

METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING SEMICONDUCTOR CHIP

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001]

The present invention relates to a method for manufacturing a semiconductor chip.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002]

In recent years, considerable progress has been made in thinning and downsizing of semiconductor chips. In particular, IC cards including semiconductor IC chips, such as a memory card and a smart card, require thinning of the chips, and LED/LCD drive devices or the like require downsizing of the chips. With increase in demands for these products, it is considered that there will be even more needs for thinning and downsizing of semiconductor chips in the future.

[0003]

These semiconductor chips are obtained by reducing a thickness of a semiconductor wafer to a predetermined thickness through processes such as backgrinding and etching and then divided into individual chips through a dicing process. In such a dicing process, a blade-dicing method in which a dicing blade is used to cut the wafer has been in use. In the blade-dicing method, cutting resistance from the blade is directly applied to the semiconductor wafer at the time of cutting. Thus, this cutting resistance may cause the semiconductor chip to have a micro chipping. The occurrence of the chipping not only impairs appearance of the semiconductor chip but may invite chip breakage at the time of pickup due to insufficient transverse strength in some cases and may possibly damage circuit patterns on the chip. Also, in the dicing process of physically dicing with a blade, it is impossible to decrease a width of a kerf (also called as a scribe line or a street), which is a space between two chips, less than a blade width having a thickness. As a result, the number of chips that can be obtained from a wafer (an yield) is small. Furthermore, long processing time of the wafer has also been an issue.

[0004]

Other than the blade-dicing method, various methods have been used as the dicing process. For example, in view of difficulty in dicing after thinning a wafer, there is a DBG (dicing before grinding) method, in which grooves of a predetermined depth are formed in the wafer in advance and then grinding process is performed

thereto so that thinning the chip and dividing the chip into individual pieces are performed simultaneously. In this method, although the kerf width is the same as in the blade-dicing process, the transverse strength of the chip is improved and breakage of the chip can be prevented.

[0005]

Also, there is a laser dicing method in which dicing is performed by laser. The laser dicing method can make the kerf width smaller and also has an advantage that the process can be a dry process. However, there is an inconvenience that the wafer surface may be contaminated with a sublimate from the laser cutting, and thus a pretreatment for protecting the wafer surface using a predetermined liquid protective material may be required in some cases. Also, although it is called as a dry process, a complete dry process has not been achieved yet. Furthermore, the process speed can be faster in the laser dicing method than in the blade-dicing method. However, line-by-line processing remains the same, and manufacturing of microchips still requires a certain amount of time.

[0006]

Also, there are methods using wet process such as a water jet method in which dicing is performed using water pressure. This method may cause a problem for materials such as a MEMS device or CMOS sensor in which prevention of surface contamination is highly essential. Also, there is a limit in reducing of the kerf width, and the yield of the obtained chip may be low.

[0007]

Also, a stealth dicing method in which a modifying layer is formed in a thickness direction of the wafer by using laser and the wafer is expanded to fracture for separation. This method has an advantage that the kerf width can be zero with a dry process. However, the transverse strength of the chip may tend to decrease due to thermal history during formation of the modifying layer, and also there may be silicon debris generated at the time of expansion and separation. Furthermore, collision between neighboring chips may lead to insufficiency in the transverse strength.

[0008]

Furthermore, as a method that combines the stealth dicing and the DBG, there is a chip dicing method for narrow scribe width in which a modifying layer is formed for a predetermined thickness before thinning and then grinding process is performed onto the back surface thereof so as to perform thinning and separating of the chip at the same time. With this technique, the disadvantages of the above

processes are improved. The silicon modifying layer cleaves due to stress force during the grinding process of the back surface of the wafer so as to separate the wafer into dies and this leads to advantages such as zero kerf width, high yield of the chip, and enhanced transverse strength. However, since the wafer is separated during the grinding process of the back surface, there may be, in some cases, a phenomenon in which neighboring chip end faces collide with each other, causing chipping off of corners of the chips.

[0009]

Also, a dicing technology using plasma dicing method has been proposed (see Patent Document 1, for example). The plasma dicing method divides the semiconductor wafer by plasma, which selectively etches regions that are not masked. This dicing method enables to separate chips selectively and allows the separation without any problems even if the scribe line is not straight. Also, since its etching rate is extremely high, the plasma dicing method has been considered as one of the most suitable processes for dividing chips in recent years.

RELATED ART

PATENT DOCUMENTS

[0010]

[Patent Document 1] Japanese Unexamined Patent Application Publication No.2007-19385 (JP-A-2007-19385)

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

(PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED BY THE INVENTION)

[0011]

In the plasma dicing method, fluorine gas such as sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6) or carbon tetrafluoride (CF_4) having an extremely high reactivity with the wafer is used as a plasma generating gas. Thus, the etching rate is high and areas that are not to be etched must be protected by a mask.

[0012]

To form this mask, as being described in Patent Document 1, a technology in which photoresist is applied onto a surface of the wafer and then photolithography process removes the areas corresponding to streets has been commonly used. Thus, to perform the plasma dicing, other than equipment for plasma dicing, equipment for photolithography process is also required, which leads to a problem of a rise in the chip cost. Also, there also has been an inconvenience that the whole treatment

process takes a long time because the process needs to go through masking steps with photoresist.

[0013]

The present invention was made in view of such problems. Its object is to provide a method for manufacturing semiconductor chips, in which photolithography is not necessary and plasma irradiation can divide (separate) a wafer into chips with more certainty, highly suppressing occurrence of defective chips.

(MEANS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS)

[0014]

To achieve the above object, the present invention provides a method for manufacturing semiconductor chips, including a step a of pasting a mask-integrated surface-protective tape, which includes a surface protective tape and a mask material layer being provided on the surface protective tape, over a patterned surface side of a semiconductor wafer, grinding a back surface of the semiconductor wafer, pasting a wafer fixing tape onto the grinded back surface of the semiconductor wafer, and fixing and supporting the semiconductor wafer with a ring frame; a step b of peeling off the surface protective tape from the mask-integrated surface-protective tape to expose the mask material layer, and then cutting a part of the mask material layer that corresponds to a street of the semiconductor wafer by using a laser to make an opening for the street of the semiconductor wafer; a step c of plasma dicing wherein plasma irradiation cuts the semiconductor wafer at the street and separates the semiconductor wafer into semiconductor chips; and a step d of pasting a peeling tape on the mask material layer, and peeling off the peeling tape together with the mask material layer to remove the mask material layer.

[0015]

The peeling tape is made of radiation curable resin, and it is preferable that, in the step d, after pasting the peeling tape on the mask material layer, radioactive ray is irradiated thereon to cure the peeling tape and then the peeling tape is peeled off together with the mask material layer.

[0016]

An adhesive strength between the peeling tape and the mask material layer in the step d is preferably greater than an adhesive strength between the surface protective tape and the mask material layer in the step b.

[0017]

According to the present invention, plasma irradiation can divide a wafer into chips and thus occurrence of defective chips can be suppressed. At this time, since a mask is formed by using the mask-integrated surface protective tape having the mask material layer on the surface protective tape, photolithography process is not necessary. Thus, equipment for the photolithography process is unnecessary, which can reduce the chip cost. Also, a masking process with photoresist is unnecessary and thus the whole treatment process can be shortened.

[0018]

Also, the mask material layer is peeled off by the peeling tape and thus, compared with a case in which the mask material layer is removed by ashing for example, damages to a circuit patterned surface of the semiconductor wafer can be prevented.

[0019]

Also, radiation curable resin is used as the peeling tape. Thus, when radioactive ray is irradiated to cure the peeling tape after the peeling tape is pasted, the peeling tape can be contracted. This deformation of the peeling tape due to the contraction makes sure that the peeling tape engages with the mask material layer and thus can enhance the adhesive strength between the peeling tape and the mask material layer when the peeling tape is peeled off together with the mask material layer. As a result, the mask material layer can be peeled off with certainty.

[0020]

Also, the adhesive strength between the peeling tape and the mask material layer when peeling off the mask material layer is greater than the adhesive strength between the surface protective tape and the mask material layer when peeling off the surface protective layer and thus such an effect can be obtained with certainty.

(EFFECTS OF THE INVENTION)

[0021]

The present invention can provide a method for manufacturing semiconductor chips, in which photolithography process is not necessary and plasma irradiation can divide (separate) a wafer into chips with more certainty, highly suppressing occurrence of defective chips.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0022]

FIG. 1A is a view showing a semiconductor wafer 1 and is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of steps up to pasting of a mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 onto the semiconductor wafer 1.

FIG. 1B is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to pasting of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 onto the semiconductor wafer 1 and is a view showing pasting of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 onto the semiconductor wafer 1.

FIG. 1C is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to pasting of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 onto the semiconductor wafer 1 and is a view showing the semiconductor wafer 1 pasted with the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3.

FIG. 2A is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of steps up to thinning and fixing of the semiconductor wafer 1 and is a view showing a thinning process.

FIG. 2B is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to thinning and fixing of the semiconductor wafer 1 and is a view showing pasting of a wafer fixing tape 4.

FIG. 2C is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to thinning and fixing of the semiconductor wafer 1 and is a view showing a state in which the semiconductor wafer 1 is fixed to a ring frame 13.

FIG. 3A is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of steps up to mask formation and is a view showing a state in which a surface protective tape 3a is peeled off from the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 leaving a mask material layer 3b behind.

FIG. 3B is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to mask formation and is a view showing a state in which the mask material layer 3b of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is being exposed.

FIG. 3C is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to mask formation and is a view showing a step in which laser L cuts areas of the mask material layer 3b that correspond to streets.

FIG. 4A is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating a plasma dicing process and is a view showing a state in which plasma dicing is performed.

FIG. 4B is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating the plasma dicing process and is a view showing a state in which the semiconductor wafer 1 is divided into chips 7.

FIG. 5A is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of steps up to peeling off the mask material layer 3b and is a view showing a state in which a peeling tape 16 is pasted.

FIG. 5B is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to peeling off the mask material layer 3b and is a view showing a state in which ultra violet light is irradiated.

FIG. 5C is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to peeling off the mask material layer 3b and is a view showing a state in which the mask material layer 3b is peeled off together with the peeling tape 16.

FIG. 6A is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of steps up to picking up the chip and is a view showing a state in which the mask material layer 3b is removed.

FIG. 6B is a schematic cross sectional view illustrating one of the steps up to picking up the chip and is a view showing a state in which the chip 7 is picked up.

DESCRIPTION OF SOME EMBODIMENTS

[0023]

[A method for manufacturing semiconductor chips according to the present invention]

Hereinafter, a method for manufacturing semiconductor chips according to the present invention (hereinafter, simply referred to as 'the manufacturing method of the present invention') will be described. The manufacturing method of the present invention is a method in which semiconductor chips are obtained from plasma dicing a semiconductor wafer. As described hereinafter, the manufacturing method of the present invention does not need photolithography process and thus can considerably reduce the cost for manufacturing semiconductor chips or semiconductor products.

[0024]

The manufacturing method of the present invention includes at least following processes (a) to (d).

(a): a process of pasting a mask-integrated surface-protective tape, which includes a surface protective tape and a mask material layer being provided on the surface protective tape, onto a patterned surface of a semiconductor wafer, grinding a back surface of the semiconductor wafer, pasting a wafer fixing tape onto the grinded back surface of the semiconductor wafer, and fixing and supporting the semiconductor wafer with a ring frame;

(b): a process of peeling off the surface protective tape from the mask-integrated surface-protective tape to expose the mask material layer to the surface and cutting a region that corresponds to a street by using laser to make an opening for the street of the semiconductor wafer;

(c): a process of plasma dicing in which plasma is irradiated onto the semiconductor wafer that is to be separated at the street into semiconductor chips; and

(d): a process of pasting a peeling tape onto the mask material layer and peeling off the peeling tape along with the mask material layer to remove the mask material layer.

[0025]

The peeling tape is made of radiation curable resin, and it is preferable that, in the 'process d', after the peeling tape is pasted onto the mask material layer, radioactive ray is irradiated thereon to cure the peeling tape and then the peeling tape is peeled off together with the mask material layer.

[0026]

An adhesive strength between the peeling tape and the mask material layer in the 'process d' is preferably greater than an adhesive strength between the surface protective tape and the mask material layer in the 'process b'.

[0027]

Hereinafter, some embodiments of the present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. However, apart from those specified in the present invention, the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described below. Also, embodiments in the drawings are schematically illustrated for ease of understanding the present invention: some of the sizes, thicknesses, or magnitude correlations may be altered for the convenience of description and does not show the real correlations. The outer forms and shapes of the present invention is also not limited to those illustrated in these drawings except for the matters specified in the present invention.

[0028]

Also, unless otherwise specifically noted, any commonly used devices and materials that have been conventionally used in semiconductor wafer process can be used as the devices and materials to be used in the embodiments below, and conditions for use thereof can be suitably determined and optimized according to a purpose thereof within a scope of common usage. Also, any redundant descriptions on materials, structures, methods, effects, and so forth that are common among the embodiments will be omitted.

[0029]

An embodiment of the manufacturing method of the present invention will be described with reference to FIG. 1 to FIG. 6. A semiconductor wafer 1 includes a patterned surface 2 on which a semiconductor element circuit or the like is formed on a top surface S thereof (see FIG. 1A). On the side of the patterned surface 2 of the semiconductor wafer 1, a mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is pasted (see FIG. 1B). Accordingly, the semiconductor wafer 1 having the patterned surface 2 covered with the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is obtained (see FIG. 1C).

[0030]

The mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 includes a surface protective tape 3a, which is a laminate of a substrate film 3aa and an adhesive layer 3ab, and a mask material layer 3b, which is provided on the adhesive layer 3ab. That is, the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 has the surface protective tape 3a and the mask material layer 3b that is provided on the surface protective tape 3a. In the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3, the substrate film 3aa, the adhesive layer 3ab, and the mask material layer 3b may be in a single-layered structure or in double or more layered structure, respectively. The adhesive layer 3ab and the mask material layer 3b are preferably in the single-layered structure. Also, if it is possible to make use of temporary adhesiveness of the mask material layer 3b itself, then the adhesive layer 3ab is not always necessary.

[0031]

Next, a wafer grinding device 12 grinds a back surface B of the semiconductor wafer 1 to make a thickness of the semiconductor wafer 1 thinner (see FIG. 2A). A wafer fixing tape 4 is then pasted onto the grinded back surface B (see FIG. 2B) and the semiconductor wafer 1 is fixed to and supported by the ring frame 13 (see FIG. 2C).

[0032]

Next, the surface protective tape 3a of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is peeled off from the semiconductor wafer 1, leaving the mask material layer 3b thereof on the semiconductor wafer 1 (see FIG. 3A) to expose the mask material layer 3b (see FIG. 3B). Then, from a side of the top surface S, CO₂ laser L is irradiated onto a plurality of streets (not shown in the drawing) that are formed suitably on the patterned surface 2 in lattice forms or the like to remove parts of the mask material layer 3b that correspond to the streets of the semiconductor wafer 1 and make openings for the streets of the semiconductor wafer 1 (see FIG. 3C).

[0033]

Next, from the side of the top surface S, SF₆ gas plasma 15 is irradiated to etch the semiconductor wafer 1 that is exposed at the street parts (see FIG. 4A) and divide the semiconductor wafer 1 into separate semiconductor chips 7 (a plasma dicing process) (see FIG. 4B).

[0034]

Here, this etching process of a silicon semiconductor wafer using SF₆ gas is also called as Bosch process. In this process, the exposed silicon Si is reacted with fluorine atom F generated from SF₆ by plasma to form silicon fluoride (SiF₄), which is then removed. The process is also called as reactive ion etching (RIE).

[0035]

Next, a peeling tape 16 is pasted on the side of the top surface S of the mask material layer 3b (see FIG. 5A). The peeling tape 16 includes an adhesive layer 16b provided on a substrate film 16a. The substrate film 16a and the adhesive layer 16b may be in a single-layered structure or in double or more layered structure, respectively. The adhesive layer 16b is preferably in the single-layered structure.

[0036]

The peeling tape 16 is preferably made of a radiation curable resin. In such a case, ultraviolet ray (UV19) is irradiated to cure the peeling tape 16 after the peeling tape 16 is pasted with the mask material layer 3b (see FIG. 5B).

[0037]

In the present invention, when it is said that the peeling tape 16 is made of a radiation curable resin, it includes that at least a part of the peeling tape 16 is formed of a radiation curable resin and it also includes, for example, a case in which only the adhesive layer 16b of the peeling tape 16 is made of the radiation curable resin. In such a case, 'curing the peeling tape 16' means 'curing the adhesive layer 16b of the peeling tape 16'. Also, in this description, 'radioactive ray' is used to mean both rays of light, such as ultraviolet rays, and ionizing radiation, such as electron beams. Ultraviolet rays are the preferable radioactive rays to be used in the present invention. Also, if the peeling tape 16 is not made of a radiation curable resin, the irradiation process of UV19 to the peeling tape 16 is unnecessary.

[0038]

After the peeling tape 16 is pasted and cured, the peeling tape 16 is peeled off along with the mask material layer 3b (see FIG. 5C). That is, the mask material layer 3b is adhered to the peeling tape 16 and then peeled off and removed from the patterned surface 2. At this time, curing the peeling tape 16 (the adhesive layer 16b)

by irradiating UV19 can cure and contract the peeling tape 16 before peeling off. This contraction makes uneven shapes of an interface between the peeling tape 16 and the mask material layer 3b engage with each other, improving the adhesive strength (peeling strength) between the mask material layer 3b and the peeling tape 16, so the mask material layer 3b can be peeled off and removed with certainty.

[0039]

To make sure that the mask material layer 3b is peeled off as above, it is required that the adhesive strength (peeling strength) between the mask material layer 3b and the peeling tape 16 (the adhesive layer 16b) is strong enough. On the other hand, when the surface protecting tape 3a is peeled off, the mask material layer 3b must remain on the semiconductor wafer 1. Thus, it is required that the adhesive strength (peeling strength) between the mask material layer 3b and the peeling tape 16 at the time of peeling off the peeling tape 16 is greater than the adhesive strength between the mask material layer 3b and the semiconductor wafer 1, and the adhesive strength between the mask material layer 3b and the semiconductor wafer 1 is greater than the adhesive strength between the mask material layer 3b and the surface protective tape 3a at the time of peeling off the surface protective tape 3a.

[0040]

Here, the adhesive strength of the respective part can be evaluated in the peel strength test (JIS Z0237), for example. Also, it is possible to adjust the adhesive strength between the mask material layer 3b and the peeling tape 16 or the adhesive strength between the mask material layer 3b and the surface protective tape 3a by changing the functional group or chain length of the polymer configuring the adhesive layer 3ab and the adhesive layer 16b, respectively.

[0041]

If the peeling tape 16 is formed of radiation curable adhesive, an adhesive including acrylic adhesive and radiation polymerizable compound can be suitably used. The acrylic adhesive is (meth) acrylic copolymer or a mixture of (meth) acrylic copolymer and a curing agent. Examples for the (meth) acrylic copolymer are a copolymer including (meth) acrylic acid ester as a constituent and a mixture of two or more copolymers including (meth) acrylic acid ester as constituents. The mass-average molecular weight of such polymers is usually between 300,000 and 1,000,000. A ratio of (meth) acrylic acid ester to all monomer components of the (meth) acrylic copolymer is preferably 70 mol% or more, more preferably 80 mol% or more, and further preferably 90 mol% or more.

[0042]

Also, if the ratio of (meth) acrylic acid ester to all monomer components of the (meth) acrylic copolymer is not 100 mol%, it is preferable that the rest of the monomer component exists in a form of a copolymer with (meth) acryloyl group as a polymerizable group (a component derived from (meth) acrylic acid or the like). Also, a ratio of (meth) acrylic acid ester having a functional group (hydroxy group, for example) that reacts with a curing agent, which will be described below, to all monomer components of the (meth) acrylic copolymer is preferably 1 mol% or more, more preferably 2 mol% or more, more preferably 5 mol% or more, and further preferably 10 mol% or more. Also, a ratio of the said (meth) acrylic acid ester component is preferably 35 mol% or less and more preferably 25 mol% or less. Also, a ratio of the constituent component (the monomer component) having a functional group (hydroxy group, for example) that reacts with a curing agent, which will be described below, to all monomer components of the (meth) acrylic copolymer is preferably 5 mol% or more, more preferably 10 mol% or more. The maximum limit of the said ratio is preferably 35 mol% or less and more preferably 25 mol% or less.

[0043]

It is preferable that the above (meth) acrylic acid ester component is (meth) acrylic acid alkyl ester (also called as alkyl (meth) acrylate). The number of carbon of alkyl group which constitutes this (meth) acrylic acid alkyl ester is preferably between 1 to 20, more preferably between 1 to 15, and further preferably between 1 to 12.

[0044]

The curing agent reacts with the functional group in (meth) acrylic copolymer and is used for adjusting temporary adhesive and cohesive force. Examples of the curing agent are: an epoxy compound having two or more epoxy groups in a molecule such as 1,3-Bis(N,N-diglycidyl aminomethyl)cyclohexane, 1,3-Bis(N,N-diglycidyl aminomethyl)toluene, 1,3-Bis(N,N-diglycidyl aminomethyl)benzene, or N,N,N,N'-tetraglycidyl-m-xylenediamine; an isocyanate compound having two or more isocyanate groups in a molecule such as 2,4-tolylene diisocyanate, 2,6-tolylene diisocyanate, 1,3-xylene diisocyanate, 1,4-xylene diisocyanate, or diphenyl-methane-4,4'-diisocyanate; and an aziridine compound having two or more aziridine functional groups in a molecule such as tetramethylol-tri- β -aziridinyl propionate, trimethylol-tri- β -aziridinyl propionate, or trimethylolpropane-tri- β -(2-methylaziridine) propionate. Amount of the curing agent to be added may be adjusted according to the required temporary adhesive

force: 0.1 - 5.0 pts.mass of the curing agent for 100 pts.mass of (meth) acrylic copolymer is suitable. In the peeling tape 16 used in the present invention, the curing agent is in a state being reacted with the (meth) acrylic copolymer.

[0045]

As for the above-mentioned radiation polymerizable compound, a low-molecular-weight compound having at least two or more photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds, which can be formed into a three-dimensional network structure by irradiation of radioactive rays, in a molecule is widely used. Specifically, acrylate compounds such as trimethylol propane triacrylate, tetramethylol methane tetraacrylate, pentaerythritol triacrylate, pentaerythritol tetraacrylate, dipentaerythritol monohydroxy pentaacrylate, dipentaerythritol hexaacrylate, 1,4-butylene glycol diacrylate, 1,6-hexandiol diacrylate, polyethylene glycol diacrylate, or oligoester acrylate can be widely applicable.

[0046]

Other than the above-mentioned acrylate compounds, urethane acrylate type oligomer can also be used. The urethane acrylate type oligomer can be obtained by reacting terminal isocyanate urethane prepolymer, which can be obtained by reacting a polyester type or polyether type polyol compound with a polyvalent isocyanate compound (for example: 2,4-tolylene diisocyanate, 2,6-tolylene diisocyanate, 1,3-xylene diisocyanate, 1,4-xylene diisocyanate, or diphenyl-methane-4, 4'-diisocyanate), with acrylate having a hydroxy group or methacrylate (for example: 2-hydroxyethyl acrylate, 2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate, 2-hydroxypropyl acrylate, 2-hydroxypropyl methacrylate, polyethylene glycol acrylate, polyethylene glycol methacrylate).

[0047]

A compounding ratio between the acrylic adhesive and the radiation polymerizable compound within the radiation curable adhesive is preferably in a range from 50 to 200 pts.mass, or more preferably from 50 to 150, of the radiation polymerizable compound to 100 pts.mass of the acrylic adhesive. Within this range of the compounding ratio, it is possible to significantly reduce the temporary adhesive force of the peeling tape 16.

[0048]

As the radiation curable adhesive to be used for the peeling tape 16, it is also preferable to use a radiation polymerizable (meth) acrylic copolymer of which the above (meth) acrylic copolymer itself is radiation polymerizable. In such a case, the radiation curable adhesive may include the curing agent.

[0049]

The radiation polymerizable (meth) acrylic copolymer is a copolymer of which a copolymer molecule includes a functional group that can react and become polymerized when irradiated by radioactive rays, especially ultraviolet rays. As such a reactive group, an ethylenically unsaturated group, that is a group having a carbon-carbon double bond, is preferable. Examples for such a group are: vinyl group, allyl group, styryl group, (meth) acryloyloxy group, and (meth) acryloylamino group.

[0050]

Introducing the above-mentioned reactive group into the copolymer can be done by reacting, for example, a copolymer including a hydroxy group with a compound including a group that reacts with the hydroxy group (an isocyanate group, for example) as well as the above-mentioned reactive group (representatively, 2-(meth) acryloyloxy ethyl isocyanate).

[0051]

Also, a ratio of the monomer component having the above functional group to all monomer components constituting the radiation polymerizable (meth) acrylic copolymer is preferably 2 to 40 mol%, more preferably 5 to 30 mol%, or further preferably 10 to 30 mol%.

[0052]

Also, when polymerizing and curing the peeling tape 16 with radioactive rays, a photopolymerization initiator, such as isopropyl benzoin ether, isobutyl benzoin ether, benzophenone, Michler's ketone, chlorothioxanthone, benzyl methyl ketal, α -hydroxy cyclohexyl phenyl ketone, and 2-hydroxy methyl phenyl propane can be used. Adding at least one of the above to the peeling tape 16 allows the polymerizing reaction to progress efficiently.

[0053]

The above-mentioned peeling tape 16 may further include photosensitizer, conventionally known tackifier, softening agent, antioxidant, and the like.

[0054]

As above, the remaining mask material layer 3b on the top surface S is removed (see FIG. 6A). And, lastly, a pin 17 pushes up the separated individual chip 7, and a collet 18 sticks to and picks up the chip 7 (see FIG. 6B). As above, a semiconductor chip can be manufactured.

[0055]

Next, materials to be used in the manufacturing method of the present

invention will be described. The semiconductor wafer 1 is a silicon wafer or the like, one side of which has the patterned surface 2 semiconductor element circuit is formed. The patterned surface 2 is a surface on which circuits or the like of semiconductor elements are formed, having streets in a planar view thereof.

[0056]

(Mask-integrated Surface-protective Tape 3)

The mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 includes the adhesive layer 3ab provided on the substrate film 3aa, and the mask material layer 3b further provided on the adhesive layer 3ab. The mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 serves as a protector for the semiconductor elements formed on the patterned surface 2. That is, since the patterned surface 2 supports the semiconductor wafer 1 when a back surface of the wafer is grinded in the following wafer thinning process, the patterned surface 2 is required to be capable of withstanding this grinding load. Thus, unlike a simple photoresist film or similar, the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 has an enough thickness to coat the elements formed on the patterned surface 2, a low pressing resistance, and high adhesion so as to be adhered with the elements as closely as possible to protect infiltration of dust and grinding water.

[0057]

(Substrate Film 3aa)

The substrate film 3aa of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is made of material such as plastic or rubber, which can be suitably selected according to the required characteristics from groups of a homopolymer or copolymer of α -olefin such as polyethylene, polypropylene, ethylene-propylene copolymer, polybutane-1, poly-4-methyl pentene-1, ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, ethylene-acrylic acid copolymer and an ionomer; a mixture of the above; a simple substance or a mixture of two or more substances of polyethylene terephthalate, polyethylene naphthalate, polyphenylene sulfide, polyether imide, polyimide, polycarbonate, polymethyl methacrylate, polyurethane, styrene-ethylene-butene, pentene copolymer, or the like; and a resin composition of the above added with other resin, fillers, additives, or the like. A laminate of low density polyethylene and ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, a laminate of polypropylene and polyethylene terephthalate, polyethylene terephthalate, or polyethylene naphthalate is one of the suitable materials.

[0058]

The substrate film 3aa of such materials can be manufactured by using a

common extrusion method. If the substrate film 3aa is obtained by laminating various resins, a co-extrusion method, a lamination method, or the like can be used. At this time, an adhesive layer may be provided between resins as commonly done in a generally used manufacturing method of a lamination film. A thickness of such the substrate film 3aa is preferably between 20 and 200 μm in view of strength, expansion property or the like, and radiotransparency.

[0059]

(Adhesive Layer 3ab)

The adhesive layer 3ab, together with the mask material layer 3b, improves its adhesiveness with the patterned surface 2 by absorbing the unevenness of the elements formed on the patterned surface 2 and plays a role of protecting the patterned surface 2. To make the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 capable of withstanding the load during the wafer thinning process (the back surface grinding process), it is preferable that the adhesiveness between the adhesive layer 3ab and the mask material layer 3b or the substrate film 3aa is high in the wafer thinning process. On the other hand, it is preferable that the adhesiveness between the adhesive layer 3ab and the mask material layer 3b is low (releasability is high) after the wafer thinning process because the adhesive layer 3ab is peeled off together with the substrate film 3aa from the mask material layer 3b.

[0060]

In the present invention, a non-radiation curable adhesive agent (pressure-sensitive adhesive) is applicable for the adhesive layer 3ab as long as the agent has desired characteristics.

[0061]

A thickness of the adhesive layer 3ab is preferably between 5 and 100 μm , more preferably between 10 and 100 μm , and further preferably between 2 and 50 μm , in view of improving its protection ability of the elements or the like formed on the patterned surface 2 and also improving its adhesiveness with the patterned surface 2. Although it depends on the type of the device, the roughness of the patterned surface is approximately from a few μm to 15 μm . Thus the thickness of the adhesive layer 3ab is further preferably between 5 to 30 μm .

[0062]

(Mask Material Layer 3b)

The mask material layer 3b should not easily damage the semiconductor elements and the like when being pasted onto the patterned surface 2, and should not easily damage the semiconductor elements and the like nor leave residue of

adhesive agent on the surface thereof when being removed. As the mask material layer 3b, radiation polymerizable type, such as ultraviolet curable type, in which the mask material layer 3b is formed into a three-dimensional network structure by irradiating radioactive rays, or more preferably ultraviolet rays, or ionizing radiation, such as electron beams, curable type can be used.

[0063]

An adhesive agent of non-radiation curable type, or so-called pressure-sensitive type, is also suitably used. As such a pressure-sensitive adhesive agent, a mixture of the above-mentioned (meth) acrylic copolymer and a curable agent can be suitably used.

[0064]

As such the mask material layer 3b, acrylic adhesive or a mask material including such the acrylic adhesive and a radiation polymerizable compound can be suitably used. The above acrylic adhesive agent is either (meth) acrylic copolymer or a mixture of (meth) acrylic copolymer and a curable agent, and the acrylic adhesive agent described for the above peeling tape 16 can be suitably used. In view of adhesiveness, a ratio of (meth) acrylic acid ester component, which includes a functional group (a hydroxy group, for example) that reacts with the curable agent, to all monomer components of the (meth) acrylic copolymer is 0.1 mol% or more and more preferably 0.5 mol% or more. The maximum value thereof is preferably 20 mol% or less and more preferably 15 mol% or less. The mass-average molecular weight of the (meth) acrylic copolymer is preferably between 100,000 and 1,000,000.

[0065]

As described above, a radiation curable type adhesive agent, which is cured by radioactive rays, or a pressure-sensitive agent, which is not cured by radioactive rays, can be suitably used. As the above radiation curable adhesive agent, an adhesive agent including the above-mentioned acrylic adhesive and an acrylate compound having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof is suitable. In the above radiation curable adhesive agent, the contained amount of the acrylate compound having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof is preferably 15 mass% and more preferably 15 to 70 mass%, and further more preferably 15 to 65 mass %. Also, the acrylate compound having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof is preferably an acrylate compound having one photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bond in a molecule thereof.

[0066]

The widely applicable examples for the above acrylate compound having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof are 2-hydroxy-3-phenoxypropyl acrylate, 1,4-butylene glycol diacrylate, 1,6-hexandiole diacrylate, polyethylene glycol diacrylate, and so on. Also, urethane acrylate oligomer having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof can be suitably used: urethane acrylate oligomer obtained by the method described for the above-mentioned peeling tape 16 can be favorably used.

[0067]

A compounding ratio of the acrylic adhesive agent and the acrylate compound having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof within the above radiation curable adhesive agent is preferably in a range from 10 to 250 pts.mass, or more preferably from 15 to 200 pts.mass, of the acrylate compound having one or two photo polymerizable carbon-carbon double bonds in a molecule thereof to 100 pts.mass of the acrylic adhesive agent. With the ratio below the above upper limit, the mask material layer 3b does not deform excessively at the time of the back surface grinding, and thus the damage to the semiconductor wafer 1 can be prevented more effectively.

[0068]

Also, for the mask material layer 3b, radiation polymerizable (meth) acrylic acid ester copolymer, a photopolymerization initiator, and other components (photosensitizer, conventionally known tackifier, softening agent, antioxidant, and so on) described for the peeling tape 16 above can be favorably applicable.

[0069]

In view of further improving its protection ability of the elements formed on the patterned surface 2 and also further improving its adhesiveness with the patterned surface 2 to prevent entry of SF₆ gas and to improve removability of the mask material layer 3b, a thickness of the mask material layer 3b of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 of the present invention is preferably between 1 and 100 μm, and more preferably between 5 and 30 μm. Although it depends on the type of the device, the roughness of the patterned surface is approximately from a few μm to 15 μm. Thus the thickness of the mask material layer 3b is more preferably between 5 to 30 μm, and further preferably 5 to 20 μm.

[0070]

Furthermore, it is preferable that the mask material layer 3b of the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 of the present invention has a light transmittance at wavelength of 10 μm (hereinafter, called as the light

transmittance_{10μm}) of 80 % or less, and a visible light transmittance at wavelength of 350 - 700 nm (hereinafter, called as the visible light transmittance_{350-700μm}) of 50 % or more. The light transmittance_{10μm} is more preferably 79 % or less, and further more preferably 75 % or less. There is no lower limit in particular, although it is realistic that the light transmittance_{10μm} is 30 % or more. The visible light transmittance_{350-700μm} is more preferably 70 % or more, and further more preferably 90 % or more. There is no upper limit in particular, although it is preferable that the visible light transmittance_{350-700μm} is 100 % or less.

[0071]

With the light transmittance_{10μm} being within the above favorable range, the CO₂ laser can more efficiently cut the parts of the mask material layer 3b that correspond to streets of the semiconductor wafer 1. Also, with the visible light transmittance_{350-700μm} within the above favorable range, the patterned surface 2 of the semiconductor wafer 1 can be appropriately recognized and thus errors in recognition during the street opening can be prevented.

[0072]

The light transmittance is measured as below. First, the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is pasted with an easily-bonded PET film and only the surface protective tape 3a is peeled off. The light transmittance of the obtained lamination of the PET film and the mask material layer 3b is measured by using a spectrophotometer (product name: UV-1800 by Shimadzu Corporation), which is then subtracted by the sole light transmittance of the PET film to calculate the light transmittance of the mask material layer 3b.

[0073]

(Peeling Tape 16)

Materials and forms of the peeling tape 16 do not matter as long as the peeling tape 16 can peel off the mask material layer 3b. For example, the same film as the above-mentioned substrate film 3aa of the surface protective tape 3a can be applied as the substrate film 16a. Also, the same adhesive layer as the above-mentioned adhesive layer 3ab of the surface protective tape 3a can be applied as the adhesive layer 16b. As described above, the adhesive layer 16b differs from the adhesive layer 3ab in, for example, polymer constituents and monomer types.

[0074]

(Wafer Fixing Tape 4)

The wafer fixing tape 4 supports the semiconductor wafer 1 and is required to have a plasma resistance that can withstand during the plasma dicing process. Also,

in the pick up process, the wafer fixing tape 4 is required to have a good pick-up capability and, in some cases, expandability and the like as well. For such the wafer fixing tape 4, the same tape as the above surface protective tape 3a can be used. Also, generally called dicing tape, which is commonly known dicing tape used in conventional plasma dicing method, can be used. Also, to make transition to a die bonding process after the pickup process easier, dicing die bonding tape, which is a laminate of die bonding adhesive agent on the adhesive layer 3ab can be used as well.

[0075]

As for the laser to cut the mask material layer 3b, a laser irradiation device that irradiates laser beams of ultraviolet or infrared rays can be used. This laser irradiation device has laser irradiation parts that are arranged so as to be able to move along the streets of the semiconductor wafer 1 and can irradiate the laser L of which output power is suitably controlled for removing the mask material layer 3b. Among others, CO₂ laser is capable of outputting high power of a several to tens Watt and thus can be suitably used in the present invention.

[0076]

To perform plasma dicing, a plasma etching device can be used. The plasma etching device is a device capable of dry etching the semiconductor wafer 1, having a closed processing space provided inside a vacuum chamber in which the semiconductor wafer 1 is mounted on a high-frequency side electrode and the plasma generating gas is supplied from a gas supplying electrode that is provided opposite to the high-frequency side electrode. Plasma is generated between the gas supplying electrode and the high-frequency side electrode when high frequency voltage is applied onto the high-frequency side electrode and this plasma is used. A refrigerant is circulated inside the high-frequency electrode, which generates heat, to prevent temperature rising of the semiconductor wafer 1 due to plasma heat.

[0077]

According to the above method for manufacturing semiconductor chips (the processing method for the semiconductor wafer), since the surface protective tape 3a that protects the patterned surface 2 serves as a mask in plasma dicing process, a photolithography process and the like for providing a photoresist used in the conventional plasma dicing process becomes unnecessary. In particular, by using the surface protective tape 3a, technologies required for high level alignment in printing or transferring to form the mask are unnecessary, so pasting onto the top surface S of the semiconductor wafer 1 is easy and the mask can be formed easily by

using the laser device.

[0078]

Also, the mask material layer 3b can be removed by using the peeling tape 16 and thus the mask material layer 3b can be removed without using a special apparatus. In addition, plasma dicing is performed from the side of the patterned surface 2 (the top surface S side) and thus there is no need to turn the chip 7 upside down before the picking operation. For these reasons, the equipment can be simplified and the processing cost can be reduced considerably.

[0079]

Each of the embodiments described above is an example of the present invention and the present invention is not limited thereto. Any additions, eliminations, modifications, and the like of publicly known processes to each of the processes can be performed to the extent not to counter the purpose of the present invention.

[Working Examples]

[0080]

Hereinafter, the present invention will be described in further detail based on working examples. However, the present invention is not limited to these examples.

[0081]

(Surface Protective Tape 3a)

100 pts.mass of an acrylic polymer A (Mw: 350,000, acid value: 7 mgKOH/g, hydroxyl value: 60 mgKOH/g) including constituent elements with respective molar ratio of 74 mol% of lauryl acrylate, 6 mol% of methyl acrylate, and 20 mol% of 2-hydroxy ethyl acrylate is mixed with 1.0 pts.mass of an isocyanate curing agent (product name: L-45 by Tosoh Corporation) to obtain an adhesive composition A.

[0082]

Separately, the substrate film 3aa is formed from low-density polyethylene (LDPE) resin (product name: Nipolon Hard 205 by Tosoh Corporation) and ethylene-acetate vinyl copolymer (EVA) resin (product name: Ultrathene 540 by Tosoh Corporation) by using an extrusion method to have a thickness of 110 μm .

[0083]

The above-mentioned adhesive composition A is applied onto the EVA resin layer of the above substrate film 3aa and then dried to form the adhesive layer 3ab with a thickness of 20 μm after drying, and the surface protective tape 3a is obtained.

[0084]

(Mask Material Layer 3b)

100 pts.mass of an acrylic polymer including constituent elements with respective molar ratio of 80 mol% of 2-ethylhexyl acrylate, 1 mol% of methyl acrylate, and 19 mol% of 2-hydroxy ethyl acrylate is reacted with 2-isocyanate ethyl methacrylate (product name: MOI by Showa Denko K.K) including a photopolymerizable carbon-carbon double bond and an isocyanate functional group in a molecule to obtain an acrylic polymer B (Mw: 750,000, acid value: 6 mgKOH/g, hydroxyl value: 30 mgKOH/g) which includes a photopolymerizable carbon-carbon double bond in a molecule.

[0085]

The above acrylic polymer B is mixed with 2.0 pts.mass of an isocyanate curing agent (product name: L-45 by Tosoh Corporation) and 5.0 pts.mass of photopolymerization initiator (product name: Esacure KIP 100F by Lamberti) to obtain a mask material composition A.

[0086]

The above-mentioned mask material composition A is laminated onto the adhesive layer 3ab of the above surface protective tape 3a so that the thickness thereof is 10 μm after being dried, and the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 is obtained.

[0087]

(Peeling Tape 16)

100 pts.mass of an acrylic polymer including constituent elements with respective molar ratio of 60 mol% of butyl acrylate, 10 mol% of ethyl acrylate, 1 mol% of methyl acrylate, and 29 mol% of 2-hydroxy ethyl acrylate is reacted with 2-isocyanate ethyl methacrylate (product name: MOI by Showa Denko K.K) including a photopolymerizable carbon-carbon double bond and an isocyanate functional group in a molecule to obtain an acrylic polymer C (Mw: 650,000, acid value: 7 mgKOH/g, hydroxyl value: 40 mgKOH/g) which includes a photopolymerizable carbon-carbon double bond in a molecule.

[0088]

The above acrylic polymer C is mixed with 1.0 pts.mass of an isocyanate curing agent (product name: L-45 by Tosoh Corporation) and 5.0 pts.mass of photopolymerization initiator (product name: Esacure KIP 100F by Lamberti) to obtain an adhesive composition B.

[0089]

Separately, the substrate film 16a is formed from low-density polyethylene (LDPE) resin (product name: Nipolon Hard 205 by Tosoh Corporation) and ethylene-acetate vinyl copolymer (EVA) resin (product name: Ultrathene 540 by Tosoh Corporation) by using an extrusion method to have a thickness of 110 μm .
[0090]

The above-mentioned adhesive composition B is applied onto the EVA resin layer of the above substrate film 16a and then dried to form the adhesive layer 16b with a thickness of 20 μm after drying, and the peeling tape 16 is obtained.
[0091]

(Working Example 1)

The semiconductor wafer 1 is processed using the mask-integrated surface-protective tape 3 obtained as above. The peeling tape 16 is pasted on the mask material layer 3b, and, after pasting the peeling tape 16, ultraviolet rays are irradiated thereon before peeling off the peeling tape 16. Then the mask material layer 3 and the peeling tape 16 are peeled off together.
[0092]

(Comparison Example 1)

The mask is removed using the same way as Working Example 1 except that an ashing method in which oxide gas is made to be in a plasma state is applied as the removal method.
[0093]

(Removability Evaluation)

After utilizing the respective removal methods, the surface of the semiconductor wafer 1 is observed under a microscope. Those having the mask material layer 3b remaining on the wafer are evaluated as “A” and the others are evaluated as “C”.
[0094]

(Wafer Damage Evaluation)

The surface state of the wafer after mask removal is observed under an optical microscope. Those without any changes after the process is rated “A” and those having roughness on the surface is rated as “C”.
[0095]

[Table 1]

	Working Example 1	Comparison Example 1
Removal Method	Stripping Tape	Ashing
Mask Material Layer Removability	A	A
Wafer Damage	A	C

[0096]

From the results, in Working Example 1 in which the mask material layer 3b is removed by using the peeling tape 16, there is no damage recognized on the top surface S of the semiconductor wafer 1 after the mask material layer 3b is removed. On the other hand, in Comparison Example 1 in which the mask material layer 3b is removed by ashing, the top surface S of the semiconductor wafer 1 has a roughness due to the ashing.

[0097]

Although the embodiments of the present invention have been described referring to the attached drawings, the technical scope of the present invention does not depend on the embodiments described above. It is obvious that persons skilled in the art can think out various examples of changes or modifications within the scope of the technical idea disclosed in the claims, and it will be understood that they naturally belong to the technical scope of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF NOTATIONS

[0098]

- 1 semiconductor wafer
- 2 patterned surface
- 3 mask-integrated surface-protective tape
- 3a surface protective tape
- 3aa substrate film
- 3ab adhesive layer
- 3b mask material layer
- 4 wafer fixing tape
- 7 chip
- 12 wafer grinding device
- 13 ring frame

15 SF_6 gas plasma
16 peeling tape
16a substrate film
16b adhesive layer
17 pin
18 collet
S top surface
B back surface
L laser

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A method for manufacturing semiconductor chips comprising:
 - a step a of pasting a mask-integrated surface-protective tape, which includes a surface protective tape and a mask material layer being provided on the surface protective tape, over a patterned surface side of a semiconductor wafer, grinding a back surface of the semiconductor wafer, pasting a wafer fixing tape onto the grinded back surface of the semiconductor wafer, and fixing and supporting the semiconductor wafer with a ring frame;
 - a step b of peeling off the surface protective tape from the mask-integrated surface-protective tape to expose the mask material layer, and then cutting a part of the mask material layer that corresponds to a street of the semiconductor wafer by using a laser to make an opening for the street of the semiconductor wafer;
 - a step c of plasma dicing wherein plasma irradiation cuts the semiconductor wafer at the street and separates the semiconductor wafer into semiconductor chips; and
 - a step d of pasting a peeling tape on the mask material layer, and peeling off the peeling tape together with the mask material layer to remove the mask material layer.
2. The method for manufacturing semiconductor chips according to claim 1, wherein:
 - the peeling tape is made of radiation curable resin, and, in the step d, after pasting the peeling tape on the mask material layer, radioactive ray is irradiated thereon to cure the peeling tape and then the peeling tape is peeled off together with the mask material layer.
3. The method for manufacturing semiconductor chips according to claim 1, wherein:
 - an adhesive strength between the peeling tape and the mask material layer in the step d is greater than an adhesive strength between the surface protective tape and the mask material layer in the step b.