

Abstract Submitted
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Laser Induced Fluorescence for Singly Ionized Atomic Iodine¹

THOMAS STEINBERGER, EARL SCIME, West Virginia University — While xenon is the standard propellant for a wide range of plasma thrusters, xenon is expensive and xenon propellant systems require heavy compressed gas tanks, pressure regulators, and other bulky hardware. Iodine has similar mass and is much easier to acquire than xenon. Iodine's natural state of matter at room temperature is solid and is easily sublimated to gas with a simple heating element. This advantage for iodine is also a significant challenge when developing gas handling systems for iodine. Another challenge for iodine thrusters is a lack of well-defined spectroscopic diagnostics for single ionized iodine, specifically, a lack of a demonstrated laser induced fluorescence (LIF) scheme. We present emission spectroscopy measurements of iodine ion emission from the $6p^5P_3 - 5d^5D_4^o$ transition at 695.878 nm and the $6p^5P_3 - 6s^5S_2^o$ transition at 516.12 nm as a function of pressure and microwave power for a microwave excited iodine plasma in a sealed quartz cell at a pressure of 1 mTorr. The $5d^5D_4^o$ state is metastable and was identified by Hargus et al. [48th AIAA Joint Propulsion, 2012] as a strong candidate for an iodine ion LIF scheme. We will also present preliminary LIF measurements using a tunable dye laser operating at 695.878 nm.

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