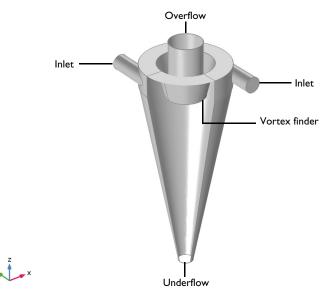


Flow in a Hydrocyclone

Introduction

Cyclones are used in a variety of applications ranging from the mining industry to vacuum cleaners (Ref. 1). In the pulp and paper industry, hydrocyclones are used for contaminant removal, pulp thickening and fiber fractionation. Most cyclones do not contain any moving parts, hence the flow is driven exclusively by the applied pressure drops between the inlet(s) and the two outlets. The forward stream in the process is referred to as the *accept flow*, whereas the discarded stream is referred to as the *reject flow*. Depending on the application, the accept outlet could either be the overflow located at the base of the cone, near the inlet(s), or the underflow near the apex of the cone. The former configuration is used for removal of heavy (compared to the carrier fluid) contaminants, whereas the latter is used for removal of light contaminants and in thickening processes. In fractionation processes the definition of accept and reject is more or less a matter of convenience since both streams are applied forward in the system.

Model Definition



The model geometry used in this application is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Model geometry showing the inlets, overflow (here the accept outlet), and underflow (the reject outlet).

Two circular inlets are tangentially attached to the annular inlet chamber, which is separated from the overflow by a wall called the "vortex finder". This design creates a strong swirl in the incoming flow. From the annular inlet chamber, the flow enters a conical chamber where the separation takes place. The conical shape preserves the angular momentum and stabilizes the vortex core — the central region of the swirl motion characterized by nearly solid-body rotation. A portion of the flow is effluxed through the underflow near the apex of the conical separation chamber, and the rest exits through the overflow.

The flow in a hydrocyclone is characterized by a very strong swirl, which makes it difficult to simulate using an isotropic turbulence model. It is imperative that the swirl flow is accurately captured in order to assess the separation efficiency for various particles. The streamlines essentially follow the azimuthal direction whereas mixing of momentum by turbulent fluctuations takes place in the radial direction, which happens to be very close to the wall-normal direction in the major part of the hydrocyclone. This makes the v2-f turbulence model a good candidate for the prevailing flow conditions.

Stationary operating conditions corresponding to those of heavy contaminant removal are studied in this application. The flowing medium is pure water at 20°C. The hydrocyclone is assumed to be pressurized and is hence operating without an air core. Initial values were chosen as zero velocity, zero pressure, and default values for the turbulence variables. No-slip conditions with automatic wall treatment were applied on all the walls. At the two inlets the velocity is set to 5 m/s, and the turbulence conditions to default (medium turbulent intensity and geometry based turbulence length scale). We also prescribe that 5% of the inlet flow exits through the underflow by specifying an uniform velocity profile. A constant pressure condition is applied at the overflow. The outlet conditions can be made more self-consistent by adding outlet chambers, corresponding to the system geometry, at both ends.

y x

Figure 2 shows the streamlines for the swirling flow in the hydrocyclone.

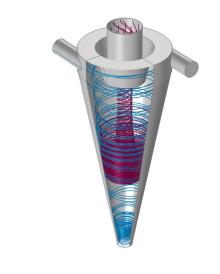


Figure 2: Streamlines for the overflow (burgundy) and underflow (teal).

The streamlines describe the typical flow field encountered in hydrocyclone applications. From the inlet chamber, the flow is diverted toward the underflow. In our case, 95% of the incoming flow should be reversed and exit through the overflow. This is illustrated by the burgundy streamlines in the core. The remainder (teal) almost sticks to the wall and exits through the underflow.

The pressure drop and in-plane streamlines on two orthogonal cut planes through the hydrocyclone are displayed in Figure 3.

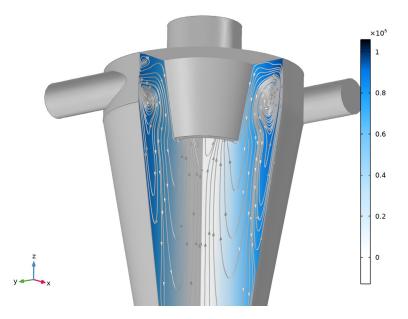


Figure 3: Pressure drop and in-plane streamlines in the xz- and yz-planes.

The two jets mix in the inlet chamber, resulting in azimuthal pressure variations on the vortex core. For certain hydrocyclone designs, this may cause the vortex core to destabilize resulting in poor separation performance. The optimal number and design of the inlet pipes as well as the design of the inlet chamber is still an active research field. The pressure drop between the inlets and outlets is of the order 100 kPa. Figure 4 shows a contour surface displaying a vertical (stable) vortex core. The swirl flow in the hydrocyclone can be

divided into an outer region, described by a semi-free vortex, and an inner region of nearly solid body rotation.

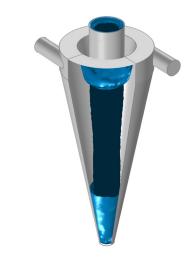


Figure 4: Contour surface of the vortex core.

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The graph in Figure 5 shows the azimuthal velocity component as a function of the radius at a vertical position 10 cm below the vortex finder. The inner core of nearly solid-body rotation is clearly distinguishable from the outer semi-free vortex.

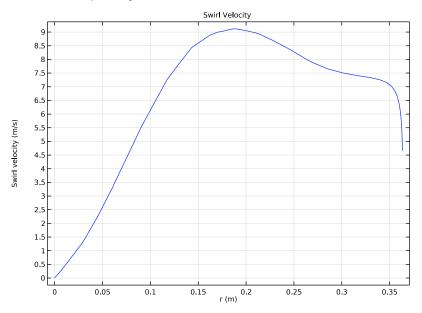


Figure 5: Azimuthal (swirl) velocity versus radius 10 cm below the vortex finder.

Notes About the COMSOL Implementation

The mesh is deliberately made relatively coarse to reduce the computational time for this tutorial model. If the maximum size of the elements is reduced by thirty percent, the maximum swirl velocity in Figure 5 reaches 12 m/s. Particle-tracking can be added to the model to illustrate the separation of heavy and light fractions.

Reference

1. D.Bradley, "The Hydrocyclone, 1st Edition, International Series of Monographs in Chemical Engineering," *Pergamon*, 1965.

Application Library path: CFD_Module/Single-Phase_Flow/hydrocyclone

Modeling Instructions

From the File menu, choose New.

NEW

In the New window, click 🚳 Model Wizard.

MODEL WIZARD

- I In the Model Wizard window, click 间 3D.
- 2 In the Select Physics tree, select Fluid Flow>Single-Phase Flow>Turbulent Flow> Turbulent Flow, v2-f (spf).
- 3 Click Add.
- 4 Click 🔿 Study.
- 5 In the Select Study tree, select Preset Studies for Selected Physics Interfaces> Stationary with Initialization.
- 6 Click M Done.

GLOBAL DEFINITIONS

Parameters 1

- I In the Model Builder window, under Global Definitions click Parameters I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Parameters, locate the Parameters section.
- **3** In the table, enter the following settings:

Name	Expression	Value	Description
u_in	5[m/s]	5 m/s	Inlet velocity
r_in	0.0725[m]	0.0725 m	Inlet radius
r_out	0.07[m]	0.07 m	Reject radius
R_f	0.05	0.05	Reject volume fraction
u_out	R_f*2*(r_in/ r_out)^2*u_in	0.53635 m/s	Reject velocity

GEOMETRY I

Work Plane I (wp1)

- I In the Geometry toolbar, click 📥 Work Plane.
- 2 In the Settings window for Work Plane, locate the Plane Definition section.

3 From the Plane list, choose xz-plane.

Work Plane I (wp1)>Plane Geometry

In the Model Builder window, click Plane Geometry.

Work Plane I (wpl)>Polygon I (poll)

- I In the Work Plane toolbar, click / Polygon.
- 2 In the Settings window for Polygon, locate the Coordinates section.
- **3** In the table, enter the following settings:

xw (m)	yw (m)	
0.4	1	
0.4	0.8	
r_out	- 1	
0	-1	
0	1.2	
0.15	1.2	
0.15	0.7	
0.18	0.7	
0.25	1	
0.4	1	

4 Click 틤 Build Selected.

Revolve I (rev1)

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Geometry I and choose Revolve.
- 2 In the Settings window for Revolve, locate the Revolution Angles section.
- **3** Clear the **Keep original faces** check box.

Cylinder I (cyl1)

- I In the Geometry toolbar, click 问 Cylinder.
- 2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape section.
- 3 In the Radius text field, type r_in.
- 4 In the **Height** text field, type 0.5.
- 5 Locate the Position section. In the x text field, type 0.3215.
- 6 In the y text field, type -0.5.
- 7 In the z text field, type 0.9.
- 8 Locate the Axis section. From the Axis type list, choose y-axis.

Cylinder 2 (cyl2)

- I In the **Geometry** toolbar, click 问 **Cylinder**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Cylinder, locate the Size and Shape section.
- 3 In the Radius text field, type r_in.
- 4 In the **Height** text field, type 0.5.
- 5 Locate the Position section. In the x text field, type -0.3215.
- 6 In the z text field, type 0.9.
- 7 Locate the Axis section. From the Axis type list, choose y-axis.
- 8 In the Geometry toolbar, click 🟢 Build All.

Form Composite Domains 1 (cmd1)

I In the Geometry toolbar, click 🗠 Virtual Operations and choose Form Composite Domains.

Use the virtual operation **Form Composite Domains** to remove the interior boundaries of the hydrocyclone. This reduces the amount of elements and thereby the memory consumption and computing time for this model.

- **2** On the object **fin**, select Domains 1–5 only.
- 3 In the Settings window for Form Composite Domains, click 틤 Build Selected.

ADD MATERIAL

- I In the Home toolbar, click 👯 Add Material to open the Add Material window.
- 2 Go to the Add Material window.
- 3 In the tree, select Built-in>Water, liquid.
- 4 Click Add to Component in the window toolbar.
- 5 In the Home toolbar, click 🙀 Add Material to close the Add Material window.

TURBULENT FLOW, V2-F (SPF)

Inlet 1

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) right-click Turbulent Flow, v2f (spf) and choose Inlet.
- 2 Select Boundaries 9 and 40 only, corresponding to the two inlets.
- 3 In the Settings window for Inlet, locate the Velocity section.

4 In the U_0 text field, type u_in.

The fully developed flow condition could be used as well to give a computed flow field for the inlet parameters. However, by doing so, the computing time would increase slightly. Thus, an analytic expression is used for the inlet parameters.

Outlet I

- I In the Physics toolbar, click 📄 Boundaries and choose Outlet.
- 2 Select Boundaries 20, 21, 29, and 30 only, corresponding to the reject outlet.
- 3 In the Settings window for Outlet, locate the Boundary Condition section.
- **4** From the list, choose **Velocity**.
- **5** Locate the **Velocity** section. In the U_0 text field, type u_out.

Outlet 2

- I In the Physics toolbar, click 🔚 Boundaries and choose Outlet.
- **2** Select Boundaries 18, 19, 28, and 31 only.
- 3 In the Settings window for Outlet, locate the Pressure Conditions section.
- 4 Select the Normal flow check box.
- 5 Clear the Suppress backflow check box.

MESH I

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Mesh I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Mesh, locate the Sequence Type section.
- 3 From the list, choose User-controlled mesh.
- **4** In the **Mesh** toolbar, click **Delete Sequence**.

ADD COMPONENT

In the Model Builder window, right-click the root node and choose Add Component>3D.

MESH 2

Import I

- I In the Mesh toolbar, click 🗔 Import.
- 2 In the Settings window for Import, locate the Import section.
- 3 Click 📂 Browse.
- 4 Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file hydrocyclone_mesh.mphbin.

5 Click 📑 Import.

MESH I

In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Mesh I.

Сору І

- I In the Mesh toolbar, click Dopy and choose Copy.
- 2 In the Settings window for Copy, locate the Source Mesh section.
- 3 From the Mesh list, choose Mesh 2.
- 4 Locate the Dimension section. From the Geometric entity level list, choose Domain.
- 5 Locate the Source Entities section. From the Selection list, choose All domains.
- 6 Locate the Destination Entities section. From the Selection list, choose All domains.
- 7 Locate the Source Mesh section. Click Copy.

8 Click 📗 Build All.

STUDY I

In the **Home** toolbar, click **= Compute**.

RESULTS

First, create datasets needed to produce Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 5.

Surface 2

- I In the **Results** toolbar, click **More Datasets** and choose **Surface**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Surface, locate the Selection section.
- **3** Click **Paste Selection**.
- 4 In the Paste Selection dialog box, type 2, 4-17, 22-27, 32-42 in the Selection text field.
- 5 Click OK.

Edge 3D I

- I In the **Results** toolbar, click **More Datasets** and choose **Edge 3D**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Edge 3D, locate the Selection section.
- 3 Click **Paste Selection**.
- **4** In the **Paste Selection** dialog box, type 1 2 4 5 7 9 10 11 12 13 14 16 17 18 19 21 23 24 25 27 28 29 31 32 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 45 47 49 55 58 59 61 63 65 66 72 73 74 75 78 80 81 82 in the **Selection** text field.
- 5 Click OK.

Cut Plane 1

In the **Results** toolbar, click **Cut Plane**.

Cut Plane 2

- I In the **Results** toolbar, click **Cut Plane**.
- 2 In the Settings window for Cut Plane, locate the Plane Data section.
- 3 From the Plane list, choose xz-planes.

Cut Line 3D I

- I In the **Results** toolbar, click Cut Line 3D.
- 2 In the Settings window for Cut Line 3D, locate the Line Data section.
- **3** In row **Point I**, set **x** to -0.5.
- 4 In row **Point 2**, set **x** to **0**.
- **5** In row **Point I**, set **z** to **0.6**.
- 6 In row **Point 2**, set **z** to **0.6**.

The following steps reproduce Figure 2.

Streamlines

- I In the Model Builder window, under Results click Velocity (spf).
- 2 In the Settings window for 3D Plot Group, type Streamlines in the Label text field.
- 3 Click to expand the Title section. From the Title type list, choose None.
- 4 Locate the Plot Settings section. Clear the Plot dataset edges check box.

Slice

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Streamlines node.
- 2 Right-click Results>Streamlines>Slice and choose Delete. Click Yes to confirm.

Surface 1

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Streamlines and choose Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Surface 2.
- 4 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Coloring list, choose Uniform.
- 5 From the Color list, choose Gray.

Line I

- I Right-click Streamlines and choose Line.
- 2 In the Settings window for Line, locate the Data section.

- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Edge 3D I.
- 4 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Coloring list, choose Uniform.
- 5 From the Color list, choose Custom.
- 6 On Windows, click the colored bar underneath, or if you are running the crossplatform desktop — the **Color** button.
- 7 Click Define custom colors.
- 8 Set the RGB values to 128, 128, and 128, respectively.
- 9 Click Add to custom colors.
- IO Click Show color palette only or OK on the cross-platform desktop.

Streamline 1

- I Right-click Streamlines and choose Streamline.
- 2 In the Settings window for Streamline, locate the Streamline Positioning section.
- **3** In the **Number** text field, type 10.
- 4 Select Boundaries 18, 19, 28, and 31 only.
- **5** Locate the **Coloring and Style** section. Find the **Line style** subsection. From the **Type** list, choose **Tube**.
- 6 In the Tube radius expression text field, type 0.0025.
- 7 Select the Radius scale factor check box.
- 8 Find the Point style subsection. From the Color list, choose Custom.
- **9** On Windows, click the colored bar underneath, or if you are running the crossplatform desktop — the **Color** button.
- **IO** Click **Define custom colors**.
- II Set the RGB values to 128, 0, and 64, respectively.
- I2 Click Add to custom colors.
- **I3** Click **Show color palette only** or **OK** on the cross-platform desktop.

Streamline 2

- I Right-click Streamlines and choose Streamline.
- **2** Select Boundaries 20, 21, 29, and 30 only.
- 3 In the Settings window for Streamline, locate the Streamline Positioning section.
- **4** In the **Number** text field, type **2**.
- **5** Locate the **Coloring and Style** section. Find the **Line style** subsection. From the **Type** list, choose **Tube**.

- 6 In the Tube radius expression text field, type 0.0025.
- 7 Select the Radius scale factor check box.
- 8 Find the Point style subsection. From the Color list, choose Custom.
- **9** On Windows, click the colored bar underneath, or if you are running the crossplatform desktop — the **Color** button.
- **IO** Click **Define custom colors**.
- II Set the RGB values to 0, 128, and 192, respectively.
- 12 Click Add to custom colors.
- **I3** Click **Show color palette only** or **OK** on the cross-platform desktop.

Streamlines

- I In the Model Builder window, click Streamlines.
- 2 In the Streamlines toolbar, click **I** Plot.
- **3** Click the 4 **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

Continue to reproduce Figure 3.

Pressure (spf)

- I In the Model Builder window, click Pressure (spf).
- 2 In the Settings window for 3D Plot Group, locate the Plot Settings section.
- **3** Clear the **Plot dataset edges** check box.

Surface

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Pressure (spf) node, then click Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Surface 2.

Line 1

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Pressure (spf) and choose Line.
- 2 In the Settings window for Line, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Edge 3D I.
- 4 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Coloring list, choose Uniform.
- **5** From the **Color** list, choose **Custom**.
- 6 On Windows, click the colored bar underneath, or if you are running the crossplatform desktop — the **Color** button.
- 7 Click Define custom colors.

- 8 Set the RGB values to 128, 128, and 128, respectively.
- 9 Click Add to custom colors.

IO Click **Show color palette only** or **OK** on the cross-platform desktop.

Pressure

In the Model Builder window, under Results>Pressure (spf) right-click Pressure and choose Delete. Click Yes to confirm.

Surface 2

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Pressure (spf) and choose Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Cut Plane I.
- **4** Locate the **Expression** section. In the **Expression** text field, type p.
- 5 Click to expand the Range section. Select the Manual color range check box.
- 6 In the Minimum text field, type -13000.
- 7 In the Maximum text field, type 106000.
- 8 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Color table list, choose JupiterAuroraBorealis.
- 9 From the Color table transformation list, choose Reverse.

Surface 3

- I Right-click Pressure (spf) and choose Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Cut Plane 2.
- **4** Locate the **Expression** section. In the **Expression** text field, type p.
- 5 Locate the Range section. Select the Manual color range check box.
- 6 In the Minimum text field, type -13000.
- 7 In the Maximum text field, type 106000.
- 8 Locate the Coloring and Style section. Clear the Color legend check box.
- 9 From the Color table list, choose JupiterAuroraBorealis.
- **IO** From the **Color table transformation** list, choose **Reverse**.

Pressure (spf)

In the Model Builder window, click Pressure (spf).

Streamline Surface 1

- I In the Pressure (spf) toolbar, click 间 More Plots and choose Streamline Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Streamline Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Cut Plane I.
- 4 Locate the Expression section. In the x component text field, type 0.
- 5 Locate the Streamline Positioning section. From the Positioning list, choose Magnitude controlled.
- 6 In the **Density** text field, type 16.
- 7 Locate the Coloring and Style section. Find the Line style subsection. From the Type list, choose Tube.
- 8 In the Tube radius expression text field, type 0.002.
- 9 Select the Radius scale factor check box.
- **IO** Find the **Point style** subsection. From the **Color** list, choose **Gray**.
- II From the **Type** list, choose **Arrow**.

Pressure (spf)

In the Model Builder window, click Pressure (spf).

Streamline Surface 2

- I In the Pressure (spf) toolbar, click 间 More Plots and choose Streamline Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Streamline Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Cut Plane 2.
- 4 Locate the Expression section. In the y component text field, type 0.
- 5 Locate the Streamline Positioning section. From the Positioning list, choose Magnitude controlled.
- 6 In the **Density** text field, type 16.
- 7 Locate the Coloring and Style section. Find the Line style subsection. From the Type list, choose Tube.
- 8 In the Tube radius expression text field, type 0.002.
- 9 Select the Radius scale factor check box.
- 10 Find the Point style subsection. From the Color list, choose Gray.
- II From the **Type** list, choose **Arrow**.

Pressure (spf)

I In the Model Builder window, click Pressure (spf).

- 2 In the Settings window for 3D Plot Group, locate the Title section.
- **3** From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.
- 4 In the **Pressure (spf)** toolbar, click **I** Plot.
- **5** Click the **F Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

The following steps reproduce Figure 4.

Vortex core

- I In the Home toolbar, click 🚛 Add Plot Group and choose 3D Plot Group.
- 2 In the Settings window for 3D Plot Group, type Vortex core in the Label text field.
- **3** Locate the **Title** section. From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.
- 4 Locate the Plot Settings section. Clear the Plot dataset edges check box.

Surface 1

- I Right-click Vortex core and choose Surface.
- 2 In the Settings window for Surface, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Surface 2.
- 4 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Coloring list, choose Uniform.
- 5 From the Color list, choose Gray.

Line 1

- I In the Model Builder window, right-click Vortex core and choose Line.
- 2 In the Settings window for Line, locate the Data section.
- 3 From the Dataset list, choose Edge 3D I.
- 4 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Coloring list, choose Uniform.
- 5 From the Color list, choose Custom.
- 6 On Windows, click the colored bar underneath, or if you are running the crossplatform desktop — the **Color** button.
- 7 Click Define custom colors.
- 8 Set the RGB values to 128, 128, and 128, respectively.
- 9 Click Add to custom colors.
- **IO** Click **Show color palette only** or **OK** on the cross-platform desktop.

Isosurface 1

I Right-click Vortex core and choose Isosurface.

- 2 In the Settings window for Isosurface, click Replace Expression in the upper-right corner of the Expression section. From the menu, choose Component 1 (comp1)>Turbulent Flow, v2-f>Velocity and pressure>Vorticity field 1/s>spf.vorticityz Vorticity field, z component.
- **3** Locate the **Levels** section. From the **Entry method** list, choose **Levels**.
- 4 In the Levels text field, type 90.
- **5** Select the **Interactive** check box.

Depending on the boundary conditions, the value may need to be adjusted by sliding the interactive bar. This visualizes the vortex core in Figure 4.

- 6 Locate the Coloring and Style section. From the Coloring list, choose Uniform.
- 7 From the Color list, choose Custom.
- 8 On Windows, click the colored bar underneath, or if you are running the crossplatform desktop — the **Color** button.
- **9** Click **Define custom colors**.
- **IO** Set the RGB values to 0, 128, and 192, respectively.
- II Click Add to custom colors.
- 12 Click Show color palette only or OK on the cross-platform desktop.
- **I3** Clear the **Color legend** check box.

Vortex core

- I In the Model Builder window, click Vortex core.
- 2 In the Vortex core toolbar, click **I** Plot.
- **3** Click the $4 \rightarrow$ **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

The following steps reproduce Figure 5.

Swirl velocity

- I In the Home toolbar, click 🚛 Add Plot Group and choose ID Plot Group.
- 2 In the Settings window for ID Plot Group, type Swirl velocity in the Label text field.
- 3 Click to expand the Title section. From the Title type list, choose Manual.
- 4 In the Title text area, type Swirl Velocity.
- 5 Locate the Plot Settings section. Select the x-axis label check box.
- 6 In the associated text field, type r (m).
- 7 Select the y-axis label check box.
- 8 In the associated text field, type Swirl velocity (m/s).

Line Graph I

In the Swirl velocity toolbar, click 📐 Line Graph.

Swirl velocity

- I In the Model Builder window, click Swirl velocity.
- 2 Locate the Data section. From the Dataset list, choose Cut Line 3D 1.

Line Graph I

- I In the Model Builder window, click Line Graph I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Line Graph, locate the y-Axis Data section.
- 3 In the **Expression** text field, type $(x*v-y*u)/sqrt(x^2+y^2+eps)$.
- 4 Locate the x-Axis Data section. From the Parameter list, choose Expression.
- **5** In the **Expression** text field, type -**x**.
- 6 In the Swirl velocity toolbar, click **I** Plot.
- 7 Click the 🕂 Zoom Extents button in the Graphics toolbar.