

**sensitivity (in mass spectrometry)**

Two different measures of sensitivity are recommended. The first, which is suitable for relatively involatile materials as well as gases, depends upon the observed change in ion current for a particular amount or change of flow rate of sample through the ion source. A second method of stating sensitivity, that is most suitable for gases, depends upon the change of ion current related to the change of partial pressure of the sample in the ion source.

It is important that the relevant experimental conditions corresponding to sensitivity measurement should always be stated. These include in a typical case details of the instrument type, bombarding electron current, slit dimensions, angular collimation, gain of the multiplier detector, scan speed and whether the measured signal corresponds to a single mass peak or to the ion beam integrated over all masses. Some indication of the time involved in the determination should be given, e.g. counting time or band width. The sensitivity should be differentiated from the detection limit.

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