

Small Outline (SO) Package Surface Mounting Methods-Parameters and Their Effect on Product Reliability

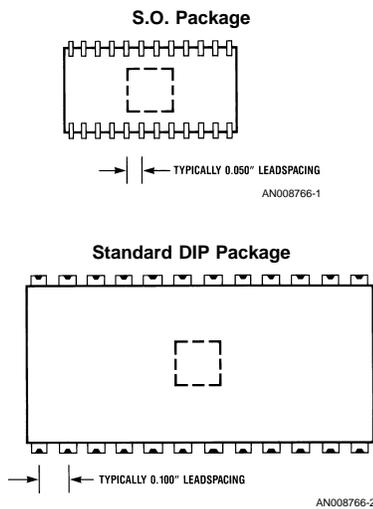
National Semiconductor
 Application Note 450
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Small Outline (SO) Package Surface Mounting Methods-Parameters and Their Effect on Product Reliability AN-450

The SO (small outline) package has been developed to meet customer demand for ever-increasing miniaturization and component density.

COMPONENT SIZE COMPARISON



In order to achieve reliability performance comparable to DIPs—SO packages are designed and built with materials and processes that effectively compensate for their small size.

All SO packages tested on 85%RA, 85°C were assembled on PC conversion boards using vapor-phase reflow soldering. With this approach we are able to measure the effect of surface mounting methods on reliability of the process. As illustrated in *Figure 1* no significant difference was detected between the long term reliability performance of surface mounted S.O. packages and the DIP control product for up to 6000 hours of accelerated 85%/85°C testing.

Because of its small size, reliability of the product assembled in SO packages needs to be carefully evaluated.

SO packages at National were internally qualified for production under the condition that they be of comparable reliability performance to a standard dual in line package under all accelerated environmental tests. *Figure 1* is a summary of accelerated bias moisture test performance on 30V bipolar and 15V CMOS product assembled in SO and DIP (control) packages.

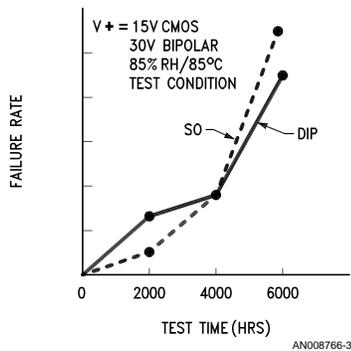


FIGURE 1.

SURFACE-MOUNT PROCESS FLOW

The standard process flowcharts for basic surface-mount operation and mixed-lead insertion/surface-mount operations, are illustrated on the following pages.

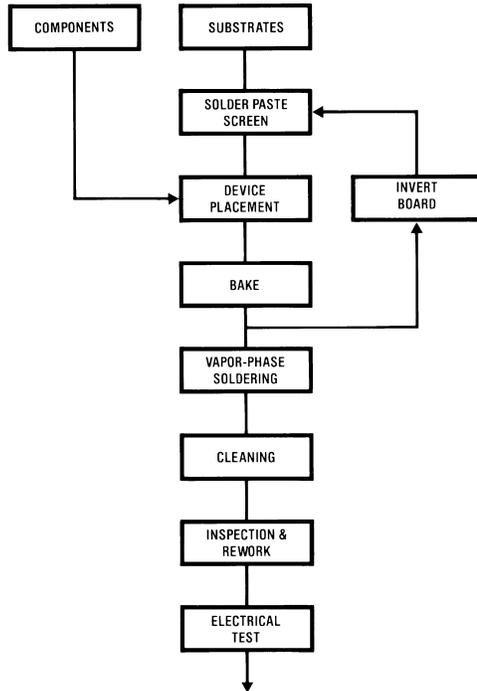
Usual variations encountered by users of SO packages are:

- Single-sided boards, surface-mounted components only.
- Single-sided boards, mixed-lead inserted and surface-mounted components.
- Double-sided boards, surface-mounted components only.
- Double-sided boards, mixed-lead inserted and surface-mounted components.

In consideration of these variations, it became necessary for users to utilize techniques involving wave soldering and adhesive applications, along with the commonly-used vapor-phase solder reflow soldering technique.

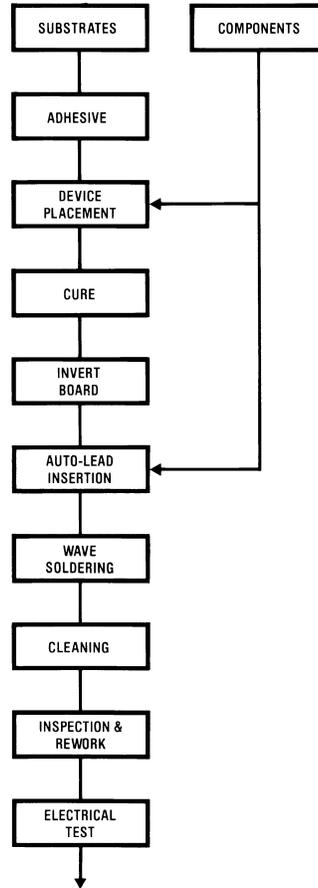
PRODUCTION FLOW

Basic Surface-Mount Production Flow



AN008766-4

Mixed Surface-Mount and Axial-Leaded Insertion Components Production Flow



AN008766-5

Thermal stress of the packages during surface-mounting processing is more severe than during standard DIP PC board mounting processes. Figure 2 illustrates package temperature versus wave soldering dwell time for surface mounted packages (components are immersed into the molten solder) and the standard DIP wave soldering process. (Only leads of the package are immersed into the molten solder).

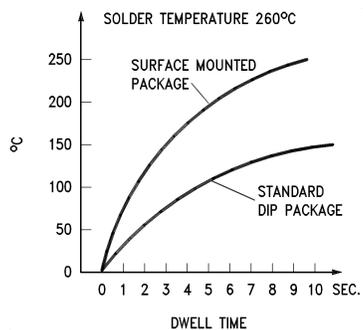


FIGURE 2.

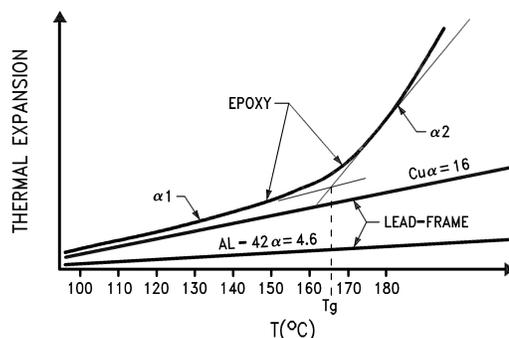


FIGURE 3.

When this happens during a conventional wave soldering process using flux and acid cleaners, process residues and even solder can enter the cavity created by the separation and become entrapped when the material cools. These contaminants can eventually diffuse into the interior of the package, especially in the presence of moisture. The result is die contamination, excessive leakage, and even catastrophic failure. Unfortunately, electrical tests performed immediately following soldering may not detect potential flaws.

Most soldering processes involve temperatures ranging up to 260°C, which far exceeds the glass-transition temperature of epoxy. Clearly, circuit boards containing SMD packages require tighter process controls than those used for boards populated solely by DIPs.

Figure 4 is a summary of accelerated bias moisture test performance on the 30V bipolar process.

- Group 1 — Standard DIP package
- Group 2 — SO packages vapor-phase reflow soldered on PC boards
- Group 3–6 SO packages wave soldered on PC boards
- Group 3 — dwell time 2 seconds
- 4 — dwell time 4 seconds
- 5 — dwell time 6 seconds

For an ideal package, the thermal expansion rate of the encapsulant should match that of the leadframe material in order for the package to maintain mechanical integrity during the soldering process. Unfortunately, a perfect matchup of thermal expansion rates with most presently used packaging materials is scarce. The problem lies primarily with the epoxy compound.

Normally, thermal expansion rates for epoxy encapsulant and metal lead frame materials are linear and remain fairly close at temperatures approaching 160°C, Figure 3. At lower temperatures the difference in expansion rate of the two materials is not great enough to cause interface separation. However, when the package reaches the glass-transition temperature (T_g) of epoxy (typically 160–165°C), the thermal expansion rate of the encapsulant increases sharply, and the material undergoes a transition into a plastic state. The epoxy begins to expand at a rate three times or more greater than the metal leadframe, causing a separation at the interface.

6 — dwell time 10 seconds

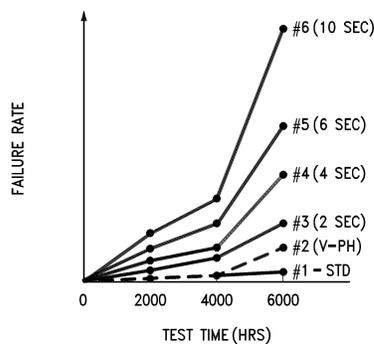


FIGURE 4.

It is clear based on the data presented that SO packages soldered onto PC boards with the vapor phase reflow process have the best long term bias moisture performance and this is comparable to the performance of standard DIP pack-

ages. The key advantage of reflow soldering methods is the clean environment that minimized the potential for contamination of surface mounted packages, and is preferred for the surface-mount process.

When wave soldering is used to surface mount components on the board, the dwell time of the component under molten solder should be no more than 4 seconds, preferably under 2 seconds in order to prevent damage to the component. Non-Halide, or (organic acid) fluxes are highly recommended.

PICK AND PLACE

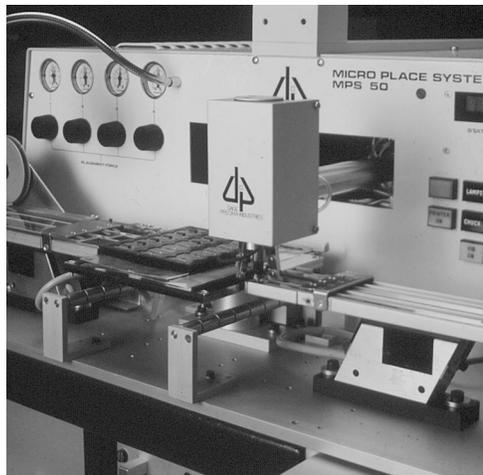
The choice of automatic (all generally programmable) pick-and-place machines to handle surface mounting has grown considerably, and their selection is based on individual needs and degree of sophistication.

The basic component-placement systems available are classified as:

- (a) In-line placement
 - Fixed placement stations
 - Boards indexed under head and respective components placed
- (b) Sequential placement
 - Either a X-Y moving table system or a θ , X-Y moving pickup system used
 - Individual components picked and placed onto boards
- (c) Simultaneous placement
 - Multiple pickup heads
 - Whole array of components placed onto the PCB at the same time
- (d) Sequential/simultaneous placement
 - X-Y moving table, multiple pickup heads system
 - Components placed on PCB by successive or simultaneous actuation of pickup heads

The SO package is treated almost the same as surface-mount, passive components requiring correct orientation in placement on the board.

Pick and Place Action



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BAKE

This is recommended, despite claims made by some solder paste suppliers that this step be omitted.

The functions of this step are:

- Holds down the solder globules during subsequent reflow soldering process and prevents expulsion of small solder balls.
- Acts as an adhesive to hold the components in place during handling between placement to reflow soldering.
- Holds components in position when a double-sided surface-mounted board is held upside down going into a vapor-phase reflow soldering operation.
- Removes solvents which might otherwise contaminate other equipment.
- Initiates activator cleaning of surfaces to be soldered.
- Prevents moisture absorption.

The process is moreover very simple. The usual schedule is about 20 minutes in a 65°C–95°C (dependent on solvent system of solder paste) oven with adequate venting. Longer bake time is not recommended due to the following reasons:

- The flux will degrade and affect the characteristics of the paste.
- Solder globules will begin to oxidize and cause solderability problems.
- The paste will creep and after reflow, may leave behind residues between traces which are difficult to remove and vulnerable to electro-migration problems.

REFLOW SOLDERING

There are various methods for reflowing the solder paste, namely:

- Hot air reflow
- Infrared heating (furnaces)
- Convectional oven heating
- Vapor-phase reflow soldering
- Laser soldering

For SO applications, hot air reflow/infrared furnace may be used for low-volume production or prototype work, but vapor-phase soldering reflow is more efficient for consistency and speed. Oven heating is not recommended because of "hot spots" in the oven and uneven melting may result. Laser soldering is more for specialized applications and requires a great amount of investment.

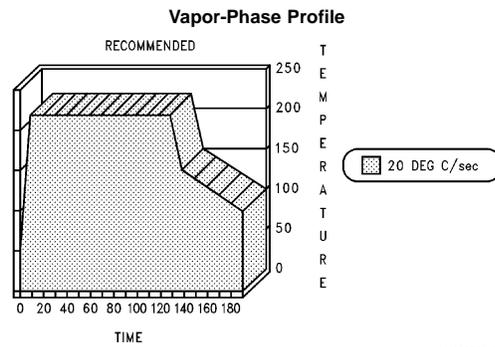
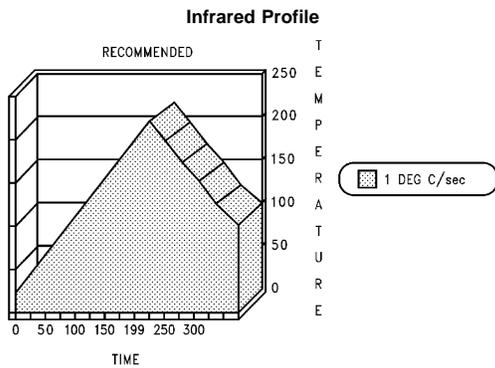
HOT GAS REFLOW/INFRARED HEATING

A hand-held or table-mount air blower (with appropriate orifice mask) can be used.

The boards are preheated to about 100°C and then subjected to an air jet at about 260°C. This is a slow process and results may be inconsistent due to various heat-sink properties of passive components.

INFRARED REFLOW SOLDERING

Use of an infrared furnace is currently the most popular method to automate mass reflow, the heating is promoted by use of IR lamps or panels. Early objections to this method were that certain materials may heat up at different rates under IR radiation and could result in damage to those components (usually sockets and connectors). This has been minimized by using far-infrared (non-focused) systems and convected air.



VAPOR-PHASE REFLOW SOLDERING

Currently the most popular and consistent method, vapor-phase soldering utilizes a fluorinert fluid with excellent heat-transfer properties to heat up components until the solder paste reflows. The maximum temperature is limited by the vapor temperature of the fluid.

The commonly used fluids (supplied by 3M Corp) are:

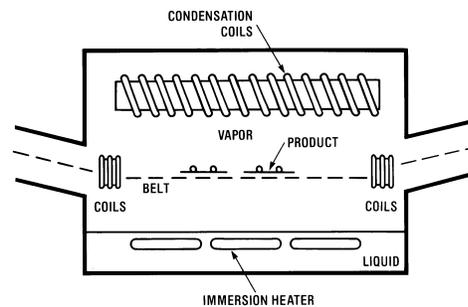
- FC-70, 215°C vapor (most applications) or FX-38
- FC-71, 253°C vapor (low-lead or tin-plate)

HTC, Concord, CA, manufactures equipment that utilizes this technique, with two options:

- Batch systems, where boards are lowered in a basket and subjected to the vapor from a tank of boiling fluid.
- In-line conveyORIZED systems, where boards are placed onto a continuous belt which transports them into a concealed tank where they are subjected to an environment of hot vapor.

Dwell time in the vapor is generally on the order of 15–30 seconds (depending on the mass of the boards and the loading density of boards on the belt).

In-Line ConveyORIZED Vapor-Phase Soldering



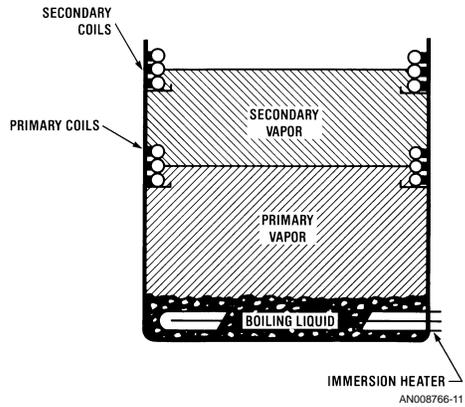
The question of thermal shock is asked frequently because of the relatively sharp increase in component temperature from room temperature to 215°C. SO packages mounted on representative boards have been tested and have shown little effect on the integrity of the packages. Various packages, such as cerdips, metal cans and TO-5 cans with glass seals, have also been tested.

Vapor-Phase Furnace



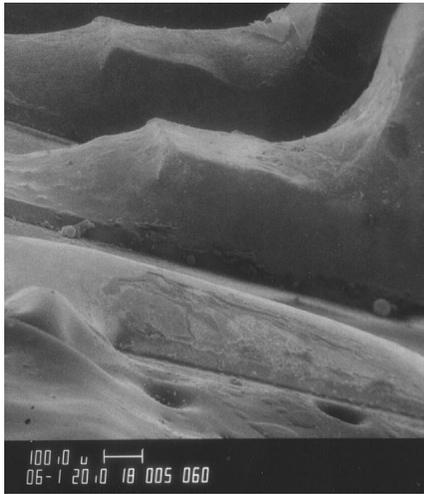
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Batch-Fed Production Vapor-Phase Soldering Unit



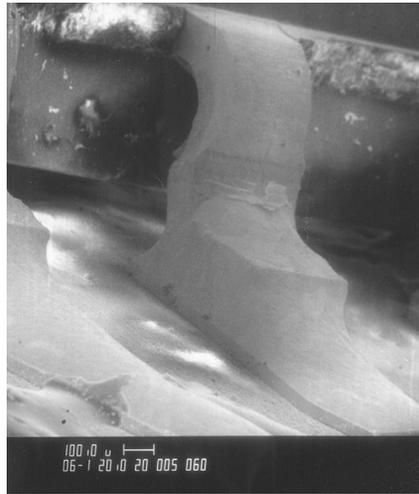
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Solder Joints on a SO-14 Package on PCB



AN008766-12

Solder Joints on a SO-14 Package on PCB



AN008766-13

PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD

The SO package is molded out of clean, thermoset plastic compound and has no particular compatibility problems with most printed circuit board substrates.

The package can be reliably mounted onto substrates such as:

- G10 or FR4 glass/resin
- FR5 glass/resin systems for high-temperature applications
- Polyimide boards, also high-temperature applications
- Ceramic substrates

General requirements for printed circuit boards are:

- Mounting pads should be solder-plated whenever applicable.
- Solder masks are commonly used to prevent solder bridging of fine lines during soldering.

The mask also protects circuits from processing chemical contamination and corrosion.

If coated over pre-tinned traces, residues may accumulate at the mask/trace interface during subsequent reflow, leading to possible reliability failures.

Recommended application of solder resist on bare, clean traces prior to coating exposed areas with solder.

General requirements for solder mask:

- Good pattern resolution.

- Complete coverage of circuit lines and resistance to flaking during soldering.
- Adhesion should be excellent on substrate material to keep off moisture and chemicals.
- Compatible with soldering and cleaning requirements.

SOLDER PASTE SCREEN PRINTING

With the initial choice of printed circuit lithographic design and substrate material, the first step in surface mounting is the application of solder paste.

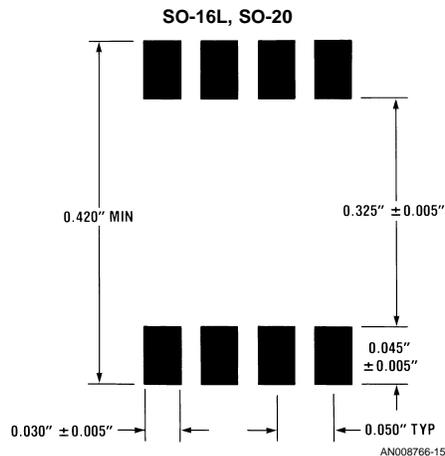
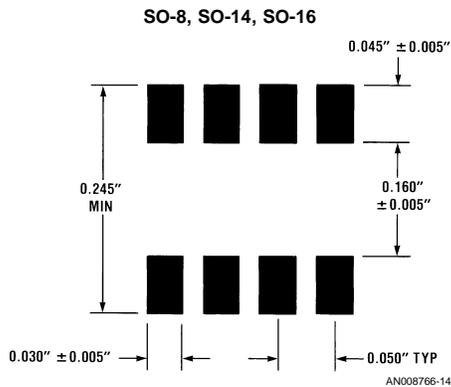
The typical lithographic "footprints" for SO packages are illustrated below. Note that the 0.050" lead center-center spacing is not easily managed by commercially-available air pressure, hand-held dispensers.

Using a stainless-steel, wire-mesh screen stencilled with an emulsion image of the substrate pads is by far the most common and well-tried method. The paste is forced through the screen by a V-shaped plastic squeegee in a sweeping manner onto the board placed beneath the screen.

The setup for SO packages has no special requirement from that required by other surface-mounted, passive components. Recommended working specifications are:

- Use stainless-steel, wire-mesh screens, #80 or #120, wire diameter 2.6 mils. Rule of thumb: mesh opening should be approximately 2.5–5 times larger than the average particle size of paste material.
- Use squeegee of Durometer 70.
- Experimentation with squeegee travel speed is recommended, if available on machine used.

RECOMMENDED SOLDER PADS FOR SO PACKAGES

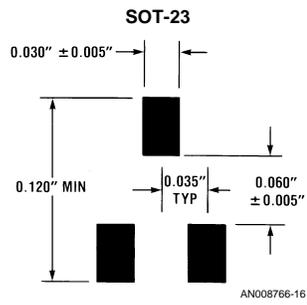


- Use solder paste of mesh 200–325.
- Emulsion thickness of 0.005" usually used to achieve a solder paste thickness (wet) of about 0.008" typical.
- Mesh pattern should be 90 degrees, square grid.
- Snap-off height of screen should not exceed 1/8", to avoid damage to screens and minimize distortion.

SOLDER PASTE

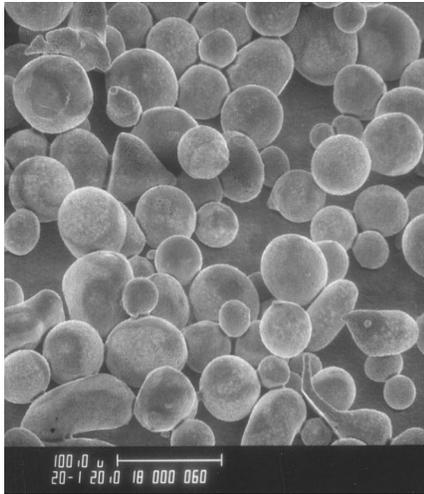
Selection of solder paste tends to be confusing, due to numerous formulations available from various manufacturers. In general, the following guidelines are sufficient to qualify a particular paste for production:

- Particle sizes (see following photographs). Mesh 325 (approximately 45 microns) should be used for general purposes, while larger (solder globules) particles are preferred for leadless components (LCC). The larger particles can easily be used for SO packages.
- Uniform particle distribution. Solder globules should be spherical in shape with uniform diameters and minimum amount of elongation (visual under 100/200 x magnification). Uneven distribution causes uneven melting and subsequent expulsion of smaller solder balls away from their proper sites.
- Composition, generally 60/40 or 63/37 Sn/Pb. Use 62/36 Sn/Pb with 2% Ag in the presence of Au on the soldering area. This formulation reduces problems of metal leaching from soldering pads.
- RMA flux system usually used.
- Use paste with approximately 88–90% solids.

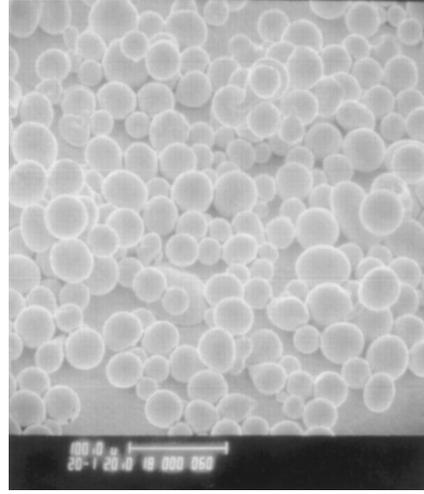


Comparison of Particle Size/Shape of Various Solder Pastes

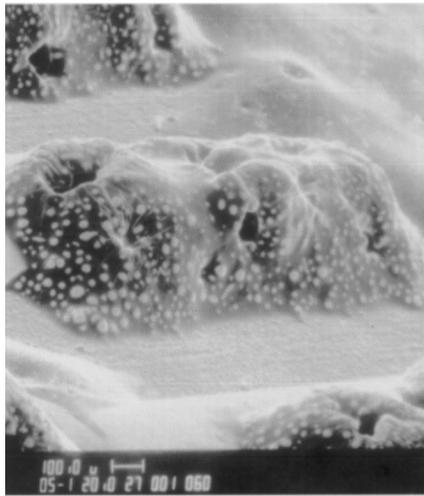
200 x Alpha (62/36/2)



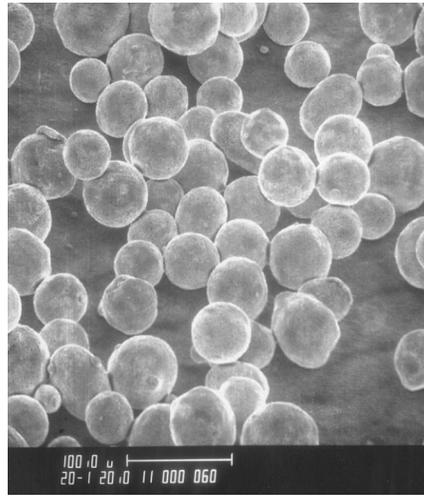
200 x Kester (63/37)



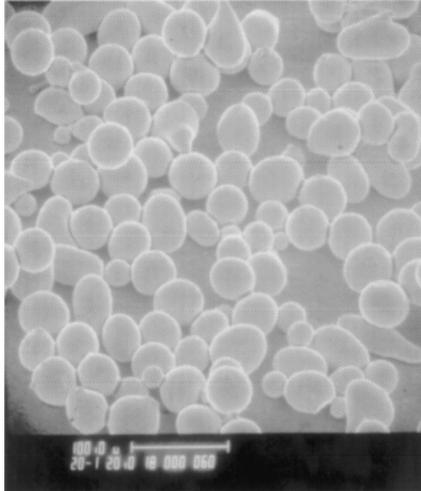
Solder Paste Screen On Pads



200 x Fry Metal (63/37)



200 ESL (63/37)



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CLEANING

The most critical process in surface mounting SO packages is in the cleaning cycle. The package is mounted very close to the surface of the substrate and has a tendency to collect residue left behind after reflow soldering.

Important considerations in cleaning are:

- Time between soldering and cleaning to be as short as possible. Residue should not be allowed to solidify on the substrate for long periods of time, making it difficult to dislodge.
- A low surface tension solvent (high penetration) should be employed. CFC solvents are being phased out as they are hazardous to the environment. Other approaches to cleaning are commercially available and should be investigated on an individual basis considering local and government environmental rules.

Prelete or 1,1,1-Trichloroethane

Kester 5120/5121

- A defluxer system which allows the workpiece to be subjected to a solvent vapor, followed by a rinse in pure solvent and a high-pressure spray lance are the basic requirements for low-volume production.
- For volume production, a conveyORIZED, multiple hot solvent spray/jet system is recommended.
- Rosin, being a natural occurring material, is not readily soluble in solvents, and has long been a stumbling block to the cleaning process. In recent developments, synthetic flux (SA flux), which is readily soluble in Freon TMS solvent, has been developed. This should be explored where permissible.

The dangers of an inadequate cleaning cycle are:

- Ion contamination, where ionic residue left on boards would cause corrosion to metallic components, affecting the performance of the board.

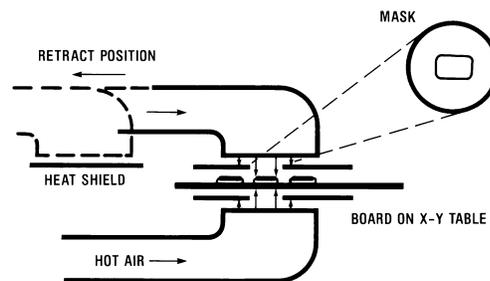
- Electro-migration, where ionic residue and moisture present on electrically-biased boards would cause dendritic growth between close spacing traces on the substrate, resulting in failures (shorts).

REWORK

Should there be a need to replace a component or re-align a previously disturbed component, a hot air system with appropriate orifice masking to protect surrounding components may be used.

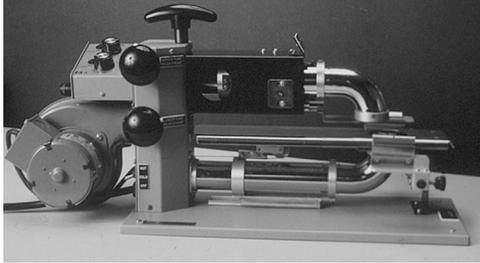
When rework is necessary in the field, specially-designed tweezers that thermally heat the component may be used to remove it from its site. The replacement can be fluxed at the lead tips or, if necessary, solder paste can be dispensed onto the pads using a varimeter. After being placed into position, the solder is reflowed by a hot-air jet or even a standard soldering iron.

Hot-Air Solder Rework Station



AN008766-22

Hot-Air Rework Machine



AN008766-23

WAVE SOLDERING

In a case where lead insertions are made on the same board as surface-mounted components, there is a need to include a wave-soldering operation in the process flow.

Two options are used:

- Surface mounted components are placed and vapor phase reflowed before auto-insertion of remaining components. The board is carried over a standard wave-solder system and the underside of the board (only lead-inserted leads) soldered.
- Surface-mounted components are placed in position, but no solder paste is used. Instead, a drop of adhesive about 5 mils maximum in height with diameter not exceeding 25% width of the package is used to hold down the package. The adhesive is cured and then proceeded to

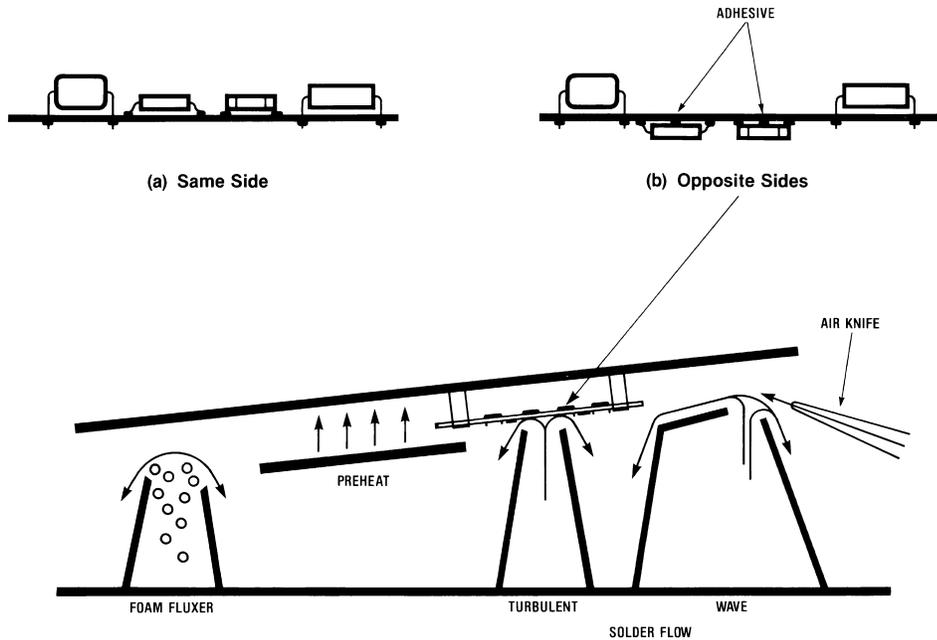
auto-insertion on the reverse side of the board (surface-mounted side facing down). The assembly is then passed over a "dual wave" soldering system. Note that the surface-mounted components are immersed into the molten solder.

Lead trimming will pose a problem after soldering in the latter case, unless the leads of the insertion components are pre-trimmed or the board specially designed to localize certain areas for easy access to the trim blade.

The controls required for wave soldering are:

- Solder temperature to be 240–260°C. The dwell time of components under molten solder to be short (preferably kept under 2 seconds), to prevent damage to most components and semiconductor devices.
- RMA (Rosin Mildly Activated) flux or more aggressive OA (Organic Acid) flux are applied by either dipping or foam fluxing on boards prior to preheat and soldering. Cleaning procedures are also more difficult (aqueous, when OA flux is used), as the entire board has been treated by flux (unlike solder paste, which is more or less localized). Non-halide OA fluxes are highly recommended.
- Preheating of boards is essential to reduce thermal shock on components. Board should reach a temperature of about 100°C just before entering the solder wave.
- Due to the closer lead spacings (0.050" vs 0.100" for dual-in-line packages), bridging of traces by solder could occur. The reduced clearance between packages also causes "shadowing" of some areas, resulting in poor solder coverage. This is minimized by dual-wave solder systems.

Mixed Surface Mount and Lead Insertion



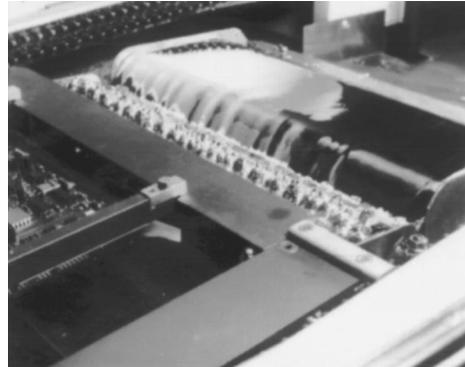
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A typical dual-wave system is illustrated below, showing the various stages employed. The first wave typically is in turbulence and given a transverse motion (across the motion of the board). This covers areas where "shadowing" occurs. A second wave (usually a broad wave) then proceeds to perform the standard soldering. The departing edge from the solder is such to reduce "icicles," and is still further reduced by an air knife placed close to the final soldering step. This air knife will blow off excess solder (still in the fluid stage) which would otherwise cause shorts (bridging) and solder bumps.

AQUEOUS CLEANING

- For volume production, a conveyORIZED system is often used with a heated recirculating spray wash (water temperature 130°C), a final spray rinse (water temperature 45–55°C), and a hot (120°C) air/air-knife drying section.
- For low-volume production, the above cleaning can be done manually, using several water rinses/tanks. Fast-drying solvents, like alcohols that are miscible with water, are sometimes used to help the drying process.
- Neutralizing agents which will react with the corrosive materials in the flux and produce material readily soluble in water may be used; the choice depends on the type of flux used.
- Final rinse water should be free from chemicals which are introduced to maintain the biological purity of the water. These materials, mostly chlorides, are detrimental to the assemblies cleaned because they introduce a fresh amount of ionizable material.

Dual Wave



AN008766-25

CONFORMAL COATING

Conformal coating is recommended for high-reliability PCBs to provide insulation resistance, as well as protection against contamination and degradation by moisture.

Requirements:

- Complete coating over components and solder joints.
- Thixotropic material which will not flow under the packages or fill voids, otherwise will introduce stress on solder joints on expansion.
- Compatibility and possess excellent adhesion with PCB material/components.
- Silicones are recommended where permissible in application.

SMD Lab Support

FUNCTIONS

Demonstration — Introduce first-time users to surface-mounting processes.

Service — Investigate problems experienced by users on surface mounting.

Reliability Builds — Assemble surface-mounted units for reliability data acquisition.

Techniques — Develop techniques for handling different materials and processes in surface mounting.

Equipment — In conjunction with equipment manufacturers, develop customized equipments to handle high density, new technology packages developed by National.

In-House Expertise — Availability of in-house expertise on semiconductor research/development to assist users on packaging queries.

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