**metastable ion**

_in mass spectrometry_

An ion which is formed with sufficient excitation to dissociate spontaneously during its flight from the ion source to the detector.

**Source:**
PAC, 1991, 63, 1541 (Recommendations for nomenclature and symbolism for mass spectroscopy (including an appendix of terms used in vacuum technology). (Recommendations 1991)) on page 1549