



US008497420B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Carroll et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,497,420 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Jul. 30, 2013**

(54) **THICK-FILM PASTES CONTAINING LEAD- AND TELLURIUM-OXIDES, AND THEIR USE IN THE MANUFACTURE OF SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICES**

(75) Inventors: **Alan Frederick Carroll**, Raleigh, NC (US); **Kenneth Warren Hang**, Hillsborough, NC (US); **Brian J. Laughlin**, Apex, NC (US); **Kurt Richard Mikeska**, Hockessin, DE (US); **Carmine Torardi**, Wilmington, DE (US); **Paul Douglas Vernooy**, Hockessin, DE (US)

(73) Assignee: **E I du Pont de Nemours and Company**, Wilmington, DE (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.
This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/100,533**

(22) Filed: **May 4, 2011**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**
US 2011/0308595 A1 Dec. 22, 2011

Related U.S. Application Data
(60) Provisional application No. 61/331,006, filed on May 4, 2010, provisional application No. 61/440,117, filed on Feb. 7, 2011, provisional application No. 61/445,508, filed on Feb. 22, 2011, provisional application No. 61/467,003, filed on Mar. 24, 2011.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
H01L 31/00 (2006.01)
H01L 21/44 (2006.01)

H01B 1/02 (2006.01)
H01B 1/22 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **136/256**; 252/513; 257/741; 257/E23.01; 257/E21.159; 438/660

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 136/256; 252/513; 257/741, E23.01, 257/E21.159; 438/660
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

4,293,451 A 10/1981 Ross
4,643,913 A 2/1987 Okunaka et al.
5,066,621 A 11/1991 Akhtar
5,118,362 A 6/1992 St. Angelo et al.
5,188,990 A 2/1993 Dumesnil et al.

(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

EP 0463826 A1 1/1992
JP 59033869 A 2/1984

(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

STIC search results.*

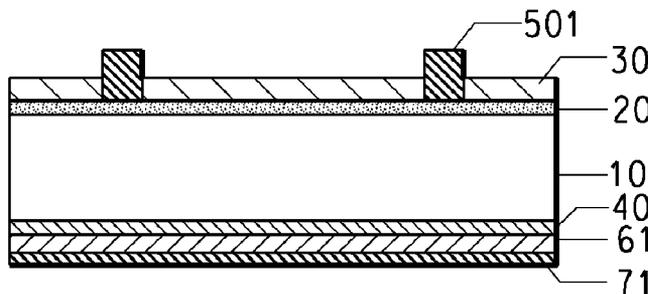
(Continued)

Primary Examiner — Jonathan Johnson
Assistant Examiner — Andrew Golden

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a thick-film paste for printing the front-side of a solar cell device having one or more insulating layers. The thick-film paste comprises an electrically conductive metal, and a lead-tellurium-oxide dispersed in an organic medium.

14 Claims, 1 Drawing Sheet



U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,336,644	A	8/1994	Akhtar et al.	
5,663,109	A	9/1997	Dietz et al.	
6,204,443	B1	3/2001	Kiso et al.	
7,494,607	B2	2/2009	Wang et al.	
7,736,546	B2	6/2010	Prunchak	
2006/0272700	A1	12/2006	Young et al.	
2008/0223446	A1*	9/2008	Wang et al.	136/265
2009/0095344	A1	4/2009	Machida et al.	
2011/0095240	A1	4/2011	Nakamura et al.	
2011/0192457	A1	8/2011	Nakayama et al.	

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP	5-175254	A	7/1993
JP	10340621	A	12/1998
JP	2011118425	A	4/2001
JP	2001284754	A	10/2001
JP	2009-99781	A	5/2009
JP	2010-283340		12/2010
WO	9200925	A1	1/1992
WO	2008134417	A1	11/2008
WO	2010123967	A1	10/2010
WO	2012099877	A1	7/2012
WO	2012116052	A1	8/2012

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Zhang, Y. et al., "Effect of the Interface Glass on Electrical Performance of Screen Printed AG Thick-Film Contacts of SI Solar Cells", Thin Solid Films, vol. 518(24), 2010, E111-E113.

International Search Report, US Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, IN PCT/US2011/035154, PCT Counterpart of the Present U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,533.

Zhang, Y. et al., "Thermal Properties of Glass Frit and Effects on SI Solar Cells", Materials Chemistry and Physics, vol. 114 (1), 2009, 319-322.

EL0979 International Search Report, US Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, in PCT/US2011/035131, PCT Counterpart of the Present U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,540.

EL0985 International Search Report, US Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, in PCT/US/2011/03519, PCT Counterpart of the Present U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,550.

EL0988 International Search Report, US Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, in PCT/US/2011/035145, PCT Counterpart of the Present U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,563.

International Search Report dated Aug. 3, 2012, International Application No. PCT/US2012/026085.

International Search Report dated Oct. 18, 2012, International Application No. PCT/US2012/030475.

International Search Report, US Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, in PCT/US2011/035167, PCT Counterpart of the Present U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,619.

International Search Report, US Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, in PCT/US2011/035139, PCT Counterpart of the Present U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,550.

Kurihara, Yasutoshi et al., "AG-PD Thick Film Conductor for AIN Ceramics", IEEE Transactions on Components, Hybrids, and Manufacturing Technology, vol. 13(2), 1990, 306-312.

Zhang, Y. et al., "Thermal Properties of Glass Frit and Effects on SI Solar Cells", Materials Chemist and Physics, vol. 114 (1), 2009, 319-322.

Non-Final Office Action mailed May 14, 2013, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/401,191.

Non-Final Office Action mailed Dec. 22, 2011, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,619.

Non-Final Office Action mailed Jul. 19, 2012, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,619.

Final Office Action mailed Mar. 28, 2013, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,619.

Non-Final Office Action mailed May 10, 2012, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,540.

Final Office Action mailed Mar. 14, 2013, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,540.

Non-Final Office Action mailed Dec. 22, 2011, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,550.

Non-Final Office Action mailed Sep. 6, 2012, in U.S. Appl. 13/100,550.

Final Office Action mailed Mar. 1, 2013, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,540.

Non-Final Office Action mailed May 11, 2012, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,563.

Final Office Action mailed Mar. 1, 2013, in U.S. Appl. No. 13/100,563.

* cited by examiner

FIG. 1A



FIG. 1B

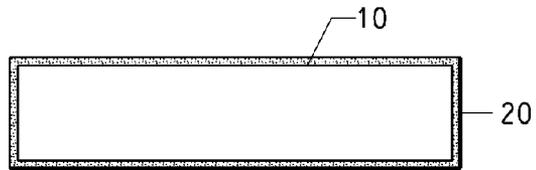


FIG. 1C



FIG. 1D

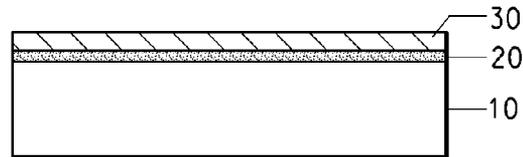


FIG. 1E

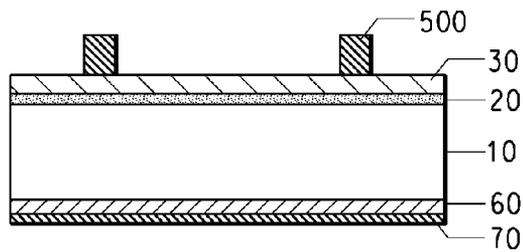
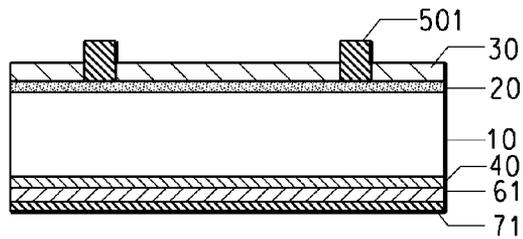


FIG. 1F



1

**THICK-FILM PASTES CONTAINING LEAD-
AND TELLURIUM-OXIDES, AND THEIR USE
IN THE MANUFACTURE OF
SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICES**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a thick-film paste for printing the front-side of a solar cell device having one or more insulating layers. The thick-film paste includes an electrically conductive metal, and a lead-tellurium-oxide dispersed in an organic medium.

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

A conventional solar cell structure with a p-type base has a negative electrode that is typically on the front-side (sun-side) of the cell and a positive electrode on the back-side. Radiation of an appropriate wavelength falling on a p-n junction of a semiconductor body serves as a source of external energy to generate hole-electron pair charge carriers. These electron-hole pair charge carriers migrate in the electric field generated by the p-n semiconductor junction and are collected by a conductive grid or metal contact applied to the surface of the semiconductor. The current generated flows to the external circuit.

Conductive pastes (also termed inks) are typically used to form the conductive grids or metal contacts. Conductive pastes typically include a glass frit, a conductive species (e.g., silver particles), and an organic medium. To form the metal contacts, conductive pastes are printed onto a substrate as grid lines or other patterns and then fired, during which electrical contact is made between the grid lines and the semiconductor substrate.

However, crystalline silicon PV cells are typically coated with an anti-reflective coating such as silicon nitride, titanium oxide or silicon oxide to promote light adsorption, which increases the cell's efficiency. Such anti-reflective coatings also act as an insulator, which impairs the flow of electrons from the substrate to the metal contacts. To overcome this problem, the conductive ink should penetrate the anti-reflective coating during firing to form metal contacts having electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate. Formation of a strong bond between the metal contact and the substrate is also desirable.

The ability to penetrate the anti-reflective coating and form a strong bond with the substrate upon firing is highly dependent on the composition of the conductive ink and firing conditions. Efficiency, a key measure of PV cell performance, is also influenced by the quality of the electrical contact made between the fired conductive ink and the substrate.

To provide an economical process for manufacturing PV cells with good efficiency, there is a need for thick-film paste compositions that can be fired at low temperatures to penetrate an anti-reflective coating and provide good electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate.

SUMMARY

One aspect of the present invention is a thick-film paste composition including:

- a) 85 to 99.5% by weight of an electrically conductive metal or derivative thereof, based on total solids in the composition;
- b) 0.5 to 15% by weight based on solids of a lead-tellurium-oxide, wherein the mole ratio of lead to tellurium of the lead-tellurium-oxide is between 5/95 and 95/5; and
- c) an organic medium.

2

Another aspect of the present invention is a process including:

- (a) providing a semiconductor substrate including one or more insulating films deposited thereon;
- (b) applying a thick-film paste composition onto the one or more insulating films to form a layered structure, wherein the thick-film paste composition includes:
 - i) 85 to 99.5% by weight of an electrically conductive metal or derivative thereof, based on total solids in the composition;
 - ii) 0.5 to 15% by weight based on solids of a lead-tellurium-oxide, wherein the mole ratio of lead to tellurium of the lead-tellurium-oxide is between 5/95 and 95/5; and
 - iii) an organic medium; and
- (c) firing the semiconductor substrate, one or more insulating films, and thick-film paste, forming an electrode in contact with the one or more insulating layers and in electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate.

Another aspect of this invention is an article including:

- a) a semiconductor substrate;
- b) one or more insulating layers on the semiconductor substrate; and
- c) an electrode in contact with the one or more insulating layers and in electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate, the electrode including an electrically conductive metal and lead-tellurium-oxide.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a process flow diagram illustrating the fabrication of a semiconductor device. Reference numerals shown in FIG. 1 are explained below.

- 10: p-type silicon substrate
- 20: n-type diffusion layer
- 30: insulating film
- 40: p+ layer (back surface field, BSF)
- 60: aluminum paste deposited on back-side
- 61: aluminum back electrode (obtained by firing back-side aluminum paste)
- 70: silver or silver/aluminum paste deposited on back-side
- 71: silver or silver/aluminum back electrode (obtained by firing back-side silver paste)
- 500: thick-film paste deposited on front-side
- 501: front electrode (formed by firing the thick-film paste)

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Solar-powered photovoltaic systems are considered to be environmentally friendly in that they reduce the need for fossil fuels.

The present invention provides compositions that can be used to manufacture photovoltaic devices with improved electrical performance.

The thick-film paste composition includes:

- a) 85 to 99.5% by weight of an electrically conductive metal or derivative thereof, based on total solids in the composition;
- b) 0.5 to 15% by weight based on solids of a lead-tellurium-oxide, wherein the mole ratio of lead to tellurium of the lead-tellurium-oxide is between 5/95 and 95/5; and
- c) an organic medium.

As defined herein, the organic medium is not considered to be part of the solids including the thick-film paste composition.

Electrically Conductive Metal

The electrically conductive metal is selected from the group consisting of silver, copper and palladium. The electrically conductive metal can be in a flake form, a spherical form, a granular form, a crystalline form, a powder, or other irregular forms and mixtures thereof. The electrically conductive metal can be provided in a colloidal suspension.

When the metal is silver, it can be in the form of silver metal, silver derivatives, or mixtures thereof. Exemplary derivatives include: alloys of silver, silver oxide (Ag_2O), silver salts such as AgCl , AgNO_3 , AgOOCCH_3 (silver acetate), AgOOCF_3 (silver trifluoroacetate), or silver orthophosphate, Ag_3PO_4 , for example. Other forms of silver compatible with the other thick-film paste components can also be used.

In one embodiment, the electrically conductive metal or derivatives thereof is from about 85 to about 99.5 wt % of the solid components of the thick-film paste composition. In a further embodiment, the electrically conductive metal or derivatives thereof is from about 90 to about 95 wt % of the solid components of the thick-film paste composition.

In an embodiment, the solids portion of the thick-film paste composition includes about 85 to about 99.5 wt % spherical silver particles. In one embodiment, the solids portion of the thick-film paste composition includes about 85 to about 90 wt % silver particles and about 1 to about 9.5 wt % silver flakes.

In one embodiment, the thick-film paste composition includes coated silver particles that are electrically conductive. Suitable coatings include phosphate and surfactants. Suitable surfactants include polyethyleneoxide, polyethyleneglycol, benzotriazole, poly(ethyleneglycol)acetic acid, lauric acid, oleic acid, capric acid, myristic acid, linolic acid, stearic acid, palmitic acid, stearate salts, palmitate salts, and mixtures thereof. The salt counter-ions can be ammonium, sodium, potassium and mixtures thereof.

The particle size of the silver is not subject to any particular limitation. In one embodiment, an average particle size is 0.5-10 microns; in another embodiment, the average particle size is 1-5 microns. As used herein, "particle size" or "D50" is intended to mean "average particle size"; "average particle size" means the 50% volume distribution size. Volume distribution size may be determined by LASER diffraction and dispersion method using a Microtrac particle size analyzer. Lead-Tellurium-Oxide

The lead-tellurium-oxide (Pb—Te—O) can be prepared by mixing TeO_2 and lead oxide powders, heating the powder mixture in air or an oxygen-containing atmosphere to form a melt, quenching the melt, grinding and ball-milling the quenched material, and screening the milled material to provide a powder with the desired particle size. The lead oxide powders may include one or more component selected from the group consisting of: PbO , Pb_3O_4 , and PbO_2 . Firing the mixture of lead and tellurium oxides is typically conducted to a peak temperature of 800 to 1200° C. The molten mixture can be quenched, for example, on a stainless steel platen or between counter-rotating stainless steel rollers to form a thick platelet. The resulting platelet can be milled to form a powder. Typically, the milled powder has a D_{50} of 0.1 to 3.0 microns. In an embodiment, the Pb—Te—O formed in this way may be at least partially crystalline.

Typically, the mixture of PbO and TeO_2 powders includes 5 to 95 mol % of lead oxide and 5 to 95 mol % of tellurium oxide, based on the combined powders. In one embodiment, the mixture of PbO and TeO_2 powders includes 30 to 85 mol % of lead oxide and 15 to 70 mol % of tellurium oxide, based on the combined powders. In another embodiment, the mix-

ture of PbO and TeO_2 powders includes 30 to 65 mol % of lead oxide and 35 to 70 mol % of tellurium oxide, based on the combined powders.

In some embodiments, the mixture of PbO and TeO_2 powders further includes one or more other metal compounds. Suitable other metal compounds include TiO_2 , LiO_2 , B_2O_3 , PbF_2 , SiO_2 , Na_2O , K_2O , Rb_2O , Cs_2O , Al_2O_3 , MgO , CaO , SrO , BaO , V_2O_5 , ZrO_2 , MoO_3 , Mn_2O_3 , Ag_2O , ZnO , Ga_2O_3 , GeO_2 , In_2O_3 , SnO_2 , Sb_2O_3 , Bi_2O_3 , BiF_3 , P_2O_5 , CuO , NiO , Cr_2O_3 , Fe_2O_3 , CoO , CO_2O_3 , and CeO_2 . Tables 1 and 2 list some examples of powder mixtures containing PbO , TeO_2 and other optional metal compounds that can be used to make lead-tellurium oxides. This list is meant to be illustrative, not limiting.

Therefore as used herein, the term " Pb—Te—O " may also include metal oxides that contain oxides of one or more elements selected from the group consisting of Si, Sn, Li, Ti, Ag, Na, K, Rb, Cs, Ge, Ga, In, Ni, Zn, Ca, Mg, Sr, Ba, Se, Mo, W, Y, As, La, Nd, Co, Pr, Gd, Sm, Dy, Eu, Ho, Yb, Lu, Bi, Ta, V, Fe, Hf, Cr, Cd, Sb, Bi, F, Zr, Mn, P, Cu, Ce, and Nb. Organic Medium

The inorganic components of the thick-film paste composition are mixed with an organic medium to form viscous pastes having suitable consistency and rheology for printing. A wide variety of inert viscous materials can be used as the organic medium. The organic medium can be one in which the inorganic components are dispersible with an adequate degree of stability during manufacturing, shipping and storage of the pastes, as well as on the printing screen during a screen-printing process.

Suitable organic media have rheological properties that provide stable dispersion of solids, appropriate viscosity and thixotropy for screen printing, appropriate wettability of the substrate and the paste solids, a good drying rate, and good firing properties. The organic medium can contain thickeners, stabilizers, surfactants, and/or other common additives. The organic medium can be a solution of polymer(s) in solvent(s). Suitable polymers include ethyl cellulose, ethylhydroxyethyl cellulose, wood rosin, mixtures of ethyl cellulose and phenolic resins, polymethacrylates of lower alcohols, and the monobutyl ether of ethylene glycol monoacetate. Suitable solvents include terpenes such as alpha- or beta-terpineol or mixtures thereof with other solvents such as kerosene, dibutylphthalate, butyl carbitol, butyl carbitol acetate, hexylene glycol and alcohols with boiling points above 150° C., and alcohol esters. Other suitable organic medium components include: bis(2-(2-butoxyethoxy)ethyl adipate, dibasic esters such as DBE, DBE-2, DBE-3, DBE-4, DBE-5, DBE-6, DBE-9, and DBE 1B, octyl epoxy tallate, isotetradecanol, and pentaerythritol ester of hydrogenated rosin. The organic medium can also include volatile liquids to promote rapid hardening after application of the thick-film paste composition on a substrate.

The optimal amount of organic medium in the thick-film paste composition is dependent on the method of applying the paste and the specific organic medium used. Typically, the thick-film paste composition contains 70 to 95 wt % of inorganic components and 5 to 30 wt % of organic medium.

If the organic medium includes a polymer, the organic composition may include 8 to 15 wt % polymer.

Preparation of the Thick-Film Paste Composition

In one embodiment, the thick-film paste composition can be prepared by mixing the conductive metal powder, the Pb—Te—O powder, and the organic medium in any order. In some embodiments, the inorganic materials are mixed first, and they are then added to the organic medium. The viscosity

can be adjusted, if needed, by the addition of solvents. Mixing methods that provide high shear may be useful.

Another aspect of the present invention is a process comprising:

a) providing a semiconductor substrate comprising one or more insulating films deposited onto at least one surface of the semiconductor substrate;

(b) applying a thick-film paste composition onto at least a portion of the one or more insulating films to form a layered structure, wherein the thick-film paste composition includes:

i) 85 to 99.5% by weight of an electrically conductive metal or derivative thereof, based on total solids in the composition;

ii) 0.5 to 15% by weight based on solids of a lead-tellurium-oxide, wherein the mole ratio of lead to tellurium of the lead-tellurium-oxide is between 5/95 and 95/5; and

iii) an organic medium; and

(c) firing the semiconductor substrate, one or more insulating films, and thick-film paste forming an electrode in contact with the one or more insulating layers and in electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate.

In one embodiment, a semiconductor device is manufactured from an article comprising a junction-bearing semiconductor substrate and a silicon nitride insulating film formed on a main surface thereof. The process includes the steps of applying (for example, coating or screen-printing) onto the insulating film, in a predetermined shape and thickness and at a predetermined position, a thick-film paste composition having the ability to penetrate the insulating layer, then firing so that thick-film paste composition reacts with the insulating film and penetrates the insulating film, thereby effecting electrical contact with the silicon substrate.

One embodiment of this process is illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 1(a) shows a single-crystal silicon or multi-crystalline silicon p-type substrate 10.

In FIG. 1(b), an n-type diffusion layer 20 of the reverse polarity is formed to create a p-n junction. The n-type diffusion layer 20 can be formed by thermal diffusion of phosphorus (P) using phosphorus oxychloride (POCl_3) as the phosphorus source. In the absence of any particular modifications, the n-type diffusion layer 20 is formed over the entire surface of the silicon p-type substrate. The depth of the diffusion layer can be varied by controlling the diffusion temperature and time, and is generally formed in a thickness range of about 0.3 to 0.5 microns. The n-type diffusion layer may have a sheet resistivity of several tens of ohms per square.

After protecting one surface of the n-type diffusion layer 20 with a resist or the like, as shown in FIG. 1(c), the n-type diffusion layer 20 is removed from most surfaces by etching so that it remains only on one main surface. The resist is then removed using an organic solvent or the like.

Next, in FIG. 1(d), an insulating layer 30 which also functions as an antireflection coating is formed on the n-type diffusion layer 20. The insulating layer is commonly silicon nitride, but can also be a $\text{SiN}_x\text{:H}$ film (i.e., the insulating film includes hydrogen for passivation during subsequent firing processing), a titanium oxide film, or a silicon oxide film. A thickness of about 700 to 900 Å of a silicon nitride film is suitable for a refractive index of about 1.9 to 2.0. Deposition of the insulating layer 30 can be by sputtering, chemical vapor deposition or other methods.

Next, electrodes are formed. As shown in FIG. 1(e), a thick-film paste composition of this invention is screen-printed on the insulating film 30, and then dried. In addition, aluminum paste 60 and back-side silver paste 70 are screen-printed onto the back-side of the substrate, and successively

dried. Firing is carried out at a temperature of 750 to 850° C. for a period of from several seconds to several tens of minutes.

Consequently, as shown in FIG. 1(f), during firing, aluminum diffuses from the aluminum paste into the silicon substrate on the back-side, thereby forming a p+ layer 40, containing a high concentration of aluminum dopant. This layer is generally called the back surface field (BSF) layer, and helps to improve the energy conversion efficiency of the solar cell. Firing converts the dried aluminum paste 60 to an aluminum back electrode 61. The back-side silver paste 70 is fired at the same time, becoming a silver or silver/aluminum back electrode 71. During firing, the boundary between the back-side aluminum and the back-side silver assumes the state of an alloy, thereby achieving electrical connection. Most areas of the back electrode are occupied by the aluminum electrode, owing in part to the need to form a p+ layer 40. At the same time, because soldering to an aluminum electrode is impossible, the silver or silver/aluminum back electrode is formed on limited areas of the backside as an electrode for interconnecting solar cells by means of copper ribbon or the like.

On the front-side, the thick-film paste composition 500 of the present invention sinters and penetrates through the insulating film 30 during firing, and thereby achieves electrical contact with the n-type diffusion layer 20. This type of process is generally called "fire through." This fired-through state, i.e., the extent to which the paste melts and passes through the insulating film 30, depends on the quality and thickness of the insulating film 30, the composition of the paste, and on the firing conditions. When fired, the paste 500 becomes the electrode 501, as shown in FIG. 1(f).

In one embodiment, the insulating film is selected from titanium oxide, aluminum oxide, silicon nitride, $\text{SiN}_x\text{:H}$, silicon oxide, silicon carbon oxynitride, a silicon nitride film containing carbon, a silicon oxide film containing carbon, and silicon oxide/titanium oxide films. The silicon nitride film can be formed by sputtering, a plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD), or a thermal CVD process. In one embodiment, the silicon oxide film is formed by thermal oxidation, sputtering, or thermal CFD or plasma CFD. The titanium oxide film can be formed by coating a titanium-containing organic liquid material onto the semiconductor substrate and firing, or by a thermal CVD.

In this process, the semiconductor substrate can be a single-crystal or multi-crystalline silicon electrode.

Suitable insulating films include one or more components selected from: aluminum oxide, titanium oxide, silicon nitride, $\text{SiN}_x\text{:H}$, silicon oxide, silicon carbon oxynitride, a silicon nitride film containing carbon, a silicon oxide film containing carbon, and silicon oxide/titanium oxide. In one embodiment of the invention, the insulating film is an anti-reflection coating (ARC). The insulating film can be applied to a semiconductor substrate, or it can be naturally forming, such as in the case of silicon oxide.

In one embodiment, the insulating film includes a layer of silicon nitride. The silicon nitride can be deposited by CVD (chemical vapor deposition), PECVD (plasma-enhanced chemical vapor deposition), sputtering, or other methods.

In one embodiment, the silicon nitride of the insulating layer is treated to remove at least a portion of the silicon nitride. The treatment can be a chemical treatment. The removal of at least a portion of the silicon nitride may result in an improved electrical contact between the conductor of the thick-film paste composition and the semiconductor substrate. This may result in improved efficiency of the semiconductor device.

TABLE 1-continued

Illustrative examples of powder mixtures that can be used to make suitable lead-tellurium oxides.

Powder mixture	Wt % PbO	Wt % TeO ₂	Wt % PbF ₂	Wt % SiO ₂	Wt % B ₂ O ₃	Wt % P ₂ O ₅	Wt % SnO ₂	Wt % Li ₂ O	Wt % V ₂ O ₅	Wt % Ag ₂ O
U	48.04	51.53						0.42		
V	39.53	28.26							32.21	

TABLE 2

Glass frit compositions in weight percent

Glass #	TeO ₂ /PbO (mole ratio)	PbO	TeO ₂	PbF ₂	SiO ₂	Bi ₂ O ₃	BiF ₃	SnO ₂	Ag ₂ O	SrO	Al ₂ O ₃	MgO	Na ₂ O	In ₂ O ₃	BaO	WO ₃	NiO
1	0.17	80.21	9.79		10.00												
2	0.22	63.09	9.80	17.12	10.00												
3	0.69	56.50	27.96				15.54										
4	0.69	50.84	25.17		10.01		13.98										
5	0.69	53.51	26.50		5.27		14.72										
6	1.36	48.56	47.12											4.32			
7	0.81	49.80	28.76											21.44			
8	1.15	45.70	37.49			16.81											
9	1.11	53.13	42.12								4.75						
10	1.50	47.11	50.52									2.37					
11	1.54	42.92	47.30												8.76	1.02	
12	1.58	44.29	49.99							5.72							
13	1.86	42.56	56.54										0.89				
14	1.86	42.15	55.99										1.86				
15	1.50	47.37	50.81					1.83									
16	1.86	42.96	57.04														
17	1.22	53.36	46.64														
18	1.00	50.64	36.21						13.15								
19	1.00	52.68	37.67						9.65								
20	1.50	32.87	51.00	16.13													
21	0.82	63.09	36.91														
22	0.67	67.72	32.28														
23	0.54	72.20	27.80														
24	1.50	47.24	50.68														2.08
25	1.50	44.24	47.47					8.29									
26	1.00	53.62	38.34					8.05									

Note: the compositions in the table are displayed in weight percent, based on the weight of the total glass composition. The TeO₂/PbO ratios is a molar ratio between only TeO₂ and PbO of the composition.

Lead-Tellurium-Oxide Preparation of Glass Frits of Tables 3

The lead-tellurium-lithium-oxide (Pb—Te—Li—Ti—O)

compositions of Table 3 were prepared by mixing and blending Pb₃O₄ and TeO₂ powders, and optionally, as shown in Table 3, SiO₂, P₂O₅, Pb₂P₂O₇, Ag₂O, Ag(NO₃) and/or SnO₂.

The blended powder batch materials were loaded to a platinum alloy crucible then inserted into a furnace at 900-1000° C. using an air or O₂ containing atmosphere. The duration of the heat treatment was 20 minutes following the attainment of a full solution of the constituents. The resulting low viscosity liquid resulting from the fusion of the constituents was then quenched by metal roller. The quenched glass was then milled, and screened to provide a powder with a D₅₀ of 0.1 to 3.0 microns.

TABLE 3

Frit compositions in weight percent

Glass #	SiO ₂	PbO	P ₂ O ₅	Ag ₂ O	SnO ₂	TeO ₂
27		44.53		7.71		47.76
28				59.22		40.78
29		41.72		13.54		44.75
30		80.75				19.25
31	1.66	41.85	0.86	9.58	1.16	44.89
32		58.31				41.69
33	5.95	54.27		5.41	1.23	33.14

Note: the compositions in the table are displayed in weight percent, based on the weight of the total glass composition.

11

Example II

Paste Preparation

Thick Film Paste Preparation of Tables 5, 6, 7, & 8

The organic components of the thick-film paste and the relative amounts are given in Table 2.

TABLE 4

Organic components of the thick-film paste	
Component	Wt. %
2,2,4-trimethyl-1,3-pentanediol monoisobutyrate	5.57
Ethyl Cellulose (50-52% ethoxyl)	0.14
Ethyl Cellulose (48-50% ethoxyl)	0.04
N-tallow-1,3-diaminopropane dioleate	1.00
Hydrogenated castor oil	0.50
Pentaerythritol tetraester of perhydroabietic acid	1.25
Dimethyl adipate	3.15
Dimethyl glutarate	0.35

The organic components were put into Thinky mixing jar (Thinky USA, Inc) and Thinky-mixed at 2000 RPM for 2 to 4 min until well-blended. The inorganic components (Pb—Te—O powders and silver conductive powders) were tumble-mixed in a glass jar for 15 min. The total weight of the inorganic components was 88 g, of which 85-87 g was silver powder and 1-3 g was the mixture of PbO and TeO₂ powders. One third of inorganic components were then added to the Thinky jar containing the organic components and mixed for 1 min at 2000 RPM. This was repeated until all of the inorganic components were added and mixed. The paste was cooled and the viscosity was adjusted to between 200 and 500 Pa·s by adding solvent and then mixing for 1 min at 200 RPM. This step was repeated until the desired viscosity was achieved. The paste was then roll-milled at a 1 mil gap for 3 passes at zero psi and 3 passes at 75 psi. The degree of dispersion was measured by fineness of grind (FOG). The FOG value is typically equal to or less than 20/10 for thick-film pastes. The viscosity of each paste was measured on a Brookfield viscometer with a #14 spindle and a #6 cup. The viscosity of the paste was adjusted after 24 hrs at RT to between 200 and 320 Pa·s. Viscosity was measured after 3 min at 10 RPM in a viscometer.

TABLE 5

Composition of thick-film pastes				
Example Number	Mol % TeO ₂ in Pb—Te—O Additive	Wt % Additive in Paste	Wt % Conductive Metal	Wt % Organic Vehicles
1	60	1.0	87.0	12.0
2	60	1.0	87.0	12.0
3	60	2.0	86.0	12.0
4	60	2.0	86.0	12.0
5	60	3.0	85.0	12.0
6	60	3.0	85.0	12.0
7	50	1.0	87.0	12.0
8	50	1.0	87.0	12.0
9	50	2.0	86.0	12.0
10	50	2.0	86.0	12.0
11	50	3.0	85.0	12.0
12	50	3.0	85.0	12.0

Thick Film Paste Preparation of Tables 9, 10, 12, & 13

Paste preparations, in general, were prepared using the following procedure: The appropriate amount of solvent,

12

medium and surfactant from Tables 9, 10, 12, & 13 were weighed and mixed in a mixing can for 15 minutes.

Since Ag is the major part of the solids, it was added incrementally to ensure better wetting. When well mixed, the paste was repeatedly passed through a 3-roll mill at progressively increasing pressures from 0 to 250 psi. The gap of the rolls was set to 2 mils. The paste viscosity was measured using a Brookfield viscometer and appropriate amounts of solvent and resin were added to adjust the paste viscosity toward a target of between 230 and 280 Pa·sec. The degree of dispersion was measured by fineness of grind (FOG). A typical FOG value for a paste is less than 20 microns for the fourth longest, continuous scratch and less than 10 microns for the point at which 50% of the paste is scratched.

To make the final pastes used to generate the data in Tables 9, 10, 12 & 13, 2 to 3 wt % of a frit from Table 1 was mixed into a portion of the Ag paste and dispersed by shear between rotating glass plates known to one skilled in the art as a muller. To make the final pastes of Tables 12 & 13 three separate pastes were made by 1) an appropriate amount of Ag was added to an appropriate amount of the vehicle of Table 4 were rolled milled, 2) an appropriate amount of the 1st glass frit from Table 3 was added to appropriate amount of the vehicle of Table 4 were roll milled, and 3) an appropriate amount of the 2nd glass frit from Table 3 was added to the appropriate amount of vehicle of Table 4 was roll milled. Appropriate amounts of the Ag paste and the frit pastes were mixed together using a planetary centrifugal mixer (Thinky Corporation, Tokyo, Japan).

Table 11 shows the combined frit composition of the examples of Table 12 and 13. The combined frit compositions shown in Table 11 are calculated using the frit compositions of Table 3 in the blending ratio of Tables 12 & 13.

The paste examples of Table 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 were made using the procedure described above for making the paste compositions listed in the table according to the following details. Tested pastes contained 85 to 88% silver powder. These examples used a singular spherical silver with a D₅₀=2.0 μm.

Example III

Solar Cell Preparation

Solar Cell Preparation of the Examples in Tables 6, 7, & 8

Solar cells for testing the performance of the thick-film paste were made from 175 micron thick Q.Cell multi-crystalline silicon wafers with a 65 ohm/sq phosphorous-doped emitter layer which had an acid-etched textured surface and 70 nm thick PECVD SiN_x antireflective coating. The solar cells were supplied by Q-Cells SE, OT Thalheim, Germany. The wafers were cut into 28 mm×28 mm wafers using a diamond wafering saw. Wafers were screen-printed after cut-down using an AMI-Presco MSP-485 screen printer to provide a bus-bar, eleven conductor lines at a 0.254 cm pitch, and a full ground-plane, screen-printed aluminum back-side conductor. After printing and drying, cells were fired in a BTU International rapid thermal processing belt furnace. The firing temperatures shown in Table 3 were the furnace set-point temperatures, which were approximately 125° C. greater than the actual wafer temperature. The fired conductor line median line width was 120 microns and mean line height was 15 microns. The median line resistivity was 3.0E-6 ohm·cm. Performance of the 28 mm×28 mm cells is expected to be impacted by edge effects that reduce the overall solar cell fill factor (FF) by ~5%.

13

Solar Cell Preparation of the Examples in Tables 9, 10, 12, & 13

Pastes were applied to 1.1"×1.1" dicing-saw-cut multi-crystalline silicon solar cells with a phosphorous-doped emitter on a p-type base. The paste from example #1 was applied to a DeutscheCell (DeutscheCell, Germany) multi-crystalline wafer with a 62Ω/□ emitter and pastes from examples #2 through #6 were applied to a Gintech (Gintech Energy Corporation, Taiwan) multi-crystalline wafer with a 55Ω/□ emitter. The solar cells used were textured by isotropic acid etching and had an anti-reflection coating (ARC) of SiN_x:H. Efficiency and fill factor, as shown in Tables 9, 10, 12, & 13, were measured for each sample. For each paste, the mean and median values of the efficiency and fill factor for 5 to 12 samples are shown. Each sample was made by screen-printing using a ETP model L555 printer set with a squeegee speed of 250 mm/sec. The screen used had a pattern of 11 finger lines with a 100 μm opening and 1 bus bar with a 1.5 mm opening on a 20 μm emulsion in a screen with 325 mesh and 23 μm wires. A commercially available Al paste, DuPont PV381, was printed on the non-illuminated (back) side of the device.

The device with the printed patterns on both sides was then dried for 10 minutes in a drying oven with a 250° C. peak temperature. The substrates were then fired sun-side up with a CF7214 Despatch 6 zone IR furnace using a 560 cm/min belt speed and 550-600-650-700-800-905 to 945° C. temperature set points. The actual temperature of the part was measured during processing. The estimated peak temperature of each part was 740-780° C. and each part was above 650° C. for a total time of 4 seconds. The fully processed samples were then tested for PV performance using a calibrated ST-1000 tester.

Examples IV

Solar Cell Performance

Efficiency and Fill Factor

Test Procedure: Efficiency and Fill Factor for the Examples of Tables 6, 7, & 8

Solar cell performance was measured using a ST-1000, Telecom STV Co. IV tester at 25° C.±1.0° C. The Xe Arc

14

lamp in the IV tester simulated sunlight with a known intensity, and irradiated the front surface of the cell. The tester used a four-contact method to measure current (I) and voltage (V) at approximately 400 load resistance settings to determine the cell's I-V curve. Solar cell efficiency (Eff), fill factor (FF), and series resistance (Rs) were calculated from the I-V curve. Rs is especially affected by contact resistivity (ρc), conductor line resistance and emitter sheet resistance. Since conductor line resistances and sheet resistances were nominally equivalent for the various samples, the differences in Rs were primarily due to ρc. Ideality factor was determined using the Suns-VOC technique. The ideality factor is reported at 0.1 sun irradiance.

Median values for efficiency, fill factor, series resistance, and ideality factors for solar cells prepared using the thick-film pastes of Examples 1-12 were determined and are summarized in Table 6. The mean and median values for efficiency for solar cells prepared using the thin-film paste of examples 13-27 were determined and are summarized in Table 7. The mean and median values for fill factor for solar cells prepared using the thin-film paste of examples 13-27 were determined and are summarized in Table 8.

TABLE 6

Performance of Pastes						
Ex.	Mol % TeO ₂ in Pb—Te—O Additive	Peak Firing Temperature (° C.)	Median Efficiency (%)	Median Fill Factor (%)	Median Series Resistance (ohm·cm ²)	Median Ideality Factor
1	60	930	14.86	76.2	1.50	1.70
2	60	940	15.07	76.9	1.40	1.50
3	60	930	15.08	77.2	1.42	1.10
4	60	940	15.27	77.6	1.37	1.60
5	60	930	14.87	77.5	1.39	1.40
6	60	940	14.92	77.7	1.38	1.10
7	60	930	15.32	77.1	1.40	1.70
8	50	940	15.03	76.4	1.44	1.80
9	50	930	14.45	74.4	1.58	2.20
10	50	940	14.6	74	1.44	2.30
11	50	930	14.29	73.6	1.54	2.40
12	50	940	14.26	73.7	1.48	2.10

TABLE 7

Mean and median efficiency (Eff %) of Pastes												
Example Number	Glass #	Glass amount (wt %)	Eff. (%) mean	Eff. (%) median								
13	1	4.5			14.90	14.89				15.00	14.92	15.03
14	2	4.5			14.13	14.27				14.85	14.79	14.95
15	3	2.5								14.13	14.12	14.32
16	6	2.1								13.84	13.96	14.24
17	8	1.5								15.27	15.35	15.34
18	10	3			13.15	12.87				13.56	13.57	13.70
19	13	2			12.06	12.45				11.50	12.03	12.54
20	25	2			8.27	7.94				11.95	12.29	13.16
21	A	2	14.14	14.34			14.50	14.71				15.50
22	C	1	13.57	14.03			17.71	14.92				14.92
23	D	1	13.64	13.92			14.72	14.81				14.93
24	B	2	14.34	14.38	14.60	14.52			15.06	145.08	15.00	
25	K	2			13.58	13.24			12.35	14.59	14.95	
26	J	2			13.16	14.04			13.34	15.03	11.61	
27	M	2	14.95	14.92	15.06	15.14			15.20	15.17	15.35	
28	O	2	14.37	14.55	14.73	14.95			15.17	15.27	15.55	
29	15	2										12.00
30	16	2			12.51	13.33			14.41	14.43	14.47	
31	17	2			13.41	13.77			14.36	14.47	14.97	

TABLE 7-continued

Mean and median efficiency (Eff %) of Pastes											
Example Number	Eff. (%) median	Eff. (%) mean	Eff. (%) median								
32	18	2									14.91
33	19	2									14.88
34	21	2						14.11	14.03		13.72
35	22	2						14.50	14.45		14.73
36	23	2						13.22	13.19		12.88
37	20	2						14.90	14.94		15.29
13	15.01	14.34	14.16					13.43	13.44		
14	14.98	14.92	14.94					15.01	15.08		
15	14.23	13.86	13.96					14.19	14.12		
16	14.35	14.30	14.37					13.77	14.19		
17	15.28	15.50	15.49					15.33	15.34		
18	13.59	12.66	12.93					11.70	11.88		
19	12.53	13.10	13.09					13.72	13.65		
20	13.17	13.52	14.39					13.52	14.39		
21	15.00										
22	14.83			14.86	14.86						
23	14.98			14.81	14.84						
24	15.19	15.37	15.42								
25	14.95	15.14	15.21								
26	15.29	15.34	15.41								
27	15.27	15.19	15.22								
28	15.33	15.06	15.27								
29	12.30	13.78	13.90					14.38	14.95	14.55	14.48
30	14.51	14.57	14.55					14.93	14.94		
31	14.97	14.81	14.89					15.18	15.13		
32	14.80	15.17	15.13					15.23	15.33	15.26	15.20
33	14.91	14.73	14.73					14.69	14.70	15.11	15.02
34	13.68	14.17	14.16					14.18	13.94	14.27	14.80
35	14.79	14.54	14.64					14.94	14.86	14.60	14.66
36	12.80	11.81	11.75					11.38	11.40	11.82	11.83
37	15.25	14.85	14.83					15.43	15.46	15.29	15.20

TABLE 8

Mean and median fill factor (FF) of Pastes												
Example Number	Glass #	Glass amount (wt %)	900 C.		910 C.		915 C.		920 C.		930 C.	
			FF mean	FF median								
13	1	4.5			76.84	77.60			76.82	76.80	76.82	77.30
14	2	4.5			72.58	73.30			75.74	76.10	75.80	75.90
15	3	2.5							74.42	74.70	74.88	74.80
16	6	2.1							71.84	72.80	73.44	73.90
17	8	1.5							78.32	78.30	78.86	78.90
18	10	3			68.46	68.40			71.56	73.30	71.24	71.30
19	13	2			62.82	64.10			60.44	61.30	64.88	65.60
20	25	2			44.24	43.20			60.64	62.00	66.90	67.10
21	A	2	71.96	71.90			72.84	73.60			75.96	76.00
22	C	1	70.26	72.10			75.86	76.40			76.48	76.80
23	D	1	72.30	73.20			75.26	75.10			76.24	76.70
24	B	2										
25	K	2			69.30	69.50			63.86	74.50	75.76	76.10
26	J	2			67.70	72.20			66.90	74.60	59.58	75.70
27	M	2	76.30	76.10	76.78	77.10			78.02	77.90	77.84	78.10
28	O	2	76.26	76.40	77.30	77.80			78.06	77.90	78.04	78.10
29	15	2									65.54	63.00
30	16	2			64.50	69.20			74.46	74.90	75.50	75.40
31	17	2			70.23	70.85			74.56	75.20	75.62	75.60
32	18	2									75.86	76.00
33	19	2									75.66	75.20
34	21	2							75.82	76.10	74.90	76.40
35	22	2							75.06	75.30	76.03	76.05
36	23	2							70.56	71.20	65.85	65.55
37	20	2							77.54	77.40	78.34	78.20

TABLE 8-continued

Mean and median fill factor (FF) of Pastes											
Example Number	940 C.		945 C.		950 C.		960 C.		970 C.		
	FF mean	FF median									
13	72.66	72.50			69.12	69.10					
14	76.52	76.30			77.04	77.20					
15	72.78	73.10			73.34	73.30					
16	73.54	73.10			71.54	73.60					
17	79.10	79.00			78.86	78.90					
18	65.96	66.50			60.62	60.00					
19	67.68	68.70			71.42	69.10					
20	69.36	73.10			69.36	68.10					
21											
22			76.94	77.10							
23			75.70	76.10							
24											
25	76.82	76.70									
26	76.80	76.70									
27	77.52	77.90									
28	77.92	77.80									
29	69.18	69.80			72.88	74.60	74.20	74.50	73.43	73.45	
30	74.20	74.20			76.70	77.30					
31	75.82	75.60			76.82	77.70					
32	76.66	77.10			76.64	77.50	77.50	77.75	77.10	77.45	
33	75.82	75.80			76.70	76.60	76.65	76.50	76.50	76.60	
34	76.90	76.85			77.10	77.40	76.50	76.40			
35	75.85	76.10			75.70	75.90	75.34	76.30			
36	63.78	63.45			60.58	60.00	61.80	62.30			
37	78.26	78.20			78.90	79.10	78.58	78.80			

Test Procedure: Efficiency and Fill Factor for the Examples of Tables 9, 10, 12, & 13

The solar cells built according to the method described herein were tested for conversion efficiency. An exemplary method of testing efficiency is provided below.

In an embodiment, the solar cells built according to the method described herein were placed in a commercial I-V tester for measuring efficiencies (Telecom STV, model

ST-1000). The Xe Arc lamp in the I-V tester simulated the sunlight with a known intensity, AM 1.5, and irradiated the front surface of the cell. The tester used a multi-point contact method to measure current (I) and voltage (V) at approximately 400 load resistance settings to determine the cell's I-V curve. Both fill factor (FF) and efficiency (Eff) were calculated from the I-V curve.

TABLE 9

Paste efficiency (Eff %) data for the results of pastes using select frits of table 3														
Example	Glass	Frit level	Efficiency (Eff %)											
			905 C.		915 C.		920 C.		925 C.		940 C.		945 C.	
#	#	(wt %)	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
38	29	2											14.65	14.66
39	30	3.35	13.08	13.07	13.05	13.33			12.91	12.84				
40	31	3.45	13.56	13.55	13.31	13.45			14.10	13.99				
41	33	2					13.18	13.14			12.33	12.41		

TABLE 10

Paste fill factor (FF) data for the results of pastes using select frits of table 3														
Example	Glass	Frit level	Fill Factor (FF)											
			905 C.		915 C.		920 C.		925 C.		940 C.		945 C.	
#	#	(wt %)	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
38	29	2											70.99	70.83
39	30	3.35	69.79	69.04	70.51	71.40			68.84	68.61				
40	31	3.45	72.03	72.30	71.01	71.38			74.20	74.75				
41	33	2					66.33	65.55			62.84	62.35		

TABLE 11

Combined frit composition resulting from the blended frit experiments of Tables 12 and 13 using the frits from Table 3.			
Blended Glass Composition Number	PbO	Ag2O	TeO2
I	33.40	20.58	46.02
II	37.70	20.92	41.37
III	29.15	29.61	41.24
IV	43.73	14.80	41.47

TABLE 14-continued

Bismuth-tellurium-oxide composition in weight percent of the oxides		
	Glass A (wt %)	
5	P ₂ O ₅	0.43
10	Li ₂ O	2.16

Note:
the composition in the table are displayed as weight percent, based on the weight of the total glass composition

TABLE 12

The paste efficiency (Eff %) results of paste using a blend of two different frits from table 3 (combined frit compositions given in Table 11).												
Example #	1st Glass #	2nd Glass #	Blended Glass Composition Number	1st frit level (wt %)	2nd frit level (wt %)	total frit level (wt %)	Efficiency (Eff %)					
							905 C.		915 C.		925 C.	
							Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
42	27	28	I	1.5	0.5	2	15.31	15.37	14.92	15.13	15.10	15.16
43	32	28	II	1.93	1.07	3	14.69	14.76	14.65	14.69	14.80	14.83
44	32	28	III	1.5	1.5	3	14.77	14.83	15.19	15.32	15.03	15.15
45	32	28	IV	1.6	0.6	2.2	15.35	15.29	15.21	15.16	15.13	15.16

TABLE 13

The paste fill factor (FF) results of paste using a blend of two different frits from table 3 (combined frit compositions given in Table 11).												
Example #	1st Glass #	2nd Glass #	Blended Glass Composition Number	1st frit level (wt %)	2nd frit level (wt %)	total frit level (wt %)	Fill Factor (FF)					
							905 C.		915 C.		925 C.	
							Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
42	27	28	I	1.5	0.5	2	75.36	75.30	74.83	75.45	75.98	76.37
43	32	28	II	1.93	1.07	3	74.20	75.03	73.52	73.57	74.09	75.03
44	32	28	III	1.5	1.5	3	73.66	74.13	75.23	75.58	74.94	75.03
45	32	28	IV	1.6	0.6	2.2	76.23	76.60	76.37	76.17	76.59	76.63

Comparative Example I

Bismuth-Tellurium-Oxide

Preparation of Bismuth-Tellurium-Oxide

A bismuth-tellurium-oxide (Bi—Te—O) containing composition as shown in table 14 was prepared using boron oxide (B₂O₃), zinc oxide (ZnO), titanium oxide (TiO₂), bismuth oxide (Bi₂O₃), tellurium oxide (TeO₂), lithium carbonate (LiCO₃), and lithium phosphate (LiPO₄) and by the procedure described above in Example I: Lead-tellurium-oxide preparation of glass frits of Table 3.

TABLE 14

Bismuth-tellurium-oxide composition in weight percent of the oxides	
	Glass A (wt %)
B ₂ O ₃	2.09
ZnO	0.98
TiO ₂	0.48
Bi ₂ O ₃	26.64
TeO ₂	67.22

Paste Preparation

45 Pastes using glass A were made by the following procedure. A paste was made by mixing the appropriate amount of organic vehicle (Table 4) and Ag powder. The Ag paste was passed through a 3-roll mill at progressively increasing pressures from 0 to 75 psi. The Ag paste viscosity was measured using a Brookfield viscometer and appropriate amounts of solvent and resin were added to adjust the paste viscosity toward a target of between 230 and 280 Pa-sec. Another paste was made by mixing the appropriate amount of organic vehicle (Table 4) and glass powder A. The frit paste was passed through a 3-roll mill at progressively increasing pressures from 0 to 250 psi. The degree of dispersion of each paste was measured by fineness of grind (FOG). A typical FOG value for a paste is less than 20 microns for the fourth longest, continuous scratch and less than 10 microns for the point at which 50% of the paste is scratched.

60 Ag and frit pastes were mixed with a mixed together using a planetary centrifugal mixer (Thinky Corporation, Tokyo, Japan) to make the final paste recipes displayed in table 15. Solar Cell Preparation and Efficiency and Fill Factor Measurement

65 Pastes were applied to 1.1"×1.1" dicing-saw-cut multi-crystalline silicon solar cells with a phosphorous-doped emitter on a p-type base. The pastes were applied to a Deutsche-

Cell (DeutscheCell, Germany) multi-crystalline wafer with a 62Ω/□ emitter. The solar cells used were textured by isotropic acid etching and had an anti-reflection coating (ARC) of SiN_x:H. Efficiency and fill factor, as shown in Table 15, were measured for each sample. Each sample was made by screen-printing using a ETP model L555 printer set with a squeegee speed of 200 mm/sec. The screen used had a pattern of 11 finger lines with a 100 μm opening and 1 bus bar with a 1.5 mm opening on a 20 μm emulsion in a screen with 325 mesh and 23 μm wires. A commercially available Al paste, DuPont PV381, was printed on the non-illuminated (back) side of the device.

The device with the printed patterns on both sides was then dried for 10 minutes in a drying oven with a 250° C. peak temperature. The substrates were then fired sun-side up with a CF7214 Despatch 6 zone IR furnace using a 560 cm/min belt speed and 500-550-610-700-800-HZ6 temperature set points, where HZ6=885, 900 & 915° C. The actual temperature of the part was measured during processing. The estimated peak temperature of each part was 745-775° C. and each part was above 650° C. for a total time of 4 seconds. The fully processed samples were then tested for PV performance using a calibrated ST-1000 tester.

Efficiency and fill factor, shown in Table 15, were measured for each sample. For each paste, the mean and median values of the efficiency and fill factor for 6 samples are shown.

TABLE 15

Recipe and electrical performance for pastes containing the bismuth-tellurium-oxide glass A of Table 14															
Example	Glass	Ag	Frit	Efficiency (Eff %)						Fill Factor (FF)					
				900		915		930		900		915		930	
#	#	wt %	wt %	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
A	A	88.6	2.1	10.04	10.13	12.46	13.01	12.61	12.98	52.8	53.5	65.1	67.3	64.2	65.6
A	A	86.3	4.2	1.14	0.83	1.45	1.42	2.93	2.79	28.7	29.7	29.4	29.5	30.7	30.1

What is claimed is:

1. A thick-film paste composition for use in forming an electrical connection in a photovoltaic device comprising a semiconductor substrate having at least one insulating layer on a main surface thereof, the composition comprising:

- a) 85 to 99.5% by weight of an electrically conductive metal or derivative thereof, based on total solids in the composition;
- b) 0.5 to 15% by weight based on solids of a lead-tellurium-oxide, wherein the lead-tellurium-oxide comprises 30 to 65 mol % of lead oxide and 35 to 70 mol % of tellurium oxide; and
- c) an organic medium;

wherein the thick-film paste, when fired, is capable of penetrating the at least one insulating layer.

2. The thick-film paste of claim 1, wherein the electrically conductive metal comprises silver.

3. The thick-film paste of claim 1, wherein the organic medium comprises a polymer.

4. The thick-film paste of claim 3, wherein the organic medium further comprises one or more additives selected from the group consisting of solvents, stabilizers, surfactants, and thickeners.

5. The thick-film paste of claim 1, wherein the electrically conductive metal is 90-95 wt % of the solids.

6. The thick-film paste of claim 1, wherein the Pb—Te—O is at least partially crystalline.

7. The thick-film paste of claim 1, further comprising an additive selected from the group consisting of: TiO₂, Li₂O, B₂O₃, PbF₂, SiO₂, Na₂O, K₂O, Cs₂O, Al₂O₃, MgO, CaO, SrO, BaO, V₂O₅, ZrO₂, MoO₃, Mn₂O₃, Ag₂O, ZnO, Ga₂O₃, GeO₂, In₂O₃, SnO₂, Sb₂O₃, Bi₂O₃, BiF₃, P₂O₅, CuO, NiO, Cr₂O₃, Fe₂O₃, CoO, Co₂O₃, and CeO₂.

8. The thick film paste of claim 1, wherein the lead-tellurium oxide further comprises one or more elements selected from the group consisting of: Si, Sn, Li, Ti, Ag, Na, K, Rb, Cs, Ge, Ga, In, Ni, Zn, Ca, Mg, Sr, Ba, Se, Mo, 1N, Y, As, La, Nd, Co, Pr, Gd, Sm, Dy, Eu, Ho, Yb, Lu, Bi, Ta, V, Fe, Hf, Cr, Cd, Sb, Bi, F, Zr, Mn, P, Cu, Ce, and Nb.

9. A process comprising:

- (a) providing a semiconductor substrate comprising one or more insulating films deposited onto at least one surface of a semiconductor substrate;
- (b) applying a thick-film paste composition onto at least a portion of the insulating film to form a layered structure, wherein the thick-film paste composition comprises:
 - i) 85 to 99.5% by weight of an electrically conductive metal or derivative thereof, based on total solids in the composition;
 - ii) 0.5 to 15% by weight based on solids of a lead-tellurium-oxide, wherein the lead-tellurium-oxide comprises 30 to 65 mol % of lead oxide and 35 to 70 mol % of tellurium oxide; and
 - iii) an organic medium; and
- (c) firing the semiconductor substrate, one or more insulating films, and thick-film paste, forming an electrode in contact with the one or more insulating layers and in electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate.

10. The process of claim 9, wherein the thick-film paste composition is applied pattern-wise onto the insulating film.

11. The process of claim 9, wherein the firing is carried out in air or an oxygen-containing atmosphere.

12. An article comprising:

- a) a semiconductor substrate;
- b) one or more insulating layers on the semiconductor substrate; and
- c) an electrode in contact with the one or more insulating layers and in electrical contact with the semiconductor substrate, the electrode comprising an electrically conductive metal and lead-tellurium-oxide wherein the lead-tellurium-oxide comprises 30 to 65 mol % of lead oxide and 35 to 70 mol % of tellurium oxide.

13. The article of claim 12, wherein the article is a semiconductor device.

14. The article of claim 13, wherein the semiconductor device is a solar cell.