Week 13 Worksheet
Scattering

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November 20, 2024

Exercise 1. Spin-spin Interaction. Consider two spin-1/2 particles that interact in a potential of the form

$$V(r) = V_{\mathrm{o}}(r) + V_{\mathrm{s}}(r)\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(1)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(2)}.$$

Suppose that both the orbital and spin interactions are short range in the interparticle separation r (i.e. vanish faster than $1/r$ as $r \to \infty$).

a) The first Born approximation for the scattering amplitude is given by

$$f(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{k}') = -\frac{4\pi^2 m}{\hbar^2} \langle \mathbf{k}' | V | \mathbf{k} \rangle .$$

Use a Fourier transform to express the scattering amplitude in terms of

$$\int e^{-i(\mathbf{k}-\mathbf{k}')\cdot\mathbf{r}_0} V_{\mathrm{o}}(r_0)\, \mathrm{d}^3 r_0,$$

and a similar expression for $V_{\mathrm{s}}(r_0)$.
Hint: Don't forget to account for the incoming and outgoing spins!

b) You computed on midterm 1 that the eigenvectors of $\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(1)} \cdot \boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(2)}$ are the singlet and triplet states, with eigenvalues -3 and 1, respectively. If the incoming particles have parallel spins, is a spin flip possible? Why or why not? Explain why the scattering is elastic or inelastic in this case, and then calculate the scattering amplitude.

c) Calculate the scattering amplitude for incident particles with opposite spins. You should be able to split it into two channels: an elastic one and an inelastic one (why?).