peak widths (in chromatography)

Peak-widths represent retention dimensions (time or volume) parallel to the baseline. If the baseline is not parallel to the axis representing time or volume, then the peak-widths are to be drawn parallel to this axis. Three peak-width values are commonly used in chromatography. Peak width at base (w_b) is the segment of the peak base intercepted by the tangents drawn to the inflection points on either side of the peak. Peak width at half height (w_h) is the length of the line parallel to the peak base at 50% of the peak height that terminates at the intersection with the two limbs of the peak. Peak width at inflection points (w_i) is the length of the line drawn between the inflection points parallel to the peak base.

The peak-width at base may be called the 'base width'. However, the peak width at half height must never be called the 'half width' because that has a completely different meaning. Also, the symbol $w_{1/2}$ should never be used instead of w_h.

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