

Problem

A charged particle in an EM-field is subject to a force $\frac{d\vec{p}}{dt} = e\vec{E} + \frac{e}{c}\vec{v} \times \vec{H}$. The relativistic energy of

the particle is $\epsilon_{\text{kin}} = \gamma mc^2$ and $\vec{p} = \gamma m\vec{v}$, from this

we can express \vec{p} as $\vec{p} = \frac{\epsilon_{\text{kin}}}{c^2}\vec{v}$. (Through this we

can make use of $\frac{d\epsilon_{\text{kin}}}{dt} = e\vec{E} \cdot \vec{v}$.) Substituting $\vec{p} = \frac{\epsilon_{\text{kin}}}{c^2}\vec{v}$

in the LHS of the Lorentz force eq:

$$\frac{d\vec{p}}{dt} = \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\epsilon_{\text{kin}}}{c^2} \vec{v} \right) = \frac{1}{c^2} \left(e(\vec{E} \cdot \vec{v})\vec{v} + \epsilon_{\text{kin}} \dot{\vec{v}} \right).$$

Equating this with the RHS:

$$\frac{1}{c^2} \left(e(\vec{E} \cdot \vec{v})\vec{v} + \epsilon_{\text{kin}} \dot{\vec{v}} \right) = e\vec{E} + \frac{e}{c}\vec{v} \times \vec{H}$$

$$\Leftrightarrow \dot{\vec{v}} = \frac{ec^2}{\epsilon_{\text{kin}}} \left[\vec{E} + \frac{1}{c}\vec{v} \times \vec{H} - \frac{1}{c^2}\vec{v}(\vec{v} \cdot \vec{E}) \right]$$

$$\text{and since } \epsilon_{\text{kin}} = \gamma mc^2 \Rightarrow \dot{\vec{v}} = \frac{ec^2}{\gamma mc^2} \left[\vec{E} + \frac{1}{c}\vec{v} \times \vec{H} - \frac{1}{c^2}\vec{v}(\vec{v} \cdot \vec{E}) \right]$$

$$= \frac{e}{\gamma m} \sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}} \left(\vec{E} + \frac{1}{c}\vec{v} \times \vec{H} - \frac{1}{c^2}\vec{v}(\vec{v} \cdot \vec{E}) \right)$$

□

(By doing this problem we realize that relativistic dynamics is given by $d\vec{p}/dt$ not $m\vec{a}$ and it is really the energy-momentum that determines the acceleration.)