

What is Electromagnetic Radiation?

Electromagnetic (EM) radiation is a self-propagating wave in space or through transparent matter. EM radiation has an electric and magnetic field component which oscillate in phase perpendicular to each other and to the direction of energy propagation. Electromagnetic radiation is classified into types according to the frequency of the wave, these types include (in order of increasing frequency): radio waves, microwaves, terahertz radiation, infrared radiation, visible light, ultraviolet radiation, X-rays and gamma rays. Of these, radio waves have the longest wavelengths and Gamma rays have the shortest. A small window of frequencies, called visible spectrum or light, is sensed by the eye of various organisms, with variations of the limits of this narrow spectrum. Light is sometimes used in a broader sense, referring to EM radiation.

EM radiation carries energy and momentum, which may be imparted when it interacts with matter.

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