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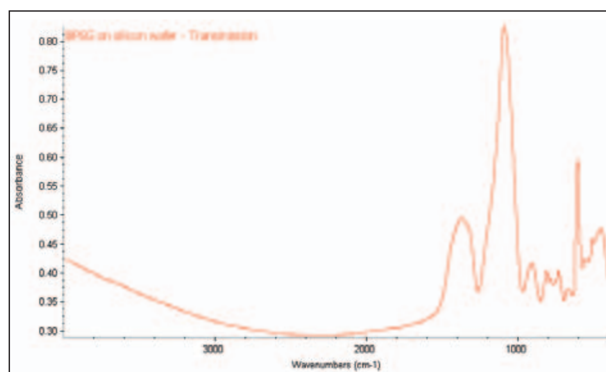
Semiconductor Applications – *FTIR Sampling Techniques Overview*

FTIR spectroscopy has established itself as a method of choice in several areas of industrial manufacturing. One of them is the quality control of semiconductor wafers. Here, the FTIR spectrometers are commonly used to measure Phosphosilicate glass (PSG) and Borophosphosilicate glass (BPSG) films, epitaxial film (EPI) thickness and interstitial oxygen and substitution carbon content.

Addition of boron and phosphorus to silicate glass during manufacturing improves the final product uniformity and reduces glass forming temperatures. Borophosphosilicate glass (BPSG) melts 100 degrees lower than Phosphosilicate glass (PSG) and offers better flow characteristics. To maintain and optimize production processes, evaluation and verification of doping levels is required. FTIR allows simultaneous measurements of boron and phosphorus as well as the thickness of the glass in a quick and nondestructive procedure. The measurements are based on the interpretation of transmission spectra and quantification of boron, phosphorus and Si-O bands. K-matrix or Partial Least Squares (PLS) methods are used for concentration/thickness calculations.

The epitaxial film (EPI) is a grown crystal layer having the same crystallographic orientation as the substrate crystal wafer. The epitaxial film differs from the substrate base as it is modified with various additives. Accurate, fast and precise determination of the EPI film thickness is important in the manufacturing process since film thickness and uniformity play a critical role in etching time and device yield across the wafer surface. Specular reflectance is used in FTIR measurements of the epitaxial layer thickness. The infrared beam enters the EPI layer, reflects off the substrate surface and makes another pass through the film when exiting. The film thickness calculations are based on one of the following methods:

- **Interference measurements** – also called Constant Angle Reflection Interference Spectroscopy or CARIS. This method uses the interference fringe pattern obtained in the specular reflectance experiment.
- **Interferogram subtraction** – based on the measurement of the primary and secondary interferogram of the sample and subtraction of this signal from that of the reference material.
- **Second Fourier Transform** of spectral response data (CEPSTRUM). This method takes the difference of two spectral response curves and performs a second Fourier transform which provides signal intensity vs. sample thickness information.



FTIR spectrum of BPSG on silicon wafer – transmission sampling mode

Oxygen and carbon may be introduced to the molten silicon during the manufacturing process. These impurities can be trapped in the crystal lattice and affect final product characteristics. For these reasons, both need to be monitored and quantified. FTIR spectroscopy (transmission measurements) provides excellent means to perform this analysis. The application uses the absorption bands of Si-C and Si-O-Si to calculate concentration levels of substitution carbon and interstitial oxygen. Beer's law is typically used to determine their concentrations.

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