**Biot–Savart's law** states that the magnetic field intensity dH produced at a point P, as shown in Figure 7.1, by the differential current element I dl is proportional to the product I dl and the sine of the angle  $\alpha$  between the element and the line joining P to the element and is inversely proportional to the square of the distance R between P and the element.

That is,

$$dH \propto \frac{I \, dl \, \sin \, \alpha}{R^2} \tag{7.1}$$

or

$$dH = \frac{kI \, dl \sin \alpha}{R^2} \tag{7.2}$$

where k is the constant of proportionality. In SI units,  $k = 1/4\pi$ , so eq. (7.2) becomes

$$dH = \frac{I \, dl \sin \alpha}{4\pi R^2} \tag{7.3}$$

From the definition of cross product in eq. (1.21), it is easy to notice that eq. (7.3) is better put in vector form as

$$d\mathbf{H} = \frac{I d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{a}_R}{4\pi R^2} = \frac{I d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{R}}{4\pi R^3}$$
 (7.4)

where  $R = |\mathbf{R}|$  and  $\mathbf{a}_R = \mathbf{R}/R$ . Thus the direction of  $d\mathbf{H}$  can be determined by the right-hand rule with the right-hand thumb pointing in the direction of the current, the right-hand fingers encircling the wire in the direction of  $d\mathbf{H}$  as shown in Figure 7.2(a). Alternatively, we can use the right-handed screw rule to determine the direction of  $d\mathbf{H}$ : with the screw placed along the wire and pointed in the direction of current flow, the direction of advance of the screw is the direction of  $d\mathbf{H}$  as in Figure 7.2(b).

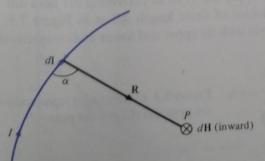


Figure 7.1 magnetic field  $d\mathbf{H}$  at P due to current element  $I d\mathbf{l}$ .



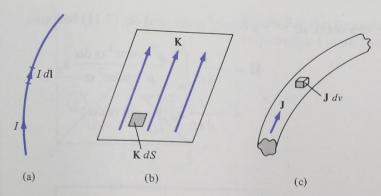


Figure 7.4 Current distributions: (a) line current, (b) surface current, (c) volume current.

 $\alpha_2$  and  $\alpha_1$  at P, the point at which **H** is to be determined. Particular note should be taken of this assumption as the formula to be derived will have to be applied accordingly. If we consider the contribution d **H** at P due to an element d **l** at (0, 0, z),

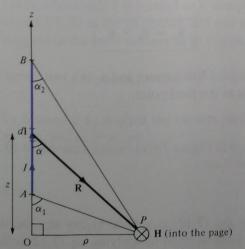
$$d\mathbf{H} = \frac{I\,d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{R}}{4\pi R^3} \tag{7.9}$$

But  $d\mathbf{l} = dz \, \mathbf{a}_z$  and  $\mathbf{R} = \rho \mathbf{a}_\rho - z \mathbf{a}_z$ , so

$$d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{R} = \rho \, dz \, \mathbf{a}_{\phi} \tag{7.10}$$

Hence.

$$\mathbf{H} = \int \frac{I\rho \, dz}{4\pi [\rho^2 + z^2]^{3/2}} \, \mathbf{a}_{\phi} \tag{7.11}$$



**Figure 7.5** Field at point *P* due to a straight filamentary conductor.

Letting  $z = \rho \cot \alpha$ ,  $dz = -\rho \csc^2 \alpha d\alpha$ , and eq. (7.11) becomes

$$\mathbf{H} = -\frac{1}{4\pi} \int_{\alpha_1}^{\alpha_2} \frac{\rho^2 \csc^2 \alpha \, d\alpha}{\rho^3 \csc^3 \alpha} \, \mathbf{a}_{\phi}$$
$$= -\frac{I}{4\pi\rho} \, \mathbf{a}_{\phi} \int_{\alpha_1}^{\alpha_2} \sin \alpha \, d\alpha$$

or

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{I}{4\pi\rho} (\cos\alpha_2 - \cos\alpha_1) \mathbf{a}_{\phi}$$
 (7.12)

This expression is generally applicable for any straight filamentary conductor of finite length. Notice from eq. (7.12) that **H** is always along the unit vector  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  (i.e., along concentric circular paths) irrespective of the length of the wire or the point of interest P. As a special case, when the conductor is *semiinfinite* (with respect to P) so that point A is now at O(0, 0, 0) while B is at  $(0, 0, \infty)$ ;  $\alpha_1 = 90^{\circ}$ ,  $\alpha_2 = 0^{\circ}$ , and eq. (7.12) becomes

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{I}{4\pi\rho} \, \mathbf{a}_{\phi} \tag{7.13}$$

Another special case is when the conductor is *infinite* in length. For this case, point A is at  $(0, 0, -\infty)$  while B is at  $(0, 0, \infty)$ ;  $\alpha_1 = 180^{\circ}$ ,  $\alpha_2 = 0^{\circ}$ , so eq. (7.12) reduces to

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{I}{2\pi\rho} \,\mathbf{a}_{\phi} \tag{7.14}$$

To find unit vector  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  in eqs. (7.12) to (7.14) is not always easy. A simple approach is to determine  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  from

$$\mathbf{a}_{\phi} = \mathbf{a}_{\ell} \times \mathbf{a}_{\rho} \tag{7.15}$$

where  $\mathbf{a}_{\ell}$  is a unit vector along the line current and  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho}$  is a unit vector along the perpendicular line from the line current to the field point.

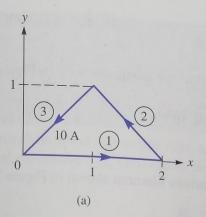
# (AMPLE 7.1

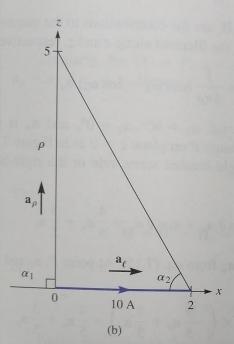
The conducting triangular loop in Figure 7.6(a) carries a current of 10 A. Find **H** at (0, 0, 5) due to side 1 of the loop.

#### Solution:

This example illustrates how eq. (7.12) is applied to any straight, thin, current-carrying conductor. The key point to keep in mind in applying eq. (7.12) is figuring out  $\alpha_1$ ,  $\alpha_2$ ,  $\beta_1$ , and  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$ . To find  $\mathbf{H}$  at (0, 0, 5) due to side 1 of the loop in Figure 7.6(a), consider Figure

**Figure 7.6** For Example 7.1: (a) conducting triangular loop, (b) side 1 of the loop.





7.6(b), where side 1 is treated as a straight conductor. Notice that we join the point of interest (0, 0, 5) to the beginning and end of the line current. Observe that  $\alpha_1$ ,  $\alpha_2$ , and  $\rho$  are assigned in the same manner as in Figure 7.5 on which eq. (7.12) is based.

$$\cos \alpha_1 = \cos 90^\circ = 0$$
,  $\cos \alpha_2 = \frac{2}{\sqrt{29}}$ ,  $\rho = 5$ 

To determine  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  is often the hardest part of applying eq. (7.12). According to eq. (7.15),  $\mathbf{a}_{\ell} = \mathbf{a}_{x}$  and  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho} = \mathbf{a}_{z}$ , so

$$\mathbf{a}_{\phi} = \mathbf{a}_{x} \times \mathbf{a}_{z} = -\mathbf{a}_{y}$$

Hence,

$$\mathbf{H}_{1} = \frac{I}{4\pi\rho} (\cos \alpha_{2} - \cos \alpha_{1}) \mathbf{a}_{\phi} = \frac{10}{4\pi(5)} \left( \frac{2}{\sqrt{29}} - 0 \right) (-\mathbf{a}_{y})$$

$$= -59.1 \mathbf{a}_{y} \text{ mA/m}$$

# PRACTICE EXERCISE 7.1

Find **H** at (0, 0, 5) due to side 3 of the triangular loop in Figure 7.6(a).

**Answer:**  $-30.63\mathbf{a}_x + 30.63\mathbf{a}_y \,\text{mA/m}.$ 

# **EXAMPLE 7.2**

Find **H** at (-3, 4, 0) due to the current filament shown in Figure 7.7(a).

## Solution:

Let  $\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{H}_x + \mathbf{H}_z$ , where  $\mathbf{H}_x$  and  $\mathbf{H}_z$  are the contributions to the magnetic field intensity at P(-3, 4, 0) due to the portions of the filament along x and z, respectively.

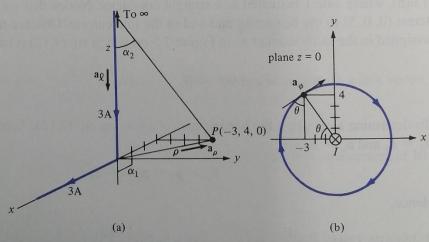
$$\mathbf{H}_z = \frac{I}{4\pi\rho} \left(\cos\alpha_2 - \cos\alpha_1\right) \mathbf{a}_{\phi}$$

At P(-3, 4, 0),  $\rho = (9 + 16)^{1/2} = 5$ ,  $\alpha_1 = 90^\circ$ ,  $\alpha_2 = 0^\circ$ , and  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  is obtained as a unit vector along the circular path through P on plane z = 0 as in Figure 7.7(b). The direction of  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  is determined using the right-handed screw rule or the right-hand rule. From the geometry in Figure 7.7(b),

$$\mathbf{a}_{\phi} = \sin \theta \, \mathbf{a}_x + \cos \theta \, \mathbf{a}_y = \frac{4}{5} \, \mathbf{a}_x + \frac{3}{5} \, \mathbf{a}_y$$

Alternatively, we can determine  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  from eq. (7.15). At point P,  $\mathbf{a}_{\ell}$  and  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho}$  are as illustrated in Figure 7.7(a) for  $\mathbf{H}_z$ . Hence,

$$\mathbf{a}_{\phi} = -\mathbf{a}_{z} \times \left(-\frac{3}{5}\,\mathbf{a}_{x} + \frac{4}{5}\,\mathbf{a}_{y}\right) = \frac{4}{5}\,\mathbf{a}_{x} + \frac{3}{5}\,\mathbf{a}_{y}$$



**Figure 7.7** For Example 7.2: (a) current filament along semiinfinite x- and z-axes;  $\mathbf{a}_{\ell}$  and  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho}$  for  $\mathbf{H}_{z}$  only; (b) determining  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho}$  for  $\mathbf{H}_{z}$ .

as obtained before. Thus

$$\mathbf{H}_z = \frac{3}{4\pi(5)} (1 - 0) \frac{(4\mathbf{a}_x + 3\mathbf{a}_y)}{5}$$
  
= 38.2\mathbf{a}\_x + 28.65\mathbf{a}\_y \text{ mA/m}

It should be noted that in this case  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  happens to be the negative of the regular  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  of cylindrical coordinates.  $\mathbf{H}_{z}$  could have also been obtained in cylindrical coordinates as

$$\mathbf{H}_z = \frac{3}{4\pi(5)} (1 - 0)(-\mathbf{a}_{\phi})$$
  
= -47.75 $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$  mA/m

Similarly, for  $\mathbf{H}_x$  at P,  $\rho=4$ ,  $\alpha_2=0^\circ$ ,  $\cos\alpha_1=3/5$ , and  $\mathbf{a}_\phi=\mathbf{a}_z$  or  $\mathbf{a}_\phi=\mathbf{a}_\ell\times\mathbf{a}_\rho=\mathbf{a}_x\times\mathbf{a}_y=\mathbf{a}_z$ . Hence,

$$\mathbf{H}_x = \frac{3}{4\pi(4)} \left( 1 - \frac{3}{5} \right) \mathbf{a}_z$$
$$= 23.88 \ \mathbf{a}_z \ \text{mA/m}$$

Thus

$$\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{H}_x + \mathbf{H}_z = 38.2\mathbf{a}_x + 28.65\mathbf{a}_y + 23.88\mathbf{a}_z \,\text{mA/m}$$

or

$$\mathbf{H} = -47.75\mathbf{a}_{\phi} + 23.88\mathbf{a}_{z} \,\text{mA/m}$$

Notice that although the current filaments appear semiinfinite (they occupy the positive z- and x-axes), it is only the filament along the z-axis that is semiinfinite with respect to point P. Thus  $\mathbf{H}_z$  could have been found by using eq. (7.13), but the equation could not have been used to find  $\mathbf{H}_x$  because the filament along the x-axis is not semiinfinite with respect to P.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE 7.2

The positive y-axis (semiinfinite line with respect to the origin) carries a filamentary current of 2 A in the  $-\mathbf{a}_y$  direction. Assume it is part of a large circuit. Find  $\mathbf{H}$  at

- (a) A(2, 3, 0)
- (b) B(3, 12, -4)

**Answer:** (a)  $145.8a_z$  mA/m, (b)  $48.97a_x + 36.73a_z$  mA/m.

## **EXAMPLE 7.3**

A circular loop located on  $x^2 + y^2 = 9$ , z = 0 carries a direct current of 10 A along  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$ . Determine **H** at (0, 0, 4) and (0, 0, -4).

Consider the circular loop shown in Figure 7.8(a). The magnetic field intensity  $d\mathbf{H}$  at point P(0, 0, h) contributed by current element  $I d\mathbf{l}$  is given by Biot–Savart's law:

$$d\mathbf{H} = \frac{I d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{R}}{4\pi R^3}$$

where  $d\mathbf{l} = \rho d\phi \mathbf{a}_{\phi}$ ,  $\mathbf{R} = (0, 0, h) - (x, y, 0) = -\rho \mathbf{a}_{\rho} + h \mathbf{a}_{z}$ , and

$$d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{R} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{a}_{\rho} & \mathbf{a}_{\phi} & \mathbf{a}_{z} \\ 0 & \rho \, d\phi & 0 \\ -\rho & 0 & h \end{vmatrix} = \rho h \, d\phi \, \mathbf{a}_{\rho} + \rho^{2} \, d\phi \, \mathbf{a}_{z}$$

Hence,

$$d\mathbf{H} = \frac{I}{4\pi[\rho^2 + h^2]^{3/2}} (\rho h \, d\phi \, \mathbf{a}_{\rho} + \rho^2 \, d\phi \, \mathbf{a}_{z}) = dH_{\rho} \, \mathbf{a}_{\rho} + dH_{z} \, \mathbf{a}_{z}$$

By symmetry, the contributions along  $\mathbf{a}_{
ho}$  add up to zero because the radial components produced by pairs of current element 180° apart cancel. This may also be shown mathematically by writing  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho}$  in rectangular coordinate systems (i.e.,  $\mathbf{a}_{\rho} = \cos \phi \, \mathbf{a}_x + \sin \phi \, \mathbf{a}_y$ ).

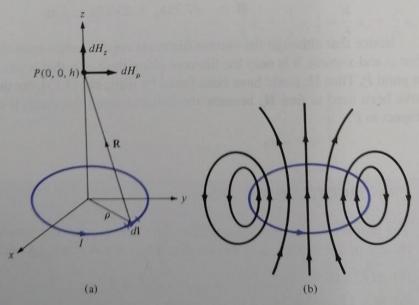


Figure 7.8 For Example 7.3: (a) circular current loop, (b) flux lines due to the current loop.

Integrating  $\cos \phi$  or  $\sin \phi$  over  $0 \le \phi \le 2\pi$  gives zero, thereby showing that  $\mathbf{H}_{\rho} = 0$ .

$$\mathbf{H} = \int dH_z \, \mathbf{a}_z = \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{I\rho^2 \, d\phi \, \mathbf{a}_z}{4\pi [\rho^2 + h^2]^{3/2}} = \frac{I\rho^2 2\pi \mathbf{a}_z}{4\pi [\rho^2 + h^2]^{3/2}}$$

or

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{I\rho^2 \mathbf{a}_z}{2[\rho^2 + h^2]^{3/2}}$$

(a) Substituting I = 10 A,  $\rho = 3$ , h = 4 gives

$$\mathbf{H}(0, 0, 4) = \frac{10 (3)^2 \mathbf{a}_z}{2[9 + 16]^{3/2}} = 0.36 \mathbf{a}_z \text{ A/m}$$

(b) Notice from  $d\mathbf{l} \times \mathbf{R}$  above that if h is replaced by -h, the z-component of  $d\mathbf{H}$  remains the same while the  $\rho$ -component still adds up to zero due to the axial symmetry of the loop. Hence

$$\mathbf{H}(0, 0, -4) = \mathbf{H}(0, 0, 4) = 0.36\mathbf{a}_z \text{ A/m}$$

The flux lines due to the circular current loop are sketched in Figure 7.8(b).

# PRACTICE EXERCISE 7.3

A thin ring of radius 5 cm is placed on plane z=1 cm so that its center is at (0, 0, 1 cm). If the ring carries 50 mA along  $\mathbf{a}_{\phi}$ , find  $\mathbf{H}$  at

- (a) (0, 0, -1 cm)
- (b) (0, 0, 10 cm)

**Answer:** (a) 400**a**<sub>z</sub> mA/m, (b) 57.3**a**<sub>z</sub> mA/m.

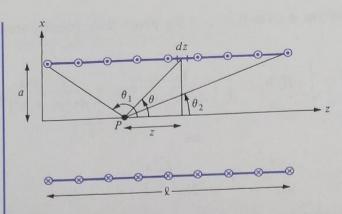
A solenoid of length  $\ell$  and radius a consists of N turns of wire carrying current I. Show that at point P along its axis,

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{nI}{2} (\cos \theta_2 - \cos \theta_1) \mathbf{a}_z$$

where  $n = N/\ell$ ,  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$  are the angles subtended at P by the end turns as illustrated in Figure 7.9. Also show that if  $\ell \gg a$ , at the center of the solenoid,

$$\mathbf{H} = n\mathbf{I}\mathbf{a}_{z}$$

Figure 7.9 For Example 7.4; cross section of a solenoid.



## Solution:

Consider the cross section of the solenoid as shown in Figure 7.9. Since the solenoid consists of circular loops, we apply the result of Example 7.3. The contribution to the magnetic field H at P by an element of the solenoid of length dz is

$$dH_z = \frac{I \, dl \, a^2}{2[a^2 + z^2]^{3/2}} = \frac{Ia^2 n \, dz}{2[a^2 + z^2]^{3/2}}$$

where  $dl = n dz = (N/\ell) dz$ . From Figure 7.9,  $\tan \theta = a/z$ ; that is,

$$dz = -a\csc^2\theta \ d\theta = -\frac{[z^2 + a^2]^{3/2}}{a^2}\sin\theta \ d\theta$$

Hence,

$$dH_z = -\frac{nI}{2}\sin\theta \ d\theta$$

or

$$H_z = -\frac{nI}{2} \int_{\theta_1}^{\theta_2} \sin \theta \ d\theta$$

Thus

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{nI}{2} (\cos \theta_2 - \cos \theta_1) \, \mathbf{a}_z$$

as required. Substituting  $n = N/\ell$  gives

$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{NI}{2\ell} (\cos \theta_2 - \cos \theta_1) \, \mathbf{a}_z$$

At the center of the solenoid,

$$\cos \theta_2 = \frac{\ell/2}{[a^2 + \ell^2/4]^{1/2}} = -\cos \theta_1$$

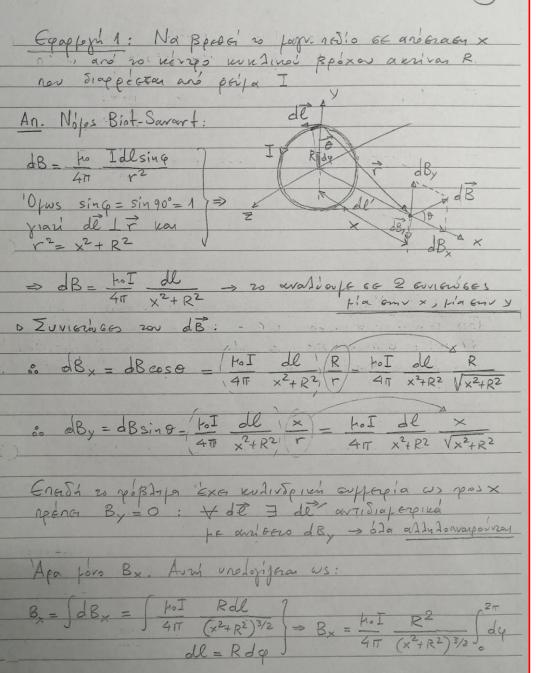
and

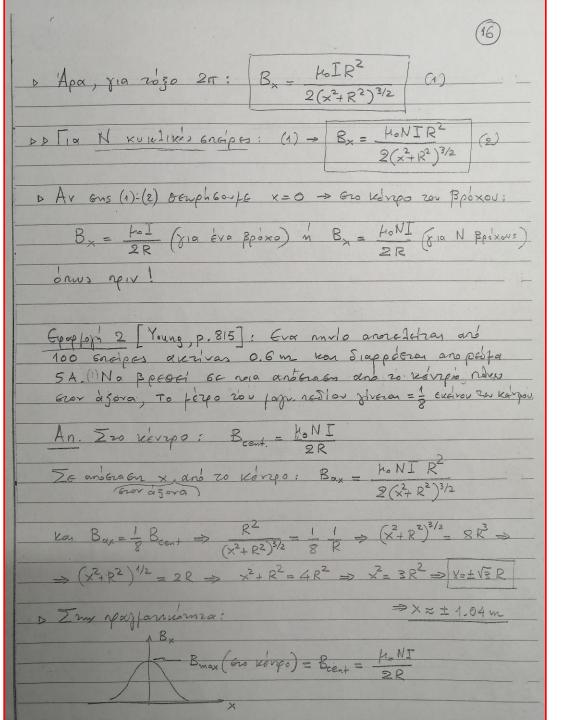
$$\mathbf{H} = \frac{In\ell}{2[a^2 + \ell^2/4]^{1/2}} \,\mathbf{a}_z$$

If  $\ell \gg a$  or  $\theta_2 \simeq 0^\circ$ ,  $\theta_1 \simeq 180^\circ$ ,

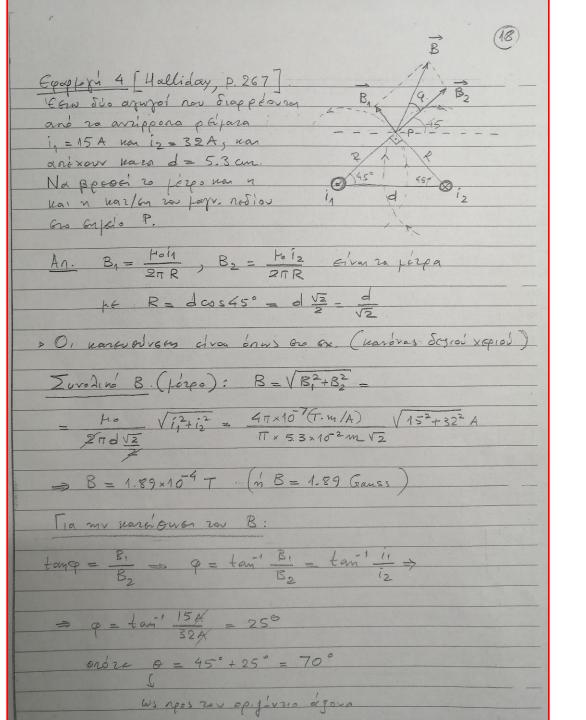
$$\mathbf{H} = nI\mathbf{a}_z = \frac{NI}{\ell}\,\mathbf{a}_z$$

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