P-Channel Power MOSFETs for Space Applications

Masanori Inoue †  Akio Kitamura †  Shuhei Tatemichi †

ABSTRACT

Fuji Electric has added a family of p-channel power MOSFETs to its lineup of power MOSFETs for space applications. Depending on the application, designers can now choose between the existing n-channel power MOSFETs and the new chips, allowing them to reduce the system part count and achieve higher system reliability. Like the n-channel power MOSFETs, the new chips use quasi-plane junction technology to lower the resistance of the drift layer, thus lowering the on-resistance. A low-temperature process is used to form gate oxide films in all diffusion layers, achieving high total ionizing dose (TID) tolerance.

1. Introduction

That the benefits of utilizing outer space for such applications as communication satellites, meteorological satellites, GPS and earth observation have permeated our daily lives is well-known. The electronic devices and switching power supplies installed in artificial satellites are required to be highly efficient so as to efficiently utilize limited power in outer space and to have a reduced number of components so as to ensure system reliability. Moreover, the power metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect-transistor (MOSFET), a key device for power conversion, is required to be a low loss device as well as to have high reliability against ionizing radiation and to be resistant to high-energy charged particles (heavy particles) and the like in a space environment.

Fuji Electric has previously developed and commercialized n-channel high-reliability power MOSFETs for space applications. Recently, p-channel power MOSFETs for space applications have been newly added to Fuji Electric’s product lineup. Compared to the n-channel power MOSFET, the p-channel power MOSFET has on-resistance that is 2 to 3 times larger in principle, and this is a disadvantage, but because its polarity is reversed, high-side switches and other circuits can be configured more simply. For this reason, the p-channel power MOSFET has the advantage of allowing the number of components to be decreased, thereby enhancing reliability and enabling a reduction in the size and weight of the overall system. Based on the technology cultivated with n-channel power MOSFET for space applications, Fuji Electric has developed and commercialized p-channel MOSFETs for space applications. The features and technology of these products are introduced below.

2. Product Features

Table 1 lists Fuji Electric’s product lineup of p-channel power MOSFETs, and Table 2 shows the differences in requirements for power MOSFETs for consumer-use and power MOSFETs for space applications. The MOSFETs for space applications maintain the equivalent low on-resistance of consumer power MOSFETs while providing the capability to tolerate a space environment.

2.1 Tolerance to ionizing radiation (TID tolerance)

Ionizing radiation is present in the environment along the orbit of an artificial satellite or the like. Generally, if a power MOSFET normally used at ground level is used in an environment of ionizing radiation, the breakdown voltage will decrease and the gate threshold voltage that controls the on-off control of the power MOSFET will shift. The market-place requirement for ionizing radiation tolerance is 1,000 Gy, which is the equivalent exposure as 10 years of geostationary orbit, and the ability to tolerate this level of exposure is ensured with the newly developed p-channel power MOSFET. Ionizing radiation tolerance is assessed by evaluating the change in characteristics that occurs when a product is actually irradiated with ionizing radiation. Figure 1 shows the evaluation results of breakdown voltage $BV_{DSS}$ and $V_{th}$, which are particularly susceptible to ionizing radiation. $BV_{DSS}$ does not change at all. Also, the shift in $V_{th}$ is limited within the range of the specification.

2.2 Heavy particle tolerance (SEE tolerance)

In space, heavy particles emitted from solar winds, supernova explosions and the like fly back and forth.
The phenomenon in which a single incident heavy particle can cause degraded characteristics or permanent damage in a biased MOSFET is generically referred to as a “single event effect” (SEE). The probability of impact in space by a heavy particle with a larger mass is lower, but such a particle would have a large amount of energy and would have a significant effect on a MOSFET. The magnitude of the energy that a heavy particle would transfer to a MOSFET is described by the linear energy transfer (LET) of the particle. Additionally, the SEE tolerance also depends on the biased state of the power MOSFET at the time when the heavy particle comes in, and the higher the $V_{DS}$ and $V_{GS}$, the greater the susceptibility to damage. Therefore, the SEE tolerance is generally expressed with the magnitude of the LET and the usable areas of $V_{DS}$ and $V_{GS}$.

Table 1  Product list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product type</th>
<th>$V_{DS}$ (V)</th>
<th>$I_{D}$ (A)</th>
<th>$I_{D}$ (Pulse) (A)</th>
<th>$R_{DS}$ (on) max. (Ω)</th>
<th>$P_{th}$ (W)</th>
<th>$V_{DS}$ (ab) (V)</th>
<th>$Q_{g}$ max. (nC)</th>
<th>SEE LET MeV/(mg/cm²)</th>
<th>Package type</th>
<th>Mass (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A01</td>
<td>−100</td>
<td>−42</td>
<td>−168</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>TO-254</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A02</td>
<td>−100</td>
<td>−25</td>
<td>−100</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>TO-254</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A03</td>
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<td>−11</td>
<td>−44</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>TO-254</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A04</td>
<td>−100</td>
<td>−42</td>
<td>−168</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>SMD-2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A05</td>
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<td>−29</td>
<td>−116</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>SMD-1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A06</td>
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<td>−13</td>
<td>−52</td>
<td>0.219</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>SMD-0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A07</td>
<td>−200</td>
<td>−35</td>
<td>−140</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>TO-254</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A08</td>
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<td>−16</td>
<td>−64</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>TO-254</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A09</td>
<td>−200</td>
<td>−7.5</td>
<td>−30</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>TO-254</td>
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<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A10</td>
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<td>−37</td>
<td>−148</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>SMD-2</td>
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<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A11</td>
<td>−200</td>
<td>−18</td>
<td>−72</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>SMD-1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAXA R 2SJ1 A12</td>
<td>−200</td>
<td>−8.5</td>
<td>−34</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>±20</td>
<td>−2.5 to −4.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>SMD-0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$*1: R_{DS}$ (on) : $V_{GS}$=−12 V, $*2: P_{th}, T_c=250$ °C $*3: $ SEE: Kr, Energy: 520 MeV, Range: 63 μm, $V_{DS}$=rated $V_{DS}$, $V_{GS}$=+5 V

Table 2  Requirements of power MOSFET for space applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Consumer-use MOSFET</th>
<th>Space-use MOSFET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ionizing radiation tolerance (TID tolerance)</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy particle tolerance (SEE tolerance)</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term reliability</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phenomenon in which a single incident heavy particle can cause degraded characteristics or permanent damage in a biased MOSFET is generically referred to as a “single event effect” (SEE). The probability of impact in space by a heavy particle with a larger mass is lower, but such a particle would have a large amount of energy and would have a significant effect on a MOSFET. The magnitude of the energy that a heavy particle would transfer to a MOSFET is described by the linear energy transfer (LET) of the particle. Additionally, the SEE tolerance also depends on the biased state of the power MOSFET at the time when the heavy particle comes in, and the higher the $V_{DS}$ and $V_{GS}$, the greater the susceptibility to damage.

Therefore, the SEE tolerance is generally expressed with the magnitude of the LET and the usable areas of $V_{DS}$ and $V_{GS}$. Figure 2 is shown for the power MOSFET at a LET value of 37 MeV/(mg/cm²). Because a reverse bias of +5 V or greater is not used with $V_{GS}$, in the actual usable area, the tolerance extends to the rated value of $V_{DS}$. The probability that a heavy particle having this LET value would collide with the MOSFET corresponds to approximately once every 200 years (estimated assuming an orbit altitude of 550 km and an orbital inclination angle of 31°), and
extremely high reliability against heavy particles is provided.

2.3 Long-term reliability
A metallic hermetically sealed package is used to ensure long-term reliability of the package. In order to improve thermal cycle tolerance, the package frame (part into which the MOSFET chip is mounted) is made from CuW (copper tungsten), which has a coefficient of thermal expansion extremely close to that of silicon (the material from which the MOSFET chip is made). Additionally, the hermetically sealed package is made hollow (Fig. 3) and filled with dry nitrogen to protect the power MOSFET chip from exogenous degradation modes.

3. Technology Applied to the MOSFETs for Space Applications

The technology developed for the previously commercialized 2nd generation n-channel power MOSFETs for space applications was also applied to these p-channel MOSFETs. This section introduces the technology for ensuring TID tolerance and low on-resistance.

3.1 Application of low-temperature process
The phenomenon of a \( V_{th} \) shift is caused by electrical charge becoming trapped in the oxide film as a result of ionizing radiation.

When a MOSFET is exposed to ionizing radiation, electrons and holes are induced in its oxide film. The holes, in particular, become trapped in the oxide film and form a fixed positive electrical charge that appears in the electrical characteristics as a shift in \( V_{th} \).

From prior research, it is known that the greater the thermal history of exposure to high-temperatures, the greater amount of charge that will be trapped in an oxide film. In a consumer-use MOSFET, an efficient manufacturing process and stable electrical characteristics can be provided through the use of a gate electrode (on which a gate oxide film has also been formed) as a self-aligned mask. With this process, however, the gate oxide film acquires a thermal history of high-temperature exposure during the diffusion layer fabrication process, and the oxide layer ends up trapping a large amount of charge.

Therefore, a process flow in which the gate oxide film is formed after fabrication of the entire diffusion layer was applied to MOSFETs for space applications.
The application of this QPJ technology resulted in a 25% reduction in on-resistance per unit area compared to that of a competitor’s product (see Fig. 6).

4. Postscript

This paper has introduced Fuji Electric’s p-channel power MOSFET for space applications. These MOSFETs are tolerant of the space environment, i.e., they exhibit good tolerance of ionizing radiation, heavy particles and so on, and also realize the low on-resistance of consumer-use power MOSFETs.

Fuji Electric will continue to endeavor to reduce on-resistance further, improve SEE tolerance, and to contribute to the promotion of space development in Japan and overseas.

References


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