

PHYS102 - Charge and Force

Dr. Suess

January 10, 2007

Electrostatics

- Electrostatics
- Electrostatic Forces
- Electrostatic Forces II
- Coulomb's Law
- Coulomb's Law II

Forces

Electrostatics

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Throughout the beginning of this course, we will deal with electrostatics.

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This means we concern ourselves with charges that are at rest with respect to each other.

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How do we quantify the forces between stationary charged particles (like in the demo)?

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Thank you Mr. Charles Augustin Coulomb:



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Coulomb used a torsional balance with two insulated conducting spheres in a dumbbell configuration as shown below.

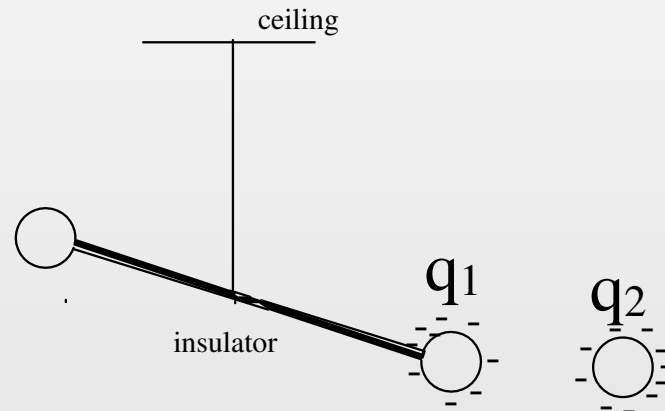
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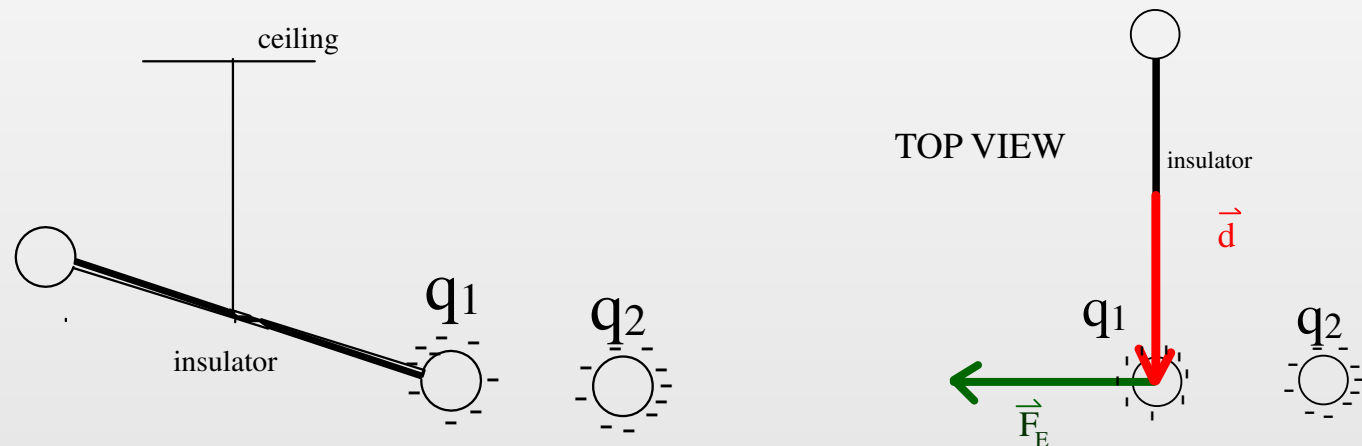
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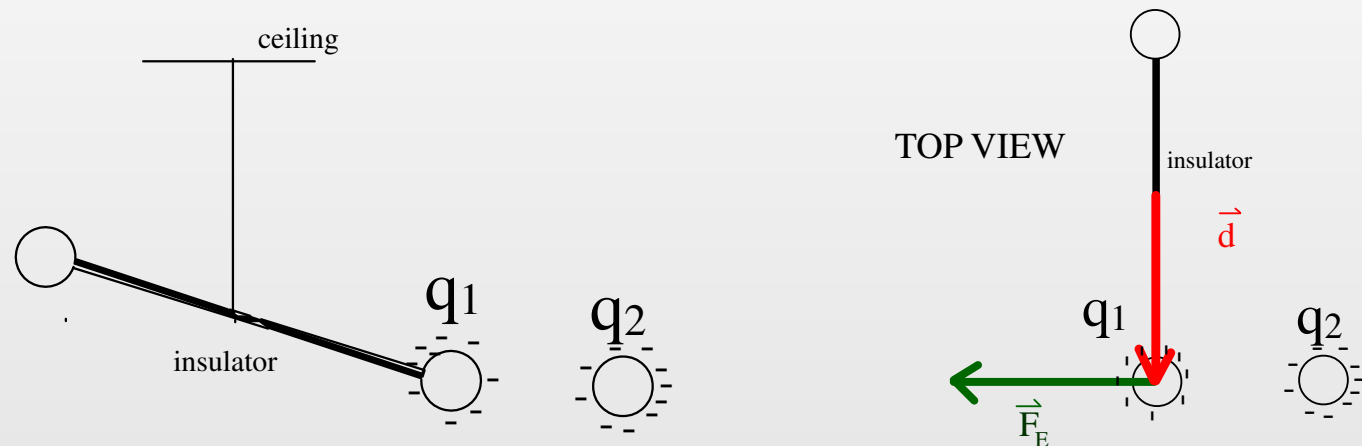
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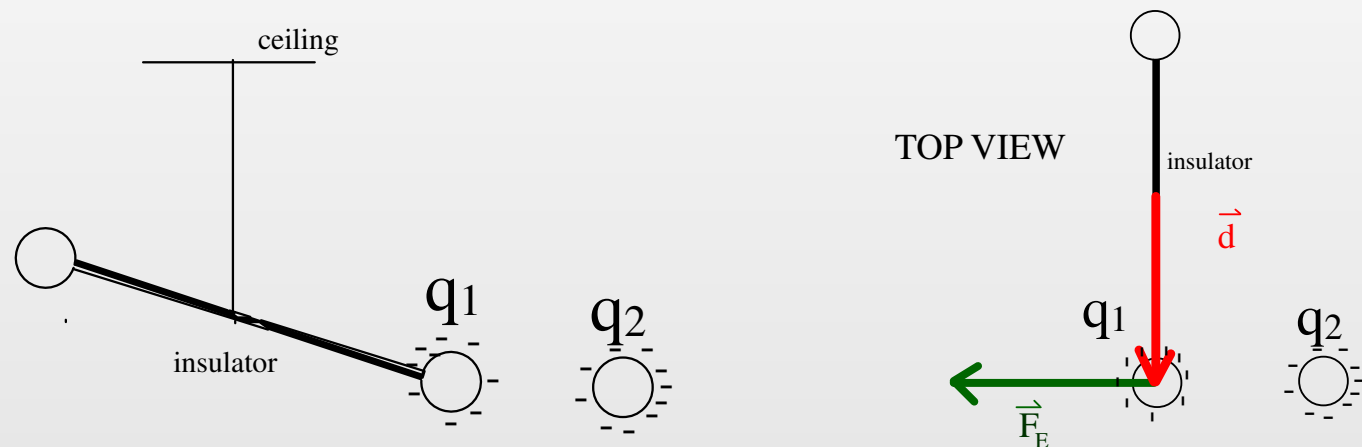
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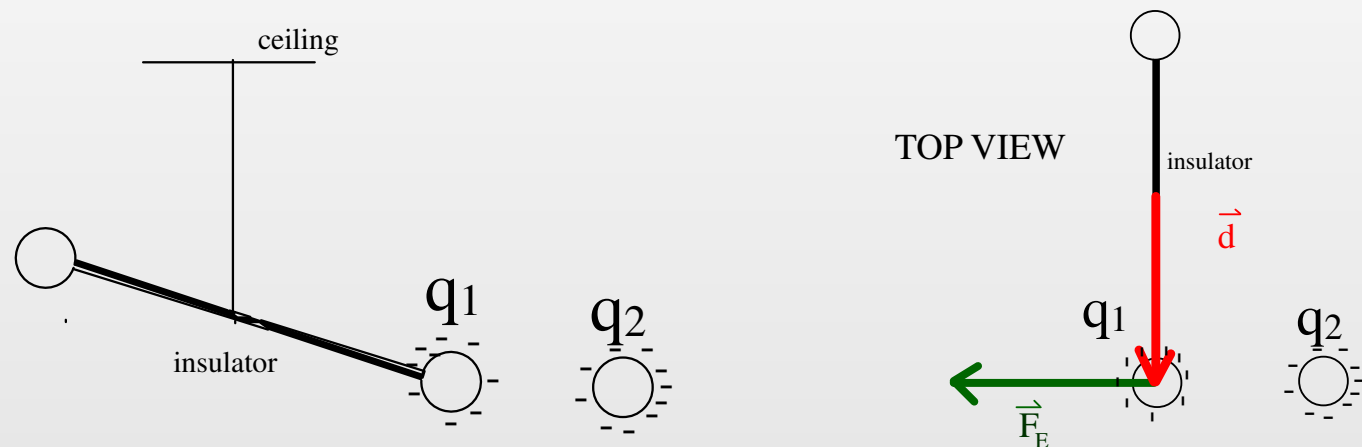
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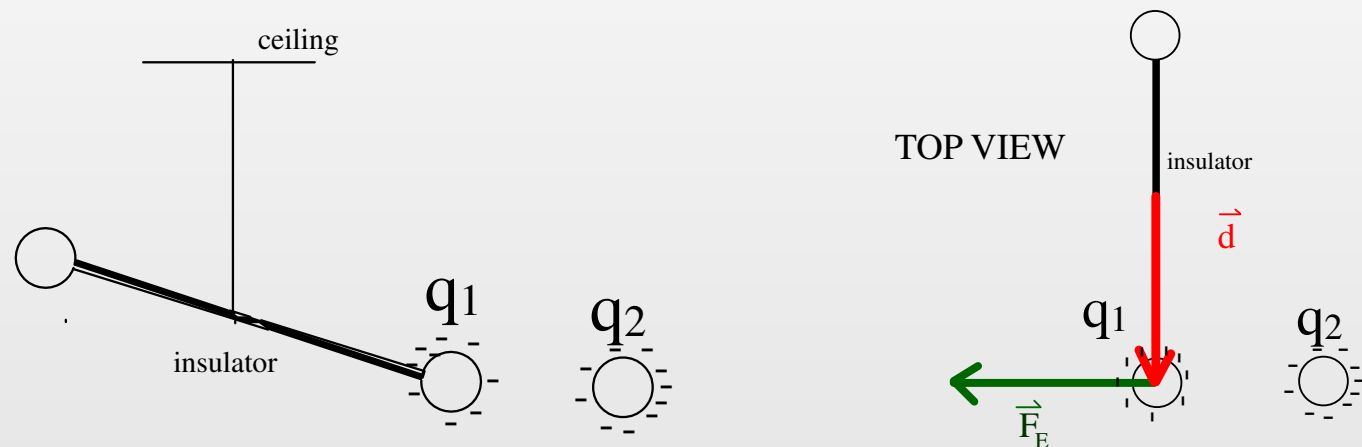
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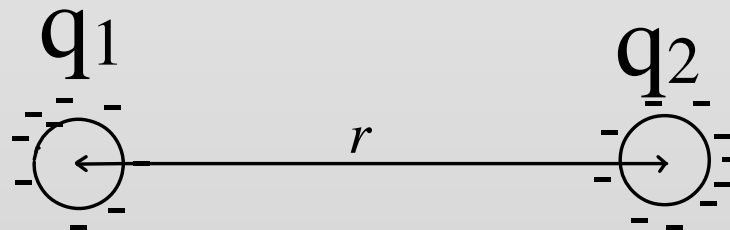
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- NOTE: for uniformly charged spheres, r is the distance between their centers



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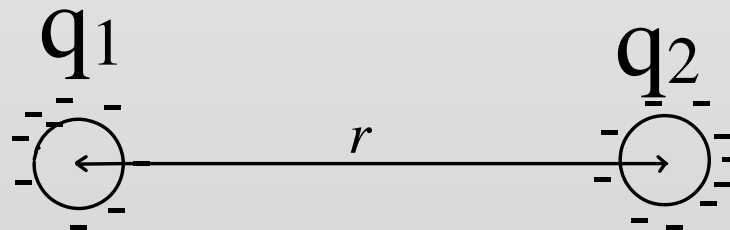
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$$F_E \propto q_1 q_2$$

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$$F_E \propto q_1 q_2$$

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$$F_E = \frac{k q_1 q_2}{r^2}.$$

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This is a mathematical statement of Coulomb's law.

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NOTE: This resembles Newton's Universal law of Gravitation:

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What are the units of k ?

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- Units: $[q] = C$

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- Units: $[q] = C$; $[r] = m$; $[F_E] = N$.
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Experimentally:

$$k = 8.987 \times 10^9 \text{ N m}^2 \text{ C}^{-2}$$

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where $\epsilon_0 = 8.85 \times 10^{-12} \text{ C}^2 \text{ N}^{-1} \text{ m}^{-2}$ is called the “permittivity of free space”.

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Forces

- Vector Nature
- Vectors
- Directional Vector

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Since we are science-minded people, we know that force is a vector so we need to specify a direction.

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- NOTE: The signs of q_1 and q_2 are important as the product will give the sign of the force.

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- Method (2) - using knowledge of attraction and repulsion between charged particles.

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- The direction is later implied by the attractive or repulsive behavior between the charged particles.

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From PHYS101 - the directional vector \hat{r} is what we need.

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Consider an example of two charged spheres.

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From PHYS101 - the directional vector \hat{r} is what we need. Consider an example of two charged spheres. Let's calculate the force \vec{F}_{12} (read as "the force exerted by charge q_1 on charge q_2 ").

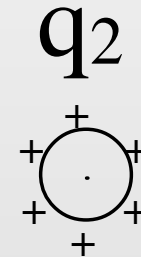
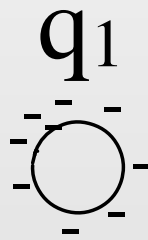
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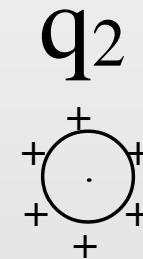
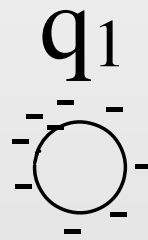
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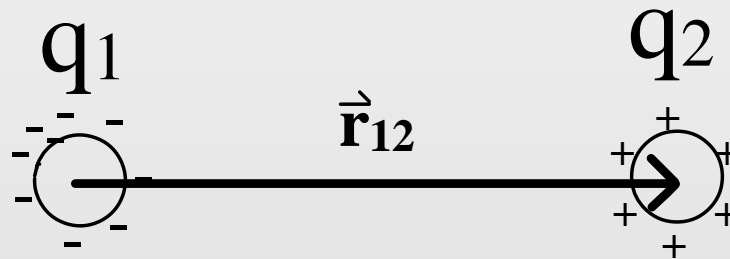
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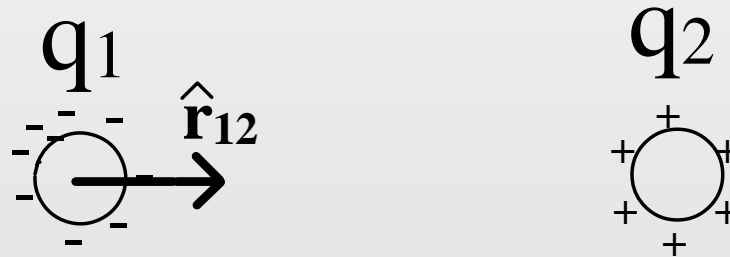
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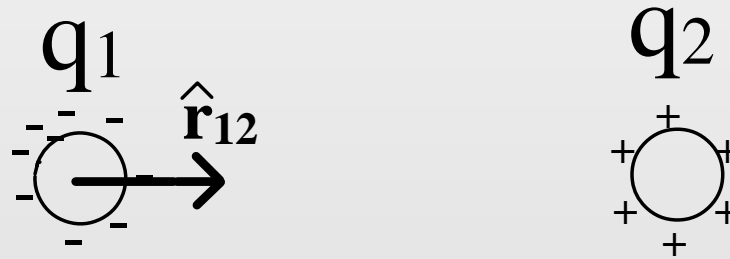
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Since the Force is given by: $\vec{F}_{12} = \frac{k q_1 q_2}{r^2} \hat{r}_{12} = -\frac{k |q_1| |q_2|}{r^2} \hat{r}_{12}$

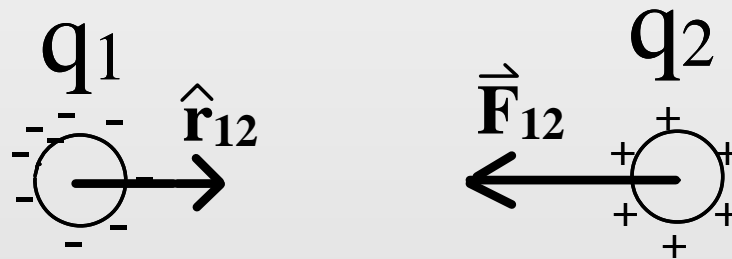
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NOTE: \vec{F}_{21} and \vec{F}_{12} form an action reaction-pair as explicit in Coulomb's law.