

SEMI PV1-0211 (Reapproved 0318)

TEST METHOD FOR MEASURING TRACE ELEMENTS IN SILICON FEEDSTOCK FOR SILICON SOLAR CELLS BY HIGH-MASS RESOLUTION GLOW DISCHARGE MASS SPECTROMETRY

This Standard was technically approved by the Photovoltaic Global Technical Committee. This edition was approved for publication by the global Audits and Reviews Subcommittee on August 18, 2017. Available at www.semiviews.org and www.semi.org in March 2018; originally published March 2009; previously published February 2011.

1 Purpose

1.1 This Test Method can be used to monitor the bulk trace level elemental impurities in silicon feedstock that affect the performance of the silicon solar cell, in particular,

1. the concentration of intentionally added dopants, and unintentionally added dopants, that can affect the target bulk resistivity of the solar cell wafer,
2. the concentration of metals (e.g., iron) and other impurities that can degrade the minority carrier lifetime of the solar cell wafer.

1.2 This Test Method can be used to monitor or qualify Si feedstock to be used in either crystalline or multicrystalline silicon wafer production.

1.3 This Test Method can be used for research and development of silicon feedstock processes and products, crystalline and multicrystalline silicon growth processes.

1.4 This Test Method can be used to evaluate the failure or reduced performance of crystalline or multicrystalline silicon solar cells.

1.5 This Test Method can facilitate a unifying of protocols and test results among worldwide laboratories used for research and development support, monitoring or qualifying product for purchase or sale or internal use.

1.6 For most elements the detection limit for routine analysis is on the order of 1 to 100 µg/kg (1 to 100 ppbwt).

2 Scope

2.1 This Test Method covers the determination of total bulk concentrations of most of the periodic table (exceptions are atmospheric C, O, N, H and noble gases due to high background signals) in silicon feedstock using a magnetic sector high-mass resolution glow discharge mass spectrometry (HR-GDMS). This Test Method measures the total amount of each element, because this test method is independent of the element's chemistry or electrical activity in the silicon.

2.1.1 This Test Method does not include all the information needed to complete HR-GDMS analyses. Sophisticated computer-controlled laboratory equipment, skillfully used by an experienced operator, is required to achieve the desired sensitivity. This Test Method does cover the particular factors (e.g., specimen preparation, setting of relative sensitivity factors, determination of detection limits) known to affect the reliability of direct trace element analysis.

2.2 This Test Method can be used for silicon in a range of physical forms, including polysilicon powders, granules, flakes, chunks, and single and multicrystalline wafers and slugs.

2.3 This Test Method can be used for silicon feedstock irrespective of all dopant species and concentrations.

2.4 This Test Method is especially designed to be used for bulk analysis of silicon feedstock with elemental concentrations in the range of ppbwt to ppmwt.

2.5 The limit of detection is determined by either the BLANK value or by count rate limitations, and may vary with instrumentation.

2.6 This Test Method is complementary to:

2.6.1 Resistivity measurements that can determine the bulk resistivity of wafers, ingots or blocks, but cannot accurately determine the dopant concentrations when there are multiple dopant types at levels that can compensate or enhance resistivity in the silicon (SEMI MF397, SEMI MF43, SEMI MF525, SEMI MF673, SEMI MF84).

2.6.2 Low temperature Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (SEMI MF1630) that can determine trace level concentrations of dopants, but which is only effective for dopants in substitutional sites, (i.e., in a Si crystal) and therefore not effective in polysilicon unless a crystal is grown.

2.6.3 Photoluminescence (SEMI MF1389) that provides the concentrations of III-V impurities in single crystal silicon, but requires single crystal silicon and does not provide the concentrations of other trace bulk impurities which may affect performance of the silicon solar cell.

2.6.4 Secondary ion mass spectrometry that can provide bulk trace elemental concentrations in Si for the entire periodic table at detection limits similar to or better than glow discharge mass spectrometry (GDMS), but is primarily not as cost effective compared to GDMS unless a small number of elements are of interest.

2.6.5 Steady state surface photovoltage (SEMI MF391) that provides the minority carrier diffusion length of silicon, and can provide iron concentrations in boron-doped silicon, but does not provide the elemental concentrations that may affect the minority carrier diffusion length (except for iron in boron-doped silicon).

2.6.6 Photoconductivity decay (SEMI MF28) that provides the minority carrier lifetime in the bulk of the Si, but does not provide the elemental concentrations that may affect the minority carrier lifetime.

2.6.7 Acid extraction followed by atomic absorption spectroscopy (SEMI MF1724) or inductively coupled mass spectrometry that provides elemental contamination on the surface of the silicon, but not in the bulk silicon.

2.6.8 Microwave photoconductive decay (SEMI MF1535) that provides the carrier recombination lifetime in the bulk of the Si, but does not provide the elemental concentrations that may affect the carrier recombination lifetime.

NOTICE: SEMI Standards and Safety Guidelines do not purport to address all safety issues associated with their use. It is the responsibility of the users of the Documents to establish appropriate safety and health practices, and determine the applicability of regulatory or other limitations prior to use.

3 Limitations

3.1 Sample preparation and preparation of supporting material (if used) can contaminate the test specimen if not performed correctly.

3.2 Materials in the GDMS instrument, particularly in the ion source/sample interaction chamber, can introduce elemental contamination that gives false signals, not coming from the test sample. Analysis of a BLANK test specimen (see ¶ 8.4.3) can determine this.

3.3 Test samples of non-Si matrices that are analyzed prior to the Si test samples may introduce elemental cross-contamination in the ion optics of the detection scheme that may give false signals, not coming from the test sample. Analysis of a BLANK test specimen can determine this.

3.4 Ions of atoms and molecular combinations of silicon, plasma gas (argon), atmospheric impurities (hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen) and background from source components (usually tantalum) can significantly interfere with the determination of the ion current of the selected isotopes at trace level mass fractions. These include for example the interferences listed in Table 1.

3.5 Bias in reference materials used to calibrate GDMS measurements introduces bias to the quantification. This can include errors in the assigned value of the impurity in the reference material or non-uniformity of the impurity in the reference material. This may be particularly important in reference materials made from multicrystalline Si.

3.6 Mass interferences can introduce bias if the instrument mass resolution, or subsequent detection scheme, is not sufficient to exclude the interference.

3.7 The accuracy and precision of the measurement can degrade as the surface irregularities (e.g., roughness or sharp edges) of the specimen surface increases. This degradation can be limited or avoided by suitable preparation of the sample surface and sample shape such as chemical-mechanical polishing, electrochemical polishing and acid etching.

Table 1 Examples of Mass Interferences in the GDMS Measurement of Silicon Feedstock

$^{38}\text{Ar}^{++}$ interferes with $^{19}\text{F}^{+}$
$^{16}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}^{+}$ interferes with $^{32}\text{S}^{+}$
$^{36}\text{Ar}^{28}\text{Si}^{++}$ interferes with $^{32}\text{S}^{+}$
$^{30}\text{Si}^1\text{H}^{+}$ interferes with $^{31}\text{P}^{+}$
$^{38}\text{Ar}^1\text{H}^{+}$ interferes with $^{39}\text{K}^{+}$
SiO^{+} interferes with $^{44}\text{Ca}^{+}, ^{45}\text{Sc}^{+}, ^{46}\text{Ti}^{+}$
$^{12}\text{C}^{16}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}^{+}$ interferes with $^{44}\text{Ca}^{+}$
SiOH^{+} interferes with $^{45}\text{Sc}^{+}, ^{46}\text{Ti}^{+}, ^{47}\text{Ti}^{+}$
SiOH_2^{+} interferes with $^{46}\text{Ti}^{+}, ^{47}\text{Ti}^{+}, ^{48}\text{Ti}^{+}$
SiOH_3^{+} interferes with $^{47}\text{Ti}^{+}, ^{48}\text{Ti}^{+}, ^{49}\text{Ti}^{+}$
SiO_2^{+} interferes with $^{60}\text{Ni}^{+}, ^{61}\text{Ni}^{+}, ^{62}\text{Ni}^{+}$
SiO_2H^{+} interferes with $^{61}\text{Ni}^{+}, ^{62}\text{Ni}^{+}, ^{63}\text{Cu}^{+}$
$\text{SiO}_2\text{H}_2^{+}$ interferes with $^{62}\text{Ni}^{+}, ^{63}\text{Cu}^{+}, ^{64}\text{Zn}^{+}$
$\text{SiO}_2\text{H}_3^{+}$ interferes with $^{63}\text{Cu}^{+}, ^{64}\text{Zn}^{+}, ^{65}\text{Cu}^{+}$
$^{40}\text{Ar}^{12}\text{C}^{+}$ interferes with $^{52}\text{Cr}^{+}$
$^{40}\text{Ar}^{16}\text{O}^{+}$ interferes with $^{56}\text{Fe}^{+}$
$^{28}\text{Si}^{28}\text{Si}^{+}$ interferes with $^{56}\text{Fe}^{+}$
ArSi^{+} interferes with $^{68}\text{Zn}^{+}, ^{69}\text{Ga}^{+}, ^{70}\text{Ge}^{+}$
ArArH^{+} interferes with $^{77}\text{Se}^{+}, ^{79}\text{Br}^{+}$
$^{181}\text{Ta}^{16}\text{O}^{+}$ interferes with $^{197}\text{Au}^{+}$

#1 For a purpose of this Document the table of mass interferences is limited only to several common examples. Interferences should be always carefully scrutinized as they can vary from samples to sample due to varying level of impurities or purity of silicon feedstock.

4 Referenced Standards and Documents

4.1 SEMI Standards and Safety Guidelines

- SEMI MF28 — Test Method for Minority Carrier Lifetime in Bulk Germanium and Silicon by Measurement of Photoconductive Decay
- SEMI MF43 — Test Method for Resistivity of Semiconductor Materials
- SEMI MF84 — Test Method for Measuring Resistivity of Silicon Wafers With an In-Line Four-Point Probe
- SEMI MF391 — Test Method of Minority Carrier Diffusion Length in Extrinsic Semiconductors by Steady-State Surface Photovoltage
- SEMI MF397 — Test Method for Resistivity of Silicon Bars Using a Two-Point Probe
- SEMI MF525 — Test Method for Measuring Resistivity of Silicon Wafers Using Spreading Resistance Probe
- SEMI MF673 — Test Method for Measuring Resistivity of Semiconductor Wafers or Sheet Resistance of Semiconductor Films with a Noncontact Eddy-Current Gauge
- SEMI MF1389 — Test Method for Photoluminescence Analysis of Single Crystal Silicon for III-V Impurities
- SEMI MF1535 — Test Method for Carrier Recombination Lifetime in Silicon Wafers by Noncontact Measurement of Photoconductive Decay by Microwave Reflectance
- SEMI MF1630 — Test Method for Low Temperature FT-IR Analysis of Single Crystal Silicon for III-V Impurities

SEMI MF1724 — Test Method for Measuring Surface Metal Contamination of Polycrystalline Silicon by Acid Extraction-Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy

4.2 *ASTM Standards*¹

ASTM D1193 — Standard Specification for Reagent Water

ASTM E122 — Standard Practice for Choice of Sample Size to Estimate, With Specified Precision, the Average for a Characteristic of a Lot or Process

ASTM E135 — Standard Terminology Relating to Analytical Chemistry for Metals, Ores, and Related Materials

ASTM E691 — Standard Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method

ASTM F1593 — Standard Test Method for Trace Metallic Impurities in Electronic Grade Aluminum by High Mass-Resolution Glow-Discharge Mass Spectrometer

4.3 *Other Documents*

SEMI AUX019 — Research Report on Interlaboratory Study to Establish Precision Statements for SEMI PV1, Test Method for Measuring Trace Elements in Silicon Feedstock For Silicon Solar Cells by High-Mass Resolution Glow Discharge Mass Spectrometry

NOTICE: Unless otherwise indicated, all documents cited shall be the latest published versions.

5 Terminology

5.1 Terminology in this Test Method is consistent with Terminology in ASTM E135. Terminology related to precision in § 17 are consistent with ASTM E691. Required terminology specific to this Test Method, not covered in ASTM E135, is indicated in ¶ 5.3.

5.2 *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

5.2.1 *UMG* — upgraded metallurgical silicon

5.3 *Definitions*

5.3.1 *high resolution* — the designation of mass resolution above 3500.

5.3.2 *reference sample* — material accepted as suitable for use as a calibration/sensitivity reference standard by all parties concerned with the analyses.

5.3.3 *Si Feedstock* — the designation given to a silicon solid material by a manufacturer or purchaser whereby the characteristics of that material are sufficient to produce silicon solar cells.

5.3.4 *specimen* — a suitably sized piece cut from a reference or test sample, prepared for installation in the HR-GDMS ion source, and analyzed.

5.3.5 *test sample* — material (silicon) to be analyzed for trace impurities by this HR-GDMS method. Generally the test sample is extracted from a larger batch (lot, casting) of product and is intended to be representative of the batch.

6 Summary of Test Method

6.1 HR-GDMS is one the most convenient methods for direct determination of impurities in silicon, which occur in trace, mg/kg Si mass fraction levels or lower. Detection limits for most elements are in the atom-parts-per-billion range in Si materials. The procedure consists of forming the sample into rods with a cross-sectional area of 2 to 9 mm² and a length of 20 mm, or in the form of a plate or a disk of at least 15 mm in diameter. Powders, particulates, or small chunks (1 to 2 mm in size) are analyzed in the flat cell geometry after compacting the sample directly or pressing the sample into high purity (7N+) supporting medium, such as indium or graphite.

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