

ABSTRACT

An apparatus and method for removing surface contaminants from a surface of a substrate provide a laminar flow of inert gas (18) over the substrate surface (12) while irradiating the substrate. The invention enables removal of surface contaminants without altering the underlying molecular crystal structure of the substrate. The source of high-energy irradiation includes a pulsed or continuous wave laser or high-energy lamp. (Fig. 2)

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