
**Carbon based films — Determination
of optical properties of amorphous
carbon films by spectroscopic
ellipsometry**

*Films à base de carbone — Détermination des propriétés optiques des
films de carbone amorphe par ellipsométrie spectroscopique*



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Foreword

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Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

This document provides a determination method and a classification for optical properties of amorphous carbon films by spectroscopic ellipsometry.

Amorphous carbon films have a structure, containing both sp^2 and sp^3 bonded carbon atoms and in several cases also hydrogen. There are graphite-like, polymer-like, glass-like and diamond-like carbon films. Because of their outstanding mechanical properties, amorphous carbon films are used in various hard coating applications on hard metals, e.g. as protective coatings against wear and corrosion in automotive parts. Biomedical and optical applications on alternative substrate materials such as silicon and glass have become more and more important. Currently, amorphous carbon films are classified into several types with regard to their chemical structures, and each type is selectively used according to its appropriate application. For an easy classification of amorphous carbon films, an optically quantified phase fingerprint with high accuracy is provided as a result of an international interlaboratory comparison.

The optical properties of refractive index n and extinction coefficient k determined by spectroscopic ellipsometry are the key quantities for the proposed classification of amorphous carbon films. The interlaboratory comparison demonstrated that a classification within the n - k plane is feasible for all types of amorphous carbon films. This will be beneficial for the identification of the coating type on alternative substrate materials (such as silicon and glass) and additional industrial applications. Spectroscopic ellipsometry as a fast and non-destructive analytical method can also be applied to quality control and development in industrial applications, given that smooth and well-defined substrate materials are used and appropriate modelling is applied.

This document is intended to implement recommended ellipsometric test conditions and the n - k plane classification scheme of amorphous carbon films on silicon wafers.

This document is useful for the complementary optical property classification and quality control of amorphous carbon films.

As amorphous carbon films show a huge diversity of structure and properties, it is crucial to select the appropriate type of amorphous carbon film to exploit their excellent properties in practical use. Therefore, carbon films are characterized by spectroscopic ellipsometry under reasonable conditions. This enables the classification of amorphous carbon films on silicon wafers within the n - k plane acting as a process fingerprint.

Carbon based films — Determination of optical properties of amorphous carbon films by spectroscopic ellipsometry

1 Scope

This document specifies spectroscopic ellipsometry for the determination of optical properties (refractive index n and extinction coefficient k) and the optical classification of different types of amorphous carbon films within the n - k plane.

It is applicable to amorphous carbon films deposited by ionized evaporation, sputtering, arc deposition, plasma-assisted chemical vapour deposition, hot filament techniques and others.

It does not apply to carbon films modified with metals or silicon, amorphous carbon films that have a gradient of composition/property in the thickness, paints and varnishes.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

refractive index

n

ratio of the velocity of propagation of electromagnetic radiation in a vacuum to the velocity of propagation of electromagnetic radiation in a medium

3.2

extinction coefficient

k

amount of absorption of electromagnetic radiation in a medium (substance)

4 Test specimen preparation

Amorphous carbon films on various substrates can be tested if the substrates are optically isotropic and optical models are available for them. The recommended test substrate is a Si wafer with a mirror surface. It can be used as substrates of the amorphous carbon films for testing depending on the requirements. Specimens shall be homogeneous amorphous carbon films. The thickness of the amorphous carbon films shall be 0,02 μm to 5 μm .

Any pertinent details of the specimens such as their dimensions, surface finish, material type, composition, microstructure and processing treatments shall be supplied.