

Dust Curtain



Evocation, Province: Sand

Level: 2

Range: 10 yds./level

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 2

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: 20-ft. cube/level

Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a controlled gale that lifts a large amount of sand and dust from the ground and shapes it in the air. The caster must choose between two basic forms—a dust wall, or a blinding dust cloud that resembles a sandstorm. The former might be used to conceal the caster's allies. The latter usually surrounds his foes.

Once the shape is chosen, it can't be changed. Within a round, the spell creates a wind strong enough to shape the cloud or wall to its full volume. The wind is not strong enough to cause damage, however. Creatures surrounded by a cloud fight as if they're in total darkness, with a -4 penalty to their attack rolls. Individuals with the blind fighting proficiency are not affected, however. Missile weapons fired into, out of, or through either the cloud or sand wall suffer a -1 penalty—assuming the target can still be seen. Spellcasting is not affected by the dust curtain, except for reduced visibility.

The caster must concentrate continuously to maintain the dust curtain. If the caster's concentration is broken, the cloud or wall of dust collapses and dissipates one round later. The same thing occurs after the caster is injured, dies, begins any spellcasting, becomes unconscious, or moves out of range of the cloud.

While concentration is maintained, the caster can move the dust wall or cloud up to 10 yards horizontally and 10 yards vertically each round. A dispel magic spell will cause the dust curtain to collapse—as will any other magic that controls or creates winds (even a friendly effort, intended to move the curtain along).

A spellcaster creating a cloud with this spell is not limited to an amorphous mass. He can shape the dust into a djinni, a dragon, a mass of tentacles—whatever suits him. Like the other forms, this must be selected upon casting, and cannot be changed afterward. Such shapes are a matter of style; the effects remain the same as any cloud, and cannot be mistaken for the real thing. The dust curtain can be cast only in an area with significant dust, sand, or loose soil to support a dust storm. The dusty earth of a village street is sufficient. Also suitable are a desert, a beach, or a tomb that has not been disturbed for ages. But the stone of a city street won't work, nor will an outcropping of solid rock or a jungle growth. The wizard casts the spell with a whispered incantation.

The material component is a handful of sand, blown from the caster's hand.

Notes: Uncommon in an arabian setting; otherwise very rare.