WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An ablation method of applying a laser beam to a workpiece to perform ablation, said ablation method comprising:

a protective film forming step of applying a liquid resin containing a powder having absorptivity to the wavelength of said laser beam to at least a subject area of said workpiece to be ablated, thereby forming a protective film containing said powder on at least said subject area of said workpiece; and

a laser processing step of applying said laser beam to said subject area coated with said protective film, thereby performing ablation through said protective film to said subject area of said workpiece after performing said protective film forming step.

2. The ablation method according to claim 1, wherein said powder has an average particle size smaller than a spot diameter of said laser beam.

3. The ablation method according to claim 1, wherein the wavelength of said laser beam is 355 nm or

less;

said powder includes a metal oxide selected from the group consisting of Fe_2O_3, ZnO, TiO_2, CeO_2, CuO, and Cu_2O; and

said liquid resin includes polyvinyl alcohol.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An ablation method of applying a laser beam to a wafer to perform ablation, the wafer having a front side partitioned by a plurality of crossing streets to thereby define separate regions where devices are formed, at least a part of the streets being provided with a test element group formed of metal, the ablation method comprising:

a protective film forming step of applying a liquid resin to the front side of the wafer, the liquid resin containing a metal oxide powder having absorptivity to a wavelength of the laser beam, thereby forming a protective film containing the metal oxide powder; and

a laser processing step of applying the laser beam to the streets after performing the protective film forming step, thereby performing ablation to thereby form a processed groove and also remove the test element group;

the metal oxide powder having an average particle size smaller than a spot diameter of the laser beam, and

the spot diameter of the laser beam being set to 10 μm or less;

the wavelength of the laser beam being set to 355 nm or less, the metal oxide powder including metal oxide selected from the group consisting of Fe_2O_3, ZnO, TiO_2, CeO_2, CuO, and Cu_2O, and the liquid resin including polyvinyl alcohol.