

transient (chemical) species

Relating to a short-lived reaction *intermediate*. It can be defined only in relation to a time scale fixed by the experimental conditions and the limitations of the technique employed in the detection of the intermediate. The term is a relative one.

Transient species are sometimes also said to be ‘metastable’. However, this latter term should be avoided, because it relates a thermodynamic term to a kinetic property, although most transients are also thermodynamically *unstable* with respect to reactants and products.

See also *persistent*.

1994, 66, 1174