

deliquescence

The process that occurs when the vapour pressure of the saturated aqueous solution of a substance is less than the vapour pressure of water in the ambient air. When water vapour is collected by the pure solid compound, a mixture of the solid and liquid or an aqueous solution of the compound forms until the substance is dissolved and is in equilibrium with its environment; at this time the vapour pressure of water over the aqueous solution will equal the partial pressure of water in the atmosphere in contact with it. A crystalline salt aerosol particle will deliquesce in the atmosphere when the relative humidity surpasses a characteristic value, the so-called deliquescence point.

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