

Examples

I. Example - Application of conservation laws to electromagnetic absorption

Fig. 1 shows a body of mass m_0 that absorbs a photon of frequency f at a certain point in time.

Because of the absorption, the body changes from rest to movement with velocity v .



Fig. 1

By applying conservation laws before and after the absorption, we find:

For the momentum:

$$\frac{hf}{c} = m_1 v \quad (I.1)$$

For the energy:

$$m_0 c^2 + hf = m_1 c^2 \quad (I.2)$$

From (I.1) we have $m_1 = hf/cv$ and that one used in (I.2) leads to:

$$m_0 c^2 + hf = \frac{hf}{cv} c^2 \quad (I.3)$$

We solve the equation (I.3) for v :

$$v = \frac{chf}{m_0 c^2 + hf}$$

We now assume, absurdly, that the velocity v could be greater than or equal to the speed of light:

$$\frac{chf}{m_0 c^2 + hf} \geq c \quad (I.4)$$

From (I.4) follows:

$$m_0 c^2 \leq 0$$

From this the following statement can be made: the hypothesis that the velocity of a body is greater than or equal to the speed of light presupposes the untenable assumption that the mass of the body is equal to or less than zero.

II. Example - Application of conservation laws to electromagnetic emission

Fig. II shows a body of mass m_0 emitting a photon of frequency f at a given time.

Because of the emission, the body changes from the resting to the moving state with the speed v .

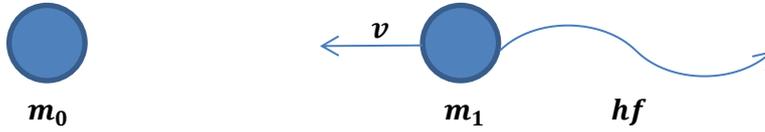


Fig. II

By applying the conservation laws before and after the emission, we note:

For the momentum:

$$0 = \frac{hf}{c} - m_1v \quad (\text{II.1})$$

For the energy:

$$m_0c^2 = m_1c^2 + hf \quad (\text{II.2})$$

From (II.1) we have $m_1 = hf/cv$ and that one used in (II.2) leads to:

$$m_0c^2 = \frac{hf}{cv}c^2 + hf \quad (\text{II.3})$$

We solve the equation (II.3) for v :

$$v = \frac{chf}{m_0c^2 - hf}$$

If we consider that the speed of a body is always lower than the speed of light, we can make the following inequality:

$$\frac{chf}{m_0c^2 - hf} < c$$

It follows:

$$hf < \frac{1}{2}m_0c^2 \quad (\text{II.4})$$

From (II.4) it can be concluded that if a single photon is emitted, its energy hf is always lower than half the internal energy of the emitting body.