

Claims

1. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) for producing a solder connection between a plurality of components (12A, 12B) by heating and melting solder material (16) which is arranged between the components (12A, 12B) to be connected, and/or for coating a component with solder material (16), comprising a base plate (66) and a pressure plate (64), between which a solder group (10) comprising the component(s) (12A, 12B) and the solder material (16) is received and which are adjustable relative to one another with regard to the spacing thereof for exerting a pressure force on the solder group (10), **characterised in that** a stop apparatus is provided which limits the spacing between the base plate (66) and the pressure plate (64) to a minimum spacing such that, once the solder material (16) has melted, the solder group (10) has a predetermined thickness.
2. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the stop apparatus is arranged on the base plate (66) or the pressure plate (64).
3. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to claim 1 or 2, **characterised in that** the stop apparatus is adjustable such that the minimum spacing can be set.
4. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the stop apparatus comprises a plurality of in particular length-adjustable stop elements.
5. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to claim 4, **characterised in that** each stop element has an adjusting device which interacts with a complementary adjusting device provided on the base plate (66) or the pressure plate (64).

6. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to claim 4 or 5, **characterised in that** the stop elements are arranged such that, on reaching the minimum spacing, they bear with a respective free end against a component (12A, 12B, 14) of the solder group (10), against a base frame (54) carrying one of the components (12A, 12B, 14) or against the base plate (66).
7. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the base plate (66) and/or the pressure plate (64) are heatable and/or coolable.
8. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) has a carrier unit (52) on which the pressure plate (64) is directly or indirectly spring-supported or spring-mounted.
9. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to claim 8, **characterised in that** the spring force which the pressure plate (64) exerts on the solder group (10) can be set.
10. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to claim 8 or 9, **characterised in that** the base plate (66) is adjustable relative to the carrier unit (52).
11. A soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the side of the pressure plate (64) associated with the base plate (66) is planar or has at least one projecting, in particular planar, step which is in contact with the solder group (10).

12. A method for producing a solder connection between a plurality of components (12A, 12B) in a process chamber (74) sealed off from its surroundings, in which is arranged a soldering apparatus (50, 150, 250) according to one of the preceding claims, by heating and melting solder material (16) which is arranged between the components (12A, 12B) to be connected, **characterised in that** the components (12A, 12B) to be connected are provisionally connected with a solid or pasty bonding material (18) to form a solder group (10) in which the components (12A, 12B) are fixed relative to one another in a joining position.
13. A method according to claim 12, **characterised in that** the bonding material (18) is selected such that it evaporates during production of the solder connection.
14. A method according to claim 13, **characterised in that**, at an evaporation pressure which is lower than atmospheric pressure, the evaporation temperature of the bonding material (18) is lower than the melting temperature of the solder material (16) at atmospheric pressure.
15. A method according to one of claims 11 to 14, **characterised in that** the solder group (10) is heated to an intermediate temperature which is lower than the melting temperature of the solder material (16) at atmospheric pressure, and in that the pressure in the process chamber (74) is reduced to a pressure below the evaporation pressure of the bonding material (18) at the intermediate temperature, such that the bonding material (18) evaporates.

16. A method according to claim 15, **characterised in that** the pressure in the process chamber (74) is initially reduced to a pressure above the evaporation pressure of the bonding material (18) at the intermediate temperature, such that the bonding material (18) does not yet evaporate, in that subsequently a cleaning agent, in particular methanoic acid, hydrogen or a plasma, is introduced into the process chamber (74) to clean the solder group (10), and in that subsequently the pressure in the process chamber (74) is reduced to a pressure below the evaporation pressure of the bonding material (18) at the intermediate temperature.
17. A method according to claim 15 or 16, **characterised in that** the intermediate temperature while the pressure in the process chamber (74) is being reduced to a pressure below the evaporation pressure of the bonding material (18) is maintained at a predetermined temperature value or within a predetermined temperature range at least until evaporation of the bonding material (18) is complete.
18. A method according to one of claims 12 to 17, **characterised in that** the bonding material (18) is arranged in the region of edges and/or corners and/or in the centre of the components to be connected (12A, 12B) and/or of the solder material.
19. A method according to one of claims 12 to 18, **characterised in that** the solder material (16) melts once the bonding material has evaporated (18).
20. A method according to one of claims 12 to 19, **characterised in that** the bonding material (18) is liquid or pasty and in particular comprises a terpene alcohol, in particular isobornyl cyclohexanol.