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Conductive layers through electroless deposition of copper on woven cellulose lyocell fabrics

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Abstract

The deposition of conductive metal layers on non-conductive material represents a key

technology in the development of textile fiber based smart materials. We describe the results

of a study on the electroless copper deposition on a woven cellulose fabric via surface

activation through silver seeding. A bath composition containing HCHO and C₄H₅KO₆ in the

molar ratio 1:0.08, a cellulose fabric and copper sulphate pentahydrate, at a pH of 12.5 was

found to be optimum for reducing induction times of the deposition. Potentiometric

measurements of the treatment solution during deposition allowed for an optimization of the

bath compositions. The treated fabrics were analyzed with confocal laser scanning

microscopy, photomicrograph scanning electron microscopy and energy dispersive X-ray to

assess the topology, and with electrical measurements to determine the conductivity. The

electrical sheet resistances ranged from 16.5 - 369.3 Ω sq⁻¹, which indicated that the

deposition levels were not homogenous across the substrate. A continuous conductive copper

layer was successfully deposited. As a test of the layer continuity, a Light emitting diode was

successfully illuminated through the substrate.

Keywords:

Electrical Resistance; Redox potential; Tartrate ligand; Textile; Metallization

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