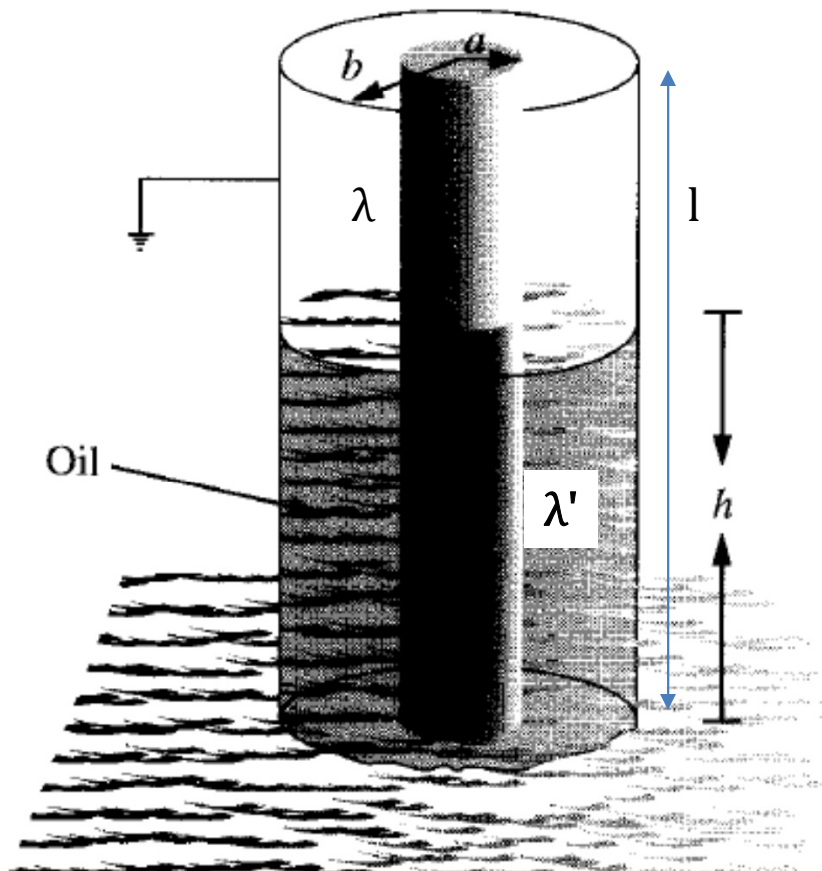
If  $W = \frac{1}{2}CV^2$  used  $\vec{F} = -F_{ex} = -\frac{dW}{dx} = -\frac{1}{2}V^2 \frac{dC}{dx}$  wrong sign

The reason is to keep  $V$  constant the battery must do work.  
So that has to be taken in to account

$$dW = F_{ex}dx + VdQ$$

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{F} &= -F_{ex} = -\frac{dW}{dx} + V \frac{dQ}{dx} \\ W = \frac{1}{2}CV^2 &\Rightarrow &= -\frac{1}{2}V^2 \frac{dC}{dx} + V^2 \frac{dC}{dx} \\ &= \frac{1}{2}V^2 \frac{dC}{dx} \quad \text{now with correct sign/direction} \end{aligned}$$

**Problem 4.28** Two long coaxial cylindrical metal tubes (inner radius  $a$ , outer radius  $b$ ) stand vertically in a tank of dielectric oil (susceptibility  $\chi_e$ , mass density  $\rho$ ). The inner one is maintained at potential  $V$ , and the outer one is grounded (Fig. 4.32). To what height ( $h$ ) does the oil rise in the space between the tubes?



Hint: find the capacitance of tube first