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Investigation of the Temperature-Dependent Optical Properties of Wavelength Shifters Used in High-Energy Physics Experiments

Wavelength shifters (WLS) are widely employed in high-energy physics experiments to convert ultraviolet (UV) and vacuum ultraviolet (VUV) radiation into wavelengths compatible with the spectral sensitivity of photodetectors. Among the materials investigated in this work are p-terphenyl (PTP), tetraphenyl butadiene (TPB), and polyethylene naphthalate (PEN), which are commonly used in scintillation detectors, cryogenic systems, and optical readout devices based on silicon photomultipliers (SiPMs). The optical properties of these WLS materials are studied through temperature-dependent absorption and photoluminescence measurements performed over a temperature range extending from liquid argon conditions to room temperature. In addition, structural and topographical analyses are conducted to investigate the influence of morphological and crystalline characteristics on their optical response. The main objective is to evaluate the impact of temperature on spectral conversion efficiency, emission behavior, and optical stability. The observed temperature dependence is discussed in terms of the interplay between radiative and non-radiative relaxation processes. As temperature increases, thermally activated non-radiative pathways become more significant, enhancing thermal quenching mechanisms and consequently reducing the photoluminescence quantum yield. Furthermore, stronger electron-phonon coupling promotes spectral broadening and possible peak shifts, reflecting the increased contribution of vibrational modes to the excited-state dynamics. Temperature-induced structural effects, including thermal expansion, conformational rearrangements, and variations in crystallinity, may further modify the local electronic environment of the emitting centers, affecting both absorption and emission spectra. Understanding these effects is essential for establishing correlations between optical performance and material structure. The results provide valuable insights into the optimization of wavelength-shifting materials for photon detection systems operating under a wide range of thermal conditions, particularly in cryogenic environments employed by modern high-energy physics experiments.

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