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标题: Propagation of gamma rays and production of free electrons in air

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摘要: This paper is devoted to the analysis of production of free electrons in air by gamma-rays leaking from radioactive materials. A model based on the Klein-Nishina scattering theory is used to calculate scattering cross sections and approximate the electron production rate. The model includes the effects of primary gamma-quanta radiated by the source as well as that scattered in air. Comparison of the model with the MCNPX kinetic code (<http://mcnpx.lanl.gov/>) in a sample problem shows excellent agreement. The motivation for this research comes from the recently proposed concept of remote detection of concealed radioactive materials [V. L. Granatstein and G. S. Nusinovich, J. Appl. Phys. 108, 063304 (2010)]. The concept is based on the breakdown in air at the focal point of a high-power beam of electromagnetic waves produced by a THz gyrotron with a 10-20 ns pulse. The presence of a radioactive material can greatly exceed the production rate of free electrons over the natural background rate. Additional electrons act as seeds to initiate the breakdown and create sufficiently dense plasma at the focal region. The dense plasma can then be remotely detected as an unambiguous effect of the concealed radioactive material. (C) 2012 American Institute of Physics. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/1.4762007>]

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