light polarization

A light beam is said to be linearly polarized if the end-point of the electric vector moves in a straight line when viewed along the direction of propagation of the beam. If it moves along a circle the beam is circularly polarized and if it moves along an ellipse the beam is elliptically polarized.
Note: Circular polarization is said to be right-handed if the direction of rotation is clockwise when viewed against the direction of propagation and left-handed if the sense of the rotation is opposite. When the position of the endpoint of the electric vector is viewed at a given time *t* as a function of distance along x, it forms a left-handed helix if the light polarization is left-handed and a right-handed helix is it is right-handed.
N.B. This supersedes an earlier definition.
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