

The Error Function

Manuel Eberl

March 17, 2025

Abstract

This entry provides the definitions and basic properties of the complex and real error function erf and the complementary error function erfc . Additionally, it gives their full asymptotic expansions.

Contents

1	The complex and real error function	2
1.1	Auxiliary Facts	2
1.2	Definition of the error function	4
1.3	The complimentary error function	6
1.4	Specific facts about the complex case	9
1.5	Asymptotics	9

1 The complex and real error function

```
theory Error-Function
imports HOL-Complex-Analysis.Complex-Analysis HOL-Library.Landau-Symbols
begin
```

1.1 Auxiliary Facts

```
lemma tendsto-sandwich-mono:
```

```
assumes (λn. f (real n)) —→ (c::real)
assumes eventually (λx. ∀y z. x ≤ y ∧ y ≤ z —→ f y ≤ f z) at-top
shows (f —→ c) at-top
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma tendsto-sandwich-antimono:
```

```
assumes (λn. f (real n)) —→ (c::real)
assumes eventually (λx. ∀y z. x ≤ y ∧ y ≤ z —→ f y ≥ f z) at-top
shows (f —→ c) at-top
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma has-bochner-integral-completion [intro]:
```

```
fixes f :: 'a ⇒ 'b::{"banach, second-countable-topology"}
shows has-bochner-integral M f I ⇒ has-bochner-integral (completion M) f I
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma has-bochner-integral-imp-has-integral:
```

```
has-bochner-integral lebesgue (λx. indicator S x *R f x) I ⇒
(f has-integral (I :: 'b :: euclidean-space)) S
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma has-bochner-integral-imp-has-integral':
```

```
has-bochner-integral lborel (λx. indicator S x *R f x) I ⇒
(f has-integral (I :: 'b :: euclidean-space)) S
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma has-bochner-integral-erf-aux:
```

```
has-bochner-integral lborel (λx. indicator {0..} x *R exp (- x2)) (sqrt pi / 2)
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma has-integral-erf-aux: ((λt::real. exp (-t2)) has-integral (sqrt pi / 2)) {0..}
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma contour-integrable-on-linepath-neg-exp-squared [simp, intro]:
```

```
(λt. exp (-(t2))) contour-integrable-on linepath 0 z
⟨proof⟩
```

```
lemma holomorphic-on-chain:
```

```
g holomorphic-on t ⇒ f holomorphic-on s ⇒ f ` s ⊆ t ⇒
(λx. g (f x)) holomorphic-on s
⟨proof⟩
```

```

lemma holomorphic-on-chain-UNIV:
  g holomorphic-on UNIV  $\implies$  f holomorphic-on s  $\implies$ 
     $(\lambda x. g(fx))$  holomorphic-on s
   $\langle proof \rangle$ 

lemmas holomorphic-on-exp' [holomorphic-intros] =
  holomorphic-on-exp [THEN holomorphic-on-chain-UNIV]

lemma leibniz-rule-field-derivative-real:
  fixes f::'a:{real-normed-field, banach}  $\Rightarrow$  real  $\Rightarrow$  'a
  assumes fx:  $\bigwedge x t. x \in U \implies t \in \{a..b\} \implies ((\lambda x. fx t) \text{ has-field-derivative } fx t)$  (at x within U)
  assumes integrable-f2:  $\bigwedge x. x \in U \implies (fx) \text{ integrable-on } \{a..b\}$ 
  assumes cont-fx: continuous-on ( $U \times \{a..b\}$ ) ( $\lambda(x, t). fx x t$ )
  assumes U:  $x0 \in U$  convex U
  shows  $((\lambda x. \text{integral } \{a..b\} (fx)) \text{ has-field-derivative } \text{integral } \{a..b\} (fx x0))$  (at x0 within U)
   $\langle proof \rangle$ 

lemma has-vector-derivative-linepath-within [derivative-intros]:
  assumes [derivative-intros]:
    (f has-vector-derivative f') (at x within S) (g has-vector-derivative g') (at x within S)
    (h has-real-derivative h') (at x within S)
  shows  $((\lambda x. \text{linepath } (fx) (gx) (hx)) \text{ has-vector-derivative }$ 
     $(1 - h x) *_R f' + h x *_R g' - h' *_R (fx - gx)$  (at x within S)
   $\langle proof \rangle$ 

lemma has-field-derivative-linepath-within [derivative-intros]:
  assumes [derivative-intros]:
    (f has-field-derivative f') (at x within S) (g has-field-derivative g') (at x within S)
    (h has-real-derivative h') (at x within S)
  shows  $((\lambda x. \text{linepath } (fx) (gx) (hx)) \text{ has-field-derivative }$ 
     $(1 - h x) *_R f' + h x *_R g' - h' *_R (fx - gx)$  (at x within S)
   $\langle proof \rangle$ 

lemma continuous-on-linepath' [continuous-intros]:
  assumes [continuous-intros]: continuous-on A f continuous-on A g continuous-on A h
  shows continuous-on A  $(\lambda x. \text{linepath } (fx) (gx) (hx))$ 
   $\langle proof \rangle$ 

lemma contour-integral-has-field-derivative:
  assumes A: open A convex A a  $\in$  A z  $\in$  A
  assumes integrable:  $\bigwedge z. z \in A \implies f \text{ contour-integrable-on linepath } a z$ 
  assumes holo: f holomorphic-on A
  shows  $((\lambda z. \text{contour-integral } (\text{linepath } a z) f) \text{ has-field-derivative } f z)$  (at z)

```

within B)
⟨proof⟩

1.2 Definition of the error function

```

definition erf-coeffs :: nat ⇒ real where
  erf-coeffs n =
    (if odd n then 2 / sqrt pi * (-1) ^ (n div 2) / (of-nat n * fact (n div 2))
     else 0)

lemma summable-erf:
  fixes z :: 'a :: {real-normed-div-algebra, banach}
  shows summable (λn. of-real (erf-coeffs n) * z ^ n)
  ⟨proof⟩

definition erf :: ('a :: {real-normed-field, banach}) ⇒ 'a where
  erf z = (sum n. of-real (erf-coeffs n) * z ^ n)

lemma erf-converges: (λn. of-real (erf-coeffs n) * z ^ n) sums erf z
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erf-0 [simp]: erf 0 = 0
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erf-minus [simp]: erf (-z) = - erf z
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erf-of-real [simp]: erf (of-real x) = of-real (erf x)
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma of-real-erf-numeral [simp]: of-real (erf (numeral n)) = erf (numeral n)
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma of-real-erf-1 [simp]: of-real (erf 1) = erf 1
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erf-has-field-derivative:
  (erf has-field-derivative of-real (2 / sqrt pi) * exp(-(z ^ 2))) (at z within A)
  ⟨proof⟩

lemmas erf-has-field-derivative' [derivative-intros] =
  erf-has-field-derivative [THEN DERIV-chain2]

lemma erf-continuous-on: continuous-on A erf
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma continuous-on-compose2-UNIV:
  continuous-on UNIV g ⇒ continuous-on s f ⇒ continuous-on s (λx. g (f x))

```

$\langle proof \rangle$

lemmas *erf-continuous-on'* [*continuous-intros*] =
erf-continuous-on [THEN *continuous-on-compose2-UNIV*]

lemma *erf-continuous* [*continuous-intros*]: *continuous* (at x within A) *erf*
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemmas *erf-continuous'* [*continuous-intros*] =
continuous-within-compose2[*OF - erf-continuous*]

lemmas *tendsto-erf* [*tendsto-intros*] = *isCont-tendsto-compose*[*OF erf-continuous*]

lemma *erf-cnj* [*simp*]: *erf* (*cnj* z) = *cnj* (*erf* z)
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *integral-exp-minus-squared-real*:
assumes $a \leq b$
shows $((\lambda t. \exp(-(t^2))) \text{ has-integral } (\sqrt{\pi} / 2 * (\text{erf } b - \text{erf } a))) \{a..b\}$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *erf-real-altdef-nonneg*:
 $x \geq 0 \implies \text{erf}(x:\text{real}) = \sqrt{\pi} * \text{integral}\{0..x\} (\lambda t. \exp(-(t^2)))$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *erf-real-altdef-nonpos*:
 $x \leq 0 \implies \text{erf}(x:\text{real}) = -\sqrt{\pi} * \text{integral}\{0..-x\} (\lambda t. \exp(-(t^2)))$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *less-imp-erf-real-less*:
assumes $a < (b:\text{real})$
shows $\text{erf } a < \text{erf } b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *le-imp-erf-real-le*: $a \leq (b:\text{real}) \implies \text{erf } a \leq \text{erf } b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *erf-real-less-cancel* [*simp*]: $(\text{erf } (a :: \text{real}) < \text{erf } b) \longleftrightarrow a < b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *erf-real-eq-iff* [*simp*]: $\text{erf } (a :: \text{real}) = \text{erf } b \longleftrightarrow a = b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *erf-real-le-cancel* [*simp*]: $(\text{erf } (a :: \text{real}) \leq \text{erf } b) \longleftrightarrow a \leq b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma *inj-on-erf-real* [*intro*]: *inj-on* (*erf :: real* \Rightarrow *real*) A
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma strict-mono-*erf-real* [intro]: strict-mono (*erf* :: real \Rightarrow real)
<proof>

lemma mono-*erf-real* [intro]: mono (*erf* :: real \Rightarrow real)
<proof>

lemma *erf-real-ge-0-iff* [simp]: *erf* (x::real) $\geq 0 \longleftrightarrow x \geq 0$
<proof>

lemma *erf-real-le-0-iff* [simp]: *erf* (x::real) $\leq 0 \longleftrightarrow x \leq 0$
<proof>

lemma *erf-real-gt-0-iff* [simp]: *erf* (x::real) $> 0 \longleftrightarrow x > 0$
<proof>

lemma *erf-real-less-0-iff* [simp]: *erf* (x::real) $< 0 \longleftrightarrow x < 0$
<proof>

lemma *erf-at-top* [tendsto-intros]: ((*erf* :: real \Rightarrow real) $\longrightarrow 1$) at-top
<proof>

lemma *erf-at-bot* [tendsto-intros]: ((*erf* :: real \Rightarrow real) $\longrightarrow -1$) at-bot
<proof>

lemmas *tendsto-erf-at-top* [tendsto-intros] = filterlim-compose[OF *erf-at-top*]
lemmas *tendsto-erf-at-bot* [tendsto-intros] = filterlim-compose[OF *erf-at-bot*]

1.3 The complimentary error function

definition *erfc* where *erfc* z = 1 $- \text{erf } z$

lemma *erf-conv-erfc*: *erf* z = 1 $- \text{erfc } z$ *<proof>*

lemma *erfc-0* [simp]: *erfc* 0 = 1
<proof>

lemma *erfc-minus*: *erfc* (-z) = 2 $- \text{erfc } z$
<proof>

lemma *erfc-of-real* [simp]: *erfc* (of-real x) = of-real (*erfc* x)
<proof>

lemma *of-real-erfc-numeral* [simp]: of-real (*erfc* (numeral n)) = *erfc* (numeral n)
<proof>

lemma *of-real-erfc-1* [simp]: of-real (*erfc* 1) = *erfc* 1

$\langle proof \rangle$

lemma less-imp-erfc-real-less: $a < (b::real) \implies erfc\ a > erfc\ b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma le-imp-erfc-real-le: $a \leq (b::real) \implies erfc\ a \geq erfc\ b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-less-cancel [simp]: $(erfc\ (a :: real) < erfc\ b) \longleftrightarrow a > b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-eq-iff [simp]: $erfc\ (a::real) = erfc\ b \longleftrightarrow a = b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-le-cancel [simp]: $(erfc\ (a :: real) \leq erfc\ b) \longleftrightarrow a \geq b$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma inj-on-erfc-real [intro]: inj-on ($erfc :: real \Rightarrow real$) A
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma antimono-erfc-real [intro]: antimono ($erfc :: real \Rightarrow real$)
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-ge-0-iff [simp]: $erfc\ (x::real) \geq 1 \longleftrightarrow x \leq 0$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-le-0-iff [simp]: $erfc\ (x::real) \leq 1 \longleftrightarrow x \geq 0$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-gt-0-iff [simp]: $erfc\ (x::real) > 1 \longleftrightarrow x < 0$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-real-less-0-iff [simp]: $erfc\ (x::real) < 1 \longleftrightarrow x > 0$
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemma erfc-has-field-derivative:
(erfc has-field-derivative -of-real $(2 / sqrt\ pi) * exp\ (-z^2))$) (at z within A)
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemmas erfc-has-field-derivative' [derivative-intros] =
erfc-has-field-derivative [THEN DERIV-chain2]

lemma erfc-continuous-on: continuous-on A erfc
 $\langle proof \rangle$

lemmas erfc-continuous-on' [continuous-intros] =
erfc-continuous-on [THEN continuous-on-compose2-UNIV]

```

lemma erfc-continuous [continuous-intros]: continuous (at x within A) erfc
  ⟨proof⟩

lemmas erfc-continuous' [continuous-intros] =
  continuous-within-compose2[OF - erfc-continuous]

lemmas tendsto-erfc [tendsto-intros] = isCont-tendsto-compose[OF erfc-continuous]

lemma erfc-at-top [tendsto-intros]: ((erfc :: real ⇒ real) —→ 0) at-top
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erfc-at-bot [tendsto-intros]: ((erfc :: real ⇒ real) —→ 2) at-bot
  ⟨proof⟩

lemmas tendsto-erfc-at-top [tendsto-intros] = filterlim-compose[OF erfc-at-top]
lemmas tendsto-erfc-at-bot [tendsto-intros] = filterlim-compose[OF erfc-at-bot]

lemma integrable-exp-minus-squared:
  assumes A ⊆ {0..} A ∈ sets lborel
  shows set-integrable lborel A (λt::real. exp (-t2)) (is ?thesis1)
    and (λt::real. exp (-t2)) integrable-on A (is ?thesis2)
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma
  assumes x ≥ 0
  shows erfc-real-altdef-nonneg: erfc x = 2 / sqrt pi * integral {x..} (λt. exp (-t2))
    and has-integral-erfc: ((λt. exp (-t2)) has-integral (sqrt pi / 2 * erfc x))
  {x..}
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erfc-real-gt-0 [simp, intro]: erfc (x::real) > 0
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erfc-real-less-2 [intro]: erfc (x::real) < 2
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erf-real-gt-neg1 [intro]: erf (x::real) > -1
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erf-real-less-1 [intro]: erf (x::real) < 1
  ⟨proof⟩

lemma erfc-cnj [simp]: erfc (cnj z) = cnj (erfc z)
  ⟨proof⟩

```

1.4 Specific facts about the complex case

lemma *erf-complex-altdef*:

*erf z = of-real (2 / sqrt pi) * contour-integral (linepath 0 z) (λt. exp (-(t^2)))*
⟨proof⟩

lemma *erf-holomorphic-on*: *erf holomorphic-on A*
⟨proof⟩

lemmas *erf-holomorphic-on'* [*holomorphic-intros*] =
erf-holomorphic-on [*THEN holomorphic-on-chain-UNIV*]

lemma *erf-analytic-on*: *erf analytic-on A*
⟨proof⟩

lemma *erf-analytic-on'* [*analytic-intros*]:
assumes *f analytic-on A*
shows *(λx. erf (f x)) analytic-on A*
⟨proof⟩

lemma *erfc-holomorphic-on*: *erfc holomorphic-on A*
⟨proof⟩

lemmas *erfc-holomorphic-on'* [*holomorphic-intros*] =
erfc-holomorphic-on [*THEN holomorphic-on-chain-UNIV*]

lemma *erfc-analytic-on*: *erfc analytic-on A*
⟨proof⟩

lemma *erfc-analytic-on'* [*analytic-intros*]:
assumes *f analytic-on A*
shows *(λx. erfc (f x)) analytic-on A*
⟨proof⟩

end

1.5 Asymptotics

theory *Error-Function-Asymptotics*

imports *Error-Function Landau-Symbols.Landau-More*
begin

lemma *real-powr-eq-powerI*:
x > 0 ⇒ y = real y' ⇒ x powr y = x ^ y'
⟨proof⟩

definition *erf-remainder-integral* where
erf-remainder-integral n x =
*lim (λm. integral {x..x + real m} (λt. exp (-(t^2)) / t ^ (2*n)))*

The following is the remainder term in the asymptotic expansion of erfc .

definition *erf-remainder where*

```
erf-remainder n x =
((-1) ^ n * 2 * fact (2*n)) / (sqrt pi * 4 ^ n * fact n) *
erf-remainder-integral n x
```

lemma *erf-remainder-integral-aux-nonneg:*

```
x > 0 ==> integral {x..x + real m} (\lambda t. exp(-(t^2)) / t ^ (2*n)) ≥ 0
⟨proof⟩
```

lemma *erf-remainder-integral-aux-bound:*

```
assumes x > 0
shows norm (integral {x..x + real m} (\lambda t. exp(-t^2) / t ^ (2*n))) ≤ exp(-x^2)
/ x ^ (2*n+1)
and integral {x..x + real m} (\lambda t. exp(-t^2) / t ^ (2*n)) ≤ exp(-x^2) / x ^
(2*n+1)
⟨proof⟩
```

lemma *convergent-erf-remainder-integral:*

```
assumes x > 0
shows convergent (\lambda m. integral {x..x + real m} (\lambda t. exp(-(t^2)) / t ^ (2*n)))
⟨proof⟩
```

lemma *LIMSEQ-erf-remainder-integral:*

```
x > 0 ==> (\lambda m. integral {x..x + real m} (\lambda t. exp(-(t^2)) / t ^ (2*n))) —————→
erf-remainder-integral n x
⟨proof⟩
```

We show some bounds on the remainder term.

lemma

```
assumes x > 0
shows erf-remainder-integral-nonneg: erf-remainder-integral n x ≥ 0
and erf-remainder-integral-bound: erf-remainder-integral n x ≤ exp(-x^2) /
x ^ (2*n+1)
⟨proof⟩
```

lemma *erf-remainder-integral-bigo:*

```
erf-remainder-integral n ∈ O(\lambda x. exp(-x^2) / x ^ (2*n+1))
⟨proof⟩
```

theorem *erf-remainder-bigo:* $\text{erf-remainder } n \in O(\lambda x. \exp(-x^2) / x ^ (2*n+1))$
 $\langle\text{proof}\rangle$

Next, we unroll the remainder term to develop the asymptotic expansion.

lemma *erf-remainder-integral-0-conv-erfc:*

```
assumes (x::real) > 0
shows erf-remainder-integral 0 x = sqrt pi / 2 * erfc x
⟨proof⟩
```

The first remainder is the *erfc* function itself.

lemma *erf-remainder-0-conv-erfc*: $x > 0 \implies \text{erf-remainder } 0 x = \text{erfc } x$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

Also, the following recurrence allows us to get the next term of the asymptotic expansion.

lemma *erf-remainder-integral-conv-Suc*:
assumes $x > 0$
shows $\text{erf-remainder-integral } n x = \exp(-x^2) / (2 * x^{(2*n+1)}) -$
 $\quad \text{real}(2*n+1) / 2 * \text{erf-remainder-integral}(Suc n) x$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

lemma *erf-remainder-conv-Suc*:
assumes $x > 0$
shows $\text{erf-remainder } n x = (-1)^n * \text{fact}(2 * n) / (\sqrt{\pi} * 4^n * \text{fact}(n) * \exp(-x^2) / (x^{(2 * n + 1)})) + \text{erf-remainder}(Suc n) x$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

Finally, this gives us the full asymptotic expansion for *erfc*:

theorem *erfc-unroll*:
assumes $x > 0$
shows $\text{erfc } x = \exp(-x^2) / \sqrt{\pi} * (\sum_{i < n.} (-1)^i * \text{fact}(2*i) / (4^{i*fact i} / x^{(2*i+1)})) + \text{erf-remainder } n x$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

For convenience, we define another auxiliary function that is more suitable for use in an automated expansion framework, since it has a simple asymptotic expansion in powers of x .

definition *erfc-aux* **where** $\text{erfc-aux } x = \exp(x^2) * \sqrt{\pi} * \text{erfc } x$
definition *erf-remainder'* **where** $\text{erf-remainder}' n x = \exp(x^2) * \sqrt{\pi} * \text{erf-remainder } n x$

lemma *erfc-aux-unroll*:
 $x > 0 \implies \text{erfc-aux } x = (\sum_{i < n.} (-1)^i * \text{fact}(2*i) / (4^{i*fact i} / x^{(2*i+1)})) + \text{erf-remainder}' n x$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

lemma *erf-remainder'-bigo*: $\text{erf-remainder}' n \in O(\lambda x. 1 / x^{(2*n+1)})$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

lemma *has-field-derivative-erfc-aux*:
 $(\text{erfc-aux has-field-derivative } (2 * x * \text{erfc-aux } x - 2)) \text{ (at } x)$
 $\langle \text{proof} \rangle$

end