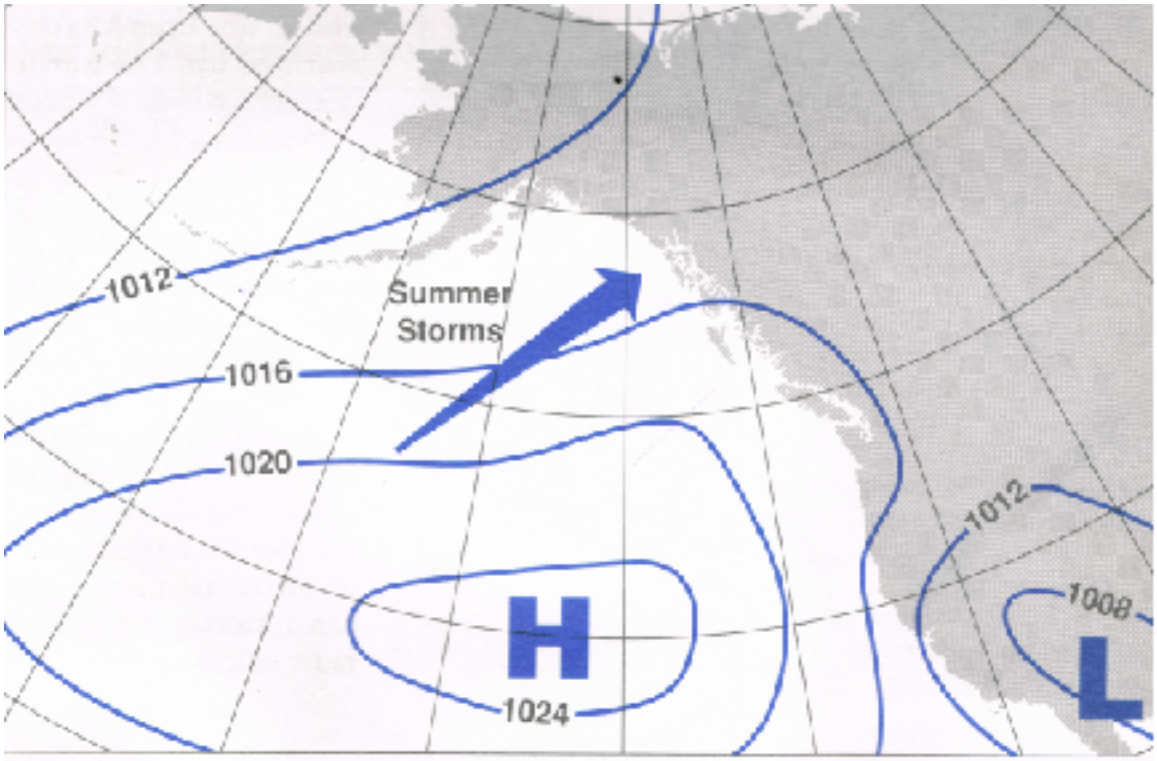
Summer Storms

During summer season from May to September there is a semi-permanent, Pacific High sitting off the coast of California, which strengthens, and moves further north. This storm track is deflected by the high into the northern section of the Gulf of Alaska.

Summer storms are not nearly as intense as winter ones because the contrast between the warm and cold air is not as strong. The result is the frontal systems that approach our BC coast are much weaker. A ridge of high pressure will develop near the coast but is controlled in strength and direction. The coastal winds may occasionally rise to gale force.

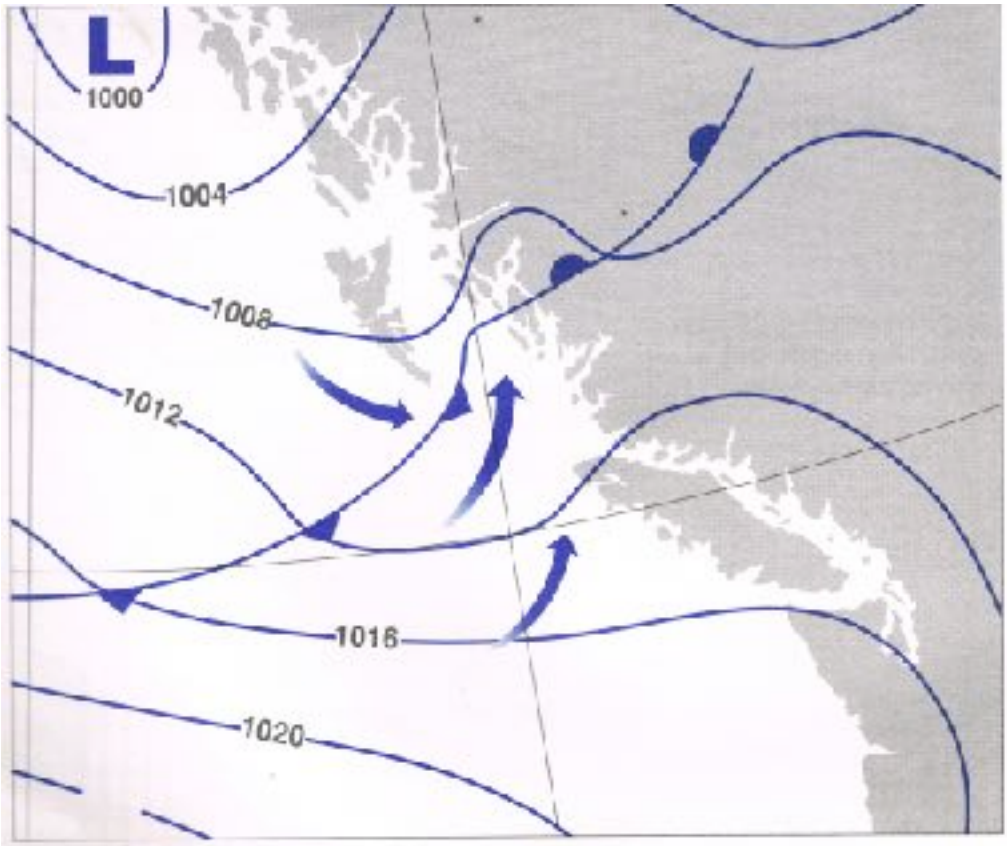


A normal Summer Storm track shown on the July mean sea-level pressure pattern. (Pressure values in millibars)

Summer Fronts

The winds in advance of the fronts are typically from the south or southwest. These winds will back into the southeast only in waters

close to the coast. This weaker front is accompanied by a narrow band of clouds and light rains. Once the front continues southeast over Vancouver Island the rain area will regularly disappear and clouds quickly dissipate.



A typical summer pressure pattern shows a front crossing the coast with an indication of the winds near the front. (Pressure values in millibars)

Behind the front or in its wake, the pressure rises and fairly strong winds increase as the High Pressure builds from up to half to 1 millibar an hour. This creates strong NW winds following the front's passage. The Strongest NW winds are often recorded in the Strait of Georgia where the airstream is funneled between the coastal mountains and Vancouver Island.