

Answer on Question #43498-Physics-Mechanics-Kinematics-Dynamics

Why is Reynolds number defining the different flows gives different values in different books and internet pages?

Answer

Because Reynolds number can be defined for a number of different situations where a fluid is in relative motion to a surface. These definitions generally include the fluid properties of density and viscosity, plus a velocity and a characteristic length or characteristic dimension. This dimension is a matter of convention – for example a radius or diameter are equally valid for spheres or circles, but one is chosen by convention. For aircraft or ships, the length or width can be used. For flow in a pipe or a sphere moving in a fluid the internal diameter is generally used today. Other shapes such as rectangular pipes or non-spherical objects have an equivalent diameter defined. For fluids of variable density such as compressible gases or fluids of variable viscosity such as non-Newtonian fluids, special rules apply. The velocity may also be a matter of convention in some circumstances, notably stirred vessels.