

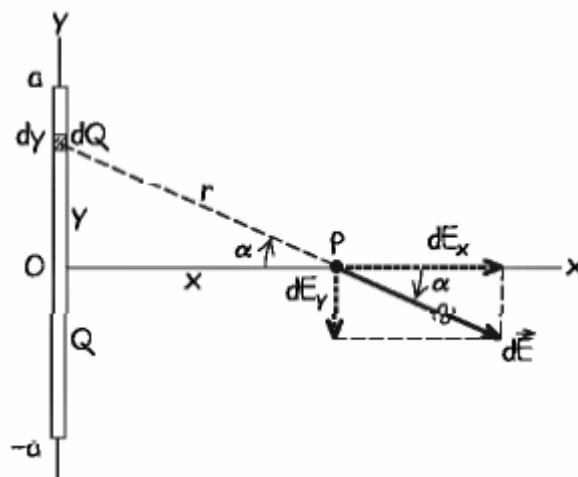
Dear student,

Here I am solving another related problem for you, obtaining the same result. You should keep in mind the formulae of charge distribution per unit length, area and surface as indicated in handouts. In your present example many steps are ignored as in detail these steps re mentioned in earlier examples. Solve the first the 1st two examples before solving it. For detail solution click here

Regards

Example 1

Positive electric charge Q is distributed uniformly along a line with length $2a$, lying along the y -axis between $y = -a$ and $y = +a$. (This might represent one of the charged rods in Fig. 1.) Find the electric field at point P on the x -axis at a distance x from the origin.



Our sketch for this problem.

Fig 1

Figure 1 shows the situation. We need to find the electric field at P as a function of the coordinate x . The x -axis is the perpendicular bisector of the charged line,

We divide the line charge into infinitesimal segments, each of which acts as a point charge; let the length of a typical segment at height y be dy . If the charge is distributed uniformly, the linear charge density λ at any point on the line is equal to $Q/2a$ (the total charge divided by the total length). Hence the charge dQ in a segment of length dy is

$$dQ = \lambda dy = \frac{Q dy}{2a}$$

The distance r from this segment to P is $(x^2 + y^2)^{1/2}$, so the magnitude of field dE at P due to this segment is

$$dE = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{dQ}{r^2} = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{dy}{2a(x^2 + y^2)}$$

We represent this field in terms of its x - and y -components:

$$dE_x = dE \cos\alpha \quad dE_y = -dE \sin\alpha$$

We note that $\sin\alpha = y/(x^2 + y^2)^{1/2}$ and $\cos\alpha = x/(x^2 + y^2)^{1/2}$; combining these with the expression for dE , we find

$$dE_x = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{x dy}{2a(x^2 + y^2)^{3/2}}$$

$$dE_y = -\frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{y dy}{2a(x^2 + y^2)^{3/2}}$$

To find the total field components E_x and E_y , we integrate these expressions, noting that to include all of Q , we must integrate from $y = -a$ to $y = +a$. We invite you to work out the details of the integration; an integral table is helpful. The final results are

$$E_x = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{Qx}{2a} \int_{-a}^a \frac{dy}{(x^2 + y^2)^{3/2}} = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{1}{x\sqrt{x^2 + a^2}}$$

$$E_y = -\frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{Q}{2a} \int_{-a}^a \frac{y dy}{(x^2 + y^2)^{3/2}} = 0$$

or, in vector form,

$$\vec{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{Q}{x\sqrt{x^2 + a^2}} \hat{i}$$

To explore our result, let's first see what happens in the limit that x is much larger than a . Then we can neglect a in the denominator $\vec{E} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{Q}{x^2} \hat{i}$

This means that if point P is very far from the line charge in comparison to the length of the line, the field at P is the same as that of a point charge.

To further explore our exact result for \vec{E} , let's express it in terms of the linear charge $\lambda = Q/2a$. Substituting $Q = 2a\lambda$ and simplifying, we get

$$\vec{E} = \frac{1}{2\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{\lambda}{x\sqrt{(x^2/a^2) + 1}} \hat{i}$$

Now we can answer the question: What is \vec{E} at a distance x from a very long line of charge? To find the answer we take the *limit* as a becomes very large. In this limit, the term x^2/a^2 in the denominator becomes much smaller than unity and can be thrown away. We are left with

$$\vec{E} = \frac{\lambda}{2\pi\epsilon_0 x} \hat{i}$$

The field magnitude depends only on the distance of point P from the line of charge. So at any point P at a perpendicular distance r from the line in any direction, \vec{E} has magnitude

$$E = \frac{\lambda}{2\pi\epsilon_0 r} \quad (\text{infinite line of charge})$$

Thus the electric field due to an infinitely long line of charge is proportional to $1/r$ rather than to $1/r^2$ as for a point charge. The direction of \vec{E} is radially outward from the line if λ is positive and radially inward if λ is negative.

Regards