

Author's Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0022-4596(18)30264-0
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssc.2018.06.023>
Reference: YJSSC20270

To appear in: *Journal of Solid State Chemistry*

Received date: 30 March 2018
Revised date: 15 June 2018
Accepted date: 19 June 2018

Cite this article as: Shigeo Takeuchi, Kota Suzuki, Masaaki Hirayama and Ryoji Kanno, Sodium superionic conduction in tetragonal Na_3PS_4 , *Journal of Solid State Chemistry*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssc.2018.06.023>

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Sodium superionic conduction in tetragonal Na₃PS₄

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Abstract

Sodium superionic conductors are highly promising as solid electrolytes for all-solid-state sodium batteries, with the capacity to improve energy and power density of liquid-electrolyte-based batteries and to address their safety issues. However, the ionic conductivity of sodium electrolytes remains roughly one order of magnitude lower than that of lithium systems. Herein, we report a synthesis method for a sodium superionic conductor, tetragonal Na₃PS₄, with an ionic conductivity of $3.39 \times 10^{-3} \text{ Scm}^{-1}$ at 25 °C—the highest value yet reported among sulfide-type sodium conductors. The high conductivity is achieved through quenching from 700 °C, which introduces sodium vacancies, and annealing at 450 °C, which increases vacancies and expands lattice volume. The phase is comprised of a framework of isolated PS₄ tetrahedra, with partial distribution of Na over 3D pathways. The high intrinsic conductivity together with low grain boundary contribution and soft mechanical properties make Na₃PS₄ a promising candidate for sodium solid electrolytes.

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