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METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING SOLID ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITOR
AND
MACHINE FOR MANUFACTURING THE SAME

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method and a machine for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor; more specifically, a method of encapsulating the electrolytic capacitor elements mounted on a hoop metal lead frame with a molding resin.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor that uses a conductive high polymer material for the solid electrolyte is described as an example of the conventional manufacturing method, referring to FIG. 6 and
15 FIG. 7. FIG. 6 is a plan view showing part of a hoop metal lead frame mounted with an element for solid electrolytic capacitor. A metal lead frame 16 has a terminal section 18 provided continuously at a certain regular interval along the direction of length, and a crosspiece 19 between respective terminal sections 18 for connecting both sides of the metal lead frame in terms
20 of the width dimension. The terminal section 18 is mounted with a capacitor element 17, with electrode of the capacitor element 17 connected to the terminal section 18. A perforation 20 is for transferring the lead frame 16.

FIG. 7 is a partial plan view used to describe a method of encapsulating the capacitor element 17 of FIG. 6 with a molding resin. A
25 main runner 21 lies close to the metal lead frame 16 along one of the sides, and a plurality of sub runner 22 branch-out from the main runner 21 covering every other crosspiece 19. Molding resin is injected from the sub runner 22 through a gate portion 23. The capacitor element 17 is encapsulated with the molding resin forming a solid electrolytic capacitor 24 on the lead frame 16.
30 Removal of the main runner 21 and the sub runner 22 provides finished pieces

of the solid electrolytic capacitor.

In the above described conventional method of manufacture, the solid electrolytic capacitors 24 formed on the metal lead frame 16 are connected with the main runner 21, the sub runner 22 and the gate portion 23, as shown in FIG. 7. The first action needed to divide the capacitors 24 into individual pieces is to separate the main runner 21 and the sub runner 22 from the solid electrolytic capacitors 24 formed on the metal lead frame 16. The action of removing the runners 21, 22 generates following problems.

A force exerted to peel the main runner 21 and the sub runner 22 off the metal lead frame 16 inevitably gives an unwanted force to the crosspiece 19 covered with the sub runner 22. The unwanted force ill affects the solid electrolytic capacitors 24. Namely, the tight adhesion between the molding resin and the lead frame 16 is deteriorated, and the hermetic sealing property of the resin-encapsulated capacitor elements 17 is degraded.

A conventional countermeasure taken to solve the above problem is to provide a blasting on the metal lead frame 16 in the area to be covered by the molding resin, for the purpose of increasing the adhesive strength to resin. However, such a countermeasure has not been effective enough to totally eliminate the adverse influence of the force exerted on the solid electrolytic capacitors 24 through said crosspiece 19. So, under the conventional method, it has been difficult to provide a sufficient assurance on the quality of solid electrolytic capacitors 24 with respect to the hermetic sealing property. Meanwhile, if one wants to separate the runners 21, 22 from the metal lead frame 16 without leaving unwanted force on the solid electrolytic capacitors 24, an expensive machine of complicated structure will be required.

The present invention aims to offer a method for manufacturing the solid electrolytic capacitors, as well as a machine for the manufacture, which can provide the solid electrolytic capacitors on the stable basis that are superior in the reliability with respect to the hermetic sealing property.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor comprising the steps of:

5 setting a hoop metal lead frame having a terminal section, on which a solid electrolytic capacitor element is mounted, provided at a certain regular interval along the length direction of the metal lead frame in a moulding die; and

 encapsulating said capacitor element with a moulding resin by providing said moulding resin into said moulding die, wherein

10 said metal lead frame is provided with a crosspiece bridging both sides of the metal lead frame in terms of the width direction, one crosspiece for every two capacitor elements, so as there are a space containing said crosspiece and a space without having said crosspiece among the spaces between said capacitor elements;

 a main runner is provided along at least one of the sides in terms of the
15 width direction of said metal lead frame;

 a sub runner, which is branching out from said main runner, is provided at a region corresponding to said space without having the crosspiece; and

 during the encapsulating step said moulding resin is injected onto said capacitor element through said sub runner.

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 Under the above described method of manufacture, since the sub runner is not covering the crosspiece, the lead frame is not affected by unwanted forces when separating both runners from the lead frame on which the capacitor elements have been integrated. Therefore, the hermetic sealing property is not ill affected, and the
25 solid electrolytic capacitors thus manufactured will have a superior reliability.

 In the above described manufacturing method of the present invention, it is preferred to provide the metal lead frame with a reference hole at the starting point and the ending point of a span corresponding to a number of capacitor elements
30 that can be moulded at one shot, for detecting dislocation in the transfer pitch; and transferring the metal lead frame for the number of capacitor elements accordingly. The reference holes may be detected by a sensor for preventing the transfer pitch

dislocation. Thus the moulding operation may be conducted efficiently at a higher precision level.

5 When joining metal lead frames, it is preferred to have the reference hole at the end of a first lead frame and the reference hole at the beginning of a second lead frame coupled together. By joining two metal lead frames in this way, the moulding operation may be carried out continuously without halting at the joint of two lead frames, or discarding the moulded elements of that sector. This contributes to a further increased productivity and yield rate.

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It is also preferred to provide the reference hole at only one side, in terms of the width direction, of a metal lead frame. With this configuration, a reversed lead frame can be easily detected, and the occurrence of a trouble may be prevented.

15 The metal lead frame having the resin-encapsulated capacitor elements is severed from the sub runner, in a manner where the sub runner is peeled off the metal lead frame while at least the metal lead frame is held firm. Since the sub runner is not covering a crosspiece, no unwanted force is given on the metal lead frame during the severance operation.

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A machine for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor in accordance with another aspect of the present invention comprises:

transfer means for moving solid electrolytic capacitor elements mounted and encapsulated on a metal lead frame with a moulding resin injected through a main
25 runner and a sub runner, within said machine;

holding means for holding the upper and the bottom surfaces of said metal lead frame, and having an escape section providing a space to avoid the holding means making contact with said sub runner; and

guide means disposed at a place downstream of said holding means,
30 provided for guiding said main runner; wherein

the guide means is operable to effect severance of the metal lead frame carrying said encapsulated capacitor elements and said sub runner from each other.

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Since the severance is conducted by the guiding means, the structure of the present manufacturing machine can be quite simple. Thus solid electrolytic capacitors having a superior hermetic sealing property can be manufactured for an inexpensive cost with ease.

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The present invention also provides a metal lead frame in the form of a hoop for manufacturing solid electrolytic capacitors, comprising:

a plurality of terminal sections stretching in the width direction, disposed along the length direction; and

10 a plurality of crosspieces bridging both sides of the metal lead frame in terms of the width direction, disposed along the length direction; wherein

said plurality of crosspieces in provided one for two of said terminal sections.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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FIG. 1 is a plan view showing part of a metal lead frame used for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor in a first exemplary embodiment

of the present invention.

FIG. 2 shows a state of the metal lead frame of FIG. 1 mounted with solid electrolytic capacitor elements.

FIG. 3 shows a state of the solid electrolytic capacitor elements of FIG. 2 encapsulated with resin.

FIG. 4(a), FIG. 4(b) and FIG. 4(c) are plan views used to show a method of joining metal lead frames in a second exemplary embodiment of the present invention; FIG. 4(a) shows the end part of a first metal lead frame, FIG. 4(b) shows the beginning part of a second metal lead frame, FIG. 4(c) shows a state in which the end part of the first metal lead frame and the beginning part of the second metal lead frame have been overlaid.

FIG. 5(a) and FIG. 5(b) show the structure of a machine for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor in a third exemplary embodiment of the present invention; FIG. 5(a) is a sectional view seen from the front, FIG. 5(b) is the side view.

FIG. 6 is a plan view showing part of a metal lead frame used for manufacturing conventional solid electrolytic capacitors, mounted with the capacitor elements.

FIG. 7 shows a state of the capacitor elements of FIG. 6 encapsulated with molding resin.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

(Embodiment 1)

Referring to FIG. 1, a terminal section 2, formed of a pair of negative electrode terminal 2a and positive electrode terminal 2b, is provided continuously at a certain regular interval along the length direction of a hoop metal lead frame 1, and a crosspiece 3 is provided connecting both sides of the lead frame 1, which crosspiece being disposed one for every two terminal sections 2. The lead frame 1 is provided with the terminal section 2 for two rows in the width, and a transfer perforation 4 in the side edges at a certain

predetermined regular interval.

As shown in FIG. 2, solid electrolytic capacitor elements 5 are mounted on the metal lead frame 1 at the terminal section 2. The negative electrode and the positive electrode (neither of them are shown) of capacitor element 5 are coupled, respectively, with terminal section 2a and the terminal section 2b, and the capacitor element 5 is fixed on the terminal section 2. The solid electrolytic capacitor element 5 is formed of a plurality of laminated sheets.

As shown in FIG. 3, the metal lead frame 1 mounted with the capacitor elements 5 is placed in a multi-cavity molding die so that a main runner 7 is locating close to and along one side, in terms of the width direction, of the lead frame 1 and a sub runner 8, which is branching out from the main runner 7, is locating at a region between the capacitor elements 5 where no crosspiece 3 exists. Molding resin is supplied to the capacitor elements 5 through a gate portion 9 provided in the sub runner 8. The capacitor elements 5 are encapsulated by the resin, and pluralities of solid electrolytic capacitors 10 (in FIG. 3, 48 pcs. are shown) are manufactured at a single shot.

The metal lead frame 1 is provided with a reference hole 6 at the beginning point and the end point of each span corresponding to a number of capacitor elements that can be molded at one shot. The transfer pitch of the lead frame can be made sure by detecting the reference hole 6 with a sensor (not shown) at the molding stage. In case any dislocation is detected, preventive measures may be taken in advance to avoid resultant troubles. The reference hole 6 is provided only in one side of the lead frame 1; therefore, if a lead frame 1 is supplied reversed by mistake or by an unexpected reason, it can be found out easily and troubles can be prevented.

In the present exemplary embodiment, the crosspiece 3 is provided one for every two capacitor elements, as shown in FIG. 3; hence, respective capacitor elements 5 are separated alternately by a space containing the

crosspiece 3 and a space without having the crosspiece 3. Since the sub runner 8 has been provided in the space without having the crosspiece 3, the operation of peeling the main runner 7 and the sub runner 8 off the lead frame 1 breaks the gate portion 9, and the solid electrolytic capacitors 10 formed
5 integrated on the metal lead frame 1 are separated from the main runners. Namely, the main runner 7 and the sub runner 8 have been formed irrelevant to the crosspiece 3 of the metal lead frame 1; therefore, a force exerted for the separation hardly reaches the solid electrolytic capacitors 10. Thus, the conventional problem that a stress generated at the separation of the runners
10 degrades the hermetic sealing between the molding resin of solid electrolytic capacitor 10 and the lead frame 1 will not arise with the present embodiment.
(Embodiment 2)

A method of joining a first and a second metal lead frames of a certain specific length together is described with reference to FIG. 4(a) - FIG. 4(c).

15 As shown in FIG. 4(a), end of a first metal lead frame 1 is cut at the location of the reference hole 6, provided for location detection, with the crosspiece 3 retained thereon. Next, as shown in FIG. 4(b), beginning of a second metal lead frame 1 is cut at the location of the reference hole 6, with the crosspiece 3 eliminated. And then, as shown in FIG. 4(c), the end part of
20 first lead frame 1 as shown in FIG. 4(a) and the beginning part of second lead frame as shown in FIG. 4(b) are overlaid and connected together sharing the reference hole 6 in common.

By the above described method of joining, a single piece of metal lead frame can be formed, with two lead frames overlapping in the shadowed area
25 as shown in FIG. 4(c). Thus the metal lead frame can be supplied on continuous basis enabling a continuous production. Furthermore, since the reference hole 6 locates in the overlapping area, it does not invite any inconvenience such as displacement of the transfer pitch for encapsulating the capacitor elements in the molding die. This provides a significant
30 contribution to the productivity and in the manufacturing cost.

(Embodiment 3)

Referring to FIG. 5(a) and FIG. 5(b), description is made on a manufacturing machine that peels and separates the metal lead frame, on which solid electrolytic capacitors are formed and integrated, from the runners.

The machine is formed of a transfer roller 11, a teathed roller 12, a pressure roller 13, a timing belt 14 and a runner guide 15. The transfer roller 11 is provided with a pilot pin 11a, which is to be engaged with the transfer perforation 4 (ref. FIG. 1) of the metal lead frame 1. The teathed roller 12 is provided with a press section 12a for giving pressure onto the metal lead frame 1, an escape section 12b for providing an escaping space for the sub runner 8, a product escape section 21c for providing an escaping space for the solid electrolytic capacitor 10 and a pilot pin 12d that fits into the transfer perforation 4 (ref. FIG. 1). The pressure roller 13 is provided with a press section 13a for giving pressing onto the lead frame 1 and a product escape section 13b for providing an escaping space for the solid electrolytic capacitor 10. The timing belt 14 is provided between the transfer roller 11 and the teathed roller 12. The runner guide 15 is provided in a pair for guiding the main runner 7 from the upper and the bottom directions.

Clockwise revolution (in the drawing) of the transfer roller 11, with the pilot pin 11a engaged with the transfer perforation 4 of metal lead frame 1, transfers the lead frame 1 to the right (in the drawing). At this stage, the lead frame 1 is firmly held from the upper and the bottom surfaces by the press section 12a of teathed roller 12 and the press section 13a of pressure roller 13. The solid electrolytic capacitor 10 is supported free of contact by virtue of the product escape section 21c of teathed roller 12 and the product escape section 13b of pressure roller 13. The sub runner 8 is also supported free of contact by virtue of the escape section 21b of teathed roller 12. Namely, the metal lead frame 1 is held firmly from the upper and the bottom surfaces by the pressure roller 13 and the teathed roller 12, with the exception

of solid electrolytic capacitor 10 and sub runner 8.

When the transfer roller 11 revolves, the metal lead frame 1 is pulled to move upward towards the transfer roller 11 in the right (in the drawing), whereas the main runner 7 proceeds straight forward to the right (in the drawing) being guided by the runner guide 15. The sub runner 8 also proceeds to the same direction accompanied by the main runner 7. Then the gate portion 9 is broken, and the runners 7, 8 alone are severed from the lead frame 1; the point of severance locating somewhere between the pressure roller 13 making contact with the teathed roller 12 and the beginning edge of the runner guide 15. The lead frame 1 carrying the solid electrolytic capacitors 10 is hooked by and transferred to the transfer roller 11.

Under the present manufacturing machine, runners can be easily severed by making use of a simple-structured runner guide 15, and the metal lead frame 1 is kept free from a force or a stress generated at the severance operation. Therefore, the severance does not ill affect the hermetic sealing of encapsulation, and solid electrolytic capacitors of high reliability may be offered.

The present invention can be embodied in various forms, without departing from the spirit or the main feature. For example, although the above exemplified metal lead frames 1 are provided with the terminal section 2 for two rows in the width direction of the lead frame, it is to be understood that such disclosure is not to be interpreted as limiting. The terminal section may of course be provided in one row. Accordingly, it is intended that the appended claims is interpreted as covering all alterations and modifications as fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. A method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor comprising the steps of:

5 setting a hoop metal lead frame having a terminal section, on which a solid electrolytic capacitor element is mounted, provided at a certain regular interval along the length direction of the metal lead frame in a moulding die; and

 encapsulating said capacitor element with a moulding resin by providing said moulding resin into said moulding die, wherein

10 said metal lead frame is provided with a crosspiece bridging both sides of the metal lead frame in terms of the width direction, one crosspiece for every two capacitor elements, so as there are a space containing said crosspiece and a space without having said crosspiece among the spaces between said capacitor elements;

15 a main runner is provided along at least one of the sides in terms of the width direction of said metal lead frame;

 a sub runner, which is branching out from said main runner, is provided at a region corresponding to said space without having the crosspiece; and

20 during the encapsulating step said moulding resin is injected onto said capacitor element through said sub runner.

2. The method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor recited in claim 1, wherein said metal lead frame is transferred for a certain span corresponding to a number of the capacitor elements that can be processed in one
25 moulding operation for encapsulating pluralities of the capacitor elements in one shot, by making use of a reference hole provided at the beginning point and the end point of the span in the metal lead frame provided for detecting a dislocation in the transfer pitch.

30 3. The method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor recited in claim 2, wherein said metal lead frame is formed of a first and a second metal lead frames, joined by coupling the reference hole provided at the end of said first metal

lead frame with the reference hole provided at the beginning of said second metal lead frame together.

4. The method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor recited in
5 claim 2, wherein said reference hole is provided at one side in terms of the width direction of said metal lead frame.

5. The method for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor recited in
any one of claims 1, 2, 3 and 4, wherein said capacitor element is first encapsulated
10 with said moulding resin, and then the sub runner is peeled and severed from said metal lead frame while said metal lead frame is held firm.

6. A machine for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor comprising:
transfer means for moving solid electrolytic capacitor elements
15 mounted and encapsulated on a metal lead frame with a moulding resin injected through a main runner and a sub runner, within said machine;

holding means for holding the upper and the bottom surfaces of said metal lead frame, and having an escape section providing a space to avoid the holding means making contact with said sub runner; and

20 guide means disposed at a place downstream of said holding means, provided for guiding said main runner; wherein

the guide means is operable to effect severance of the metal lead frame carrying said encapsulated capacitor elements and said sub runner from each other.

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7. The machine for manufacturing a solid electrolytic capacitor recited in claim 6, wherein said holding means comprises:

a toothed roller having said escape section in the middle and a press section for pressing said metal lead frame at both sides in terms of the axis
30 direction; and

a pressure roller having a product escape section for providing an escaping space for said moulded elements in the middle and a press section for pressing said metal lead frame at both sides in terms of axis direction.

8. A metal lead frame in the form of a hoop for manufacturing solid electrolytic capacitors, comprising:

5 a plurality of terminal sections stretching in the width direction,
disposed along the length direction; and

a plurality of crosspieces bridging both sides of the metal lead frame in terms of the width direction, disposed along the length direction; wherein

said plurality of crosspieces in provided one for two of said terminal sections.