Silicate Glass Composite Seals for SOFCs

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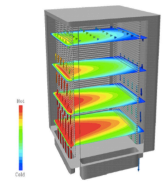
Background

Crystallization-resistant glasses are being considered for SOFC sealing applications because of their self-healing characteristics and ability to relax thermal stresses *via* viscous flow. Furthermore, their chemical composition and physical and mechanical properties can be tailored to match SOFC designs requirements.

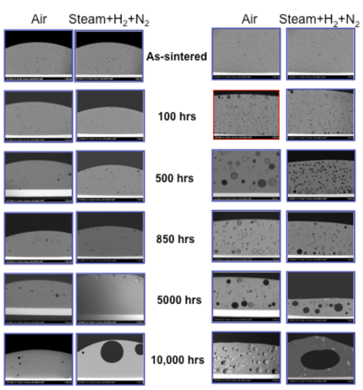
Here we present results from the characterization of Engineered Glass Seals, consisting of a crystallization-resistant glass matrix and a ceramic frangible, compliant second phase.

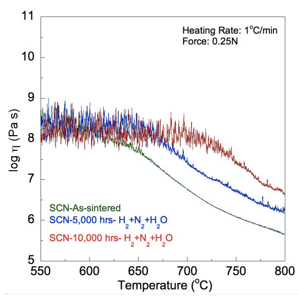


Large in-plane and axial temperature gradients exist in SOFC stacks during operation.

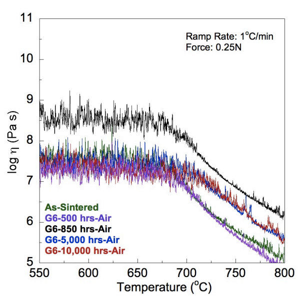
Composite seals can be designed to exhibit a range of viscosity values to perform over the large temperature gradients experienced by SOFCs and with necessary compliance to accommodate stack displacements, particularly for cells with large active surface area, which might not be flat or parallel.

Characterization of multicomponent silicate glasses





Effect of time of exposure on the viscosity of SCN glass (top) and microstructural evolution in SCN and G6 (left).



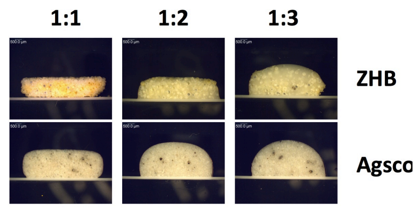
Effect of time of exposure on the viscosity of G6 glass. Viscosity decreases with temperature above T_g and increases with time of exposure.

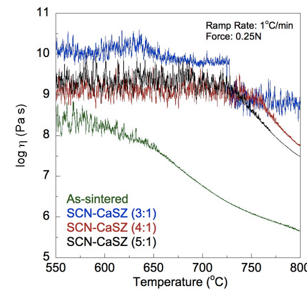
The effect of time of exposure (in air or in a gas mixture of H_2+N_2+H_2O) on the microstructure and chemical composition of two multicomponent silicate glasses (SCN and G6) is being investigated for times of exposure in excess of 10,000 hrs.

The kinetics of precipitation of crystalline phases (e.g., BaO, $KAlSi_3O_8$, $MgCaSi_2O_6$, $CaSiO_3$) have been determined, along with the evolution of the distribution of pore sizes.

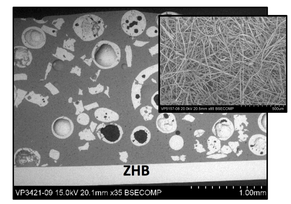
SCN: SEM-COM Co. Inc., Toledo, OH 43623.
G6: Whatman, Piscataway, NJ 08855

Engineered composite seals



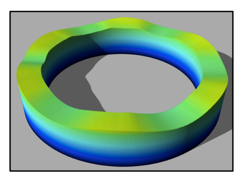


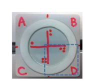
Viscosity of composite seals as a function of temperature and concentration of second phase (top) and scanning electron micrograph (bottom).

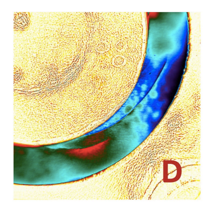


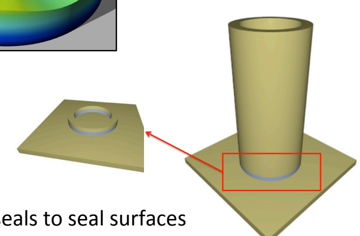
Engineered seals consisting of a multi-component silicate glass matrix and zirconia-based frangible particles or ceramic fibers have been developed.

Their wetting behavior and thermophysical properties have been characterized as a function of temperature and concentration of second phase. Ongoing tests are focused on studying their thermochemical and mechanical stability in SOFC-relevant environments and in developing low-cost manufacturing procedures.









The ability of engineered glass seals to seal surfaces that are not flat or parallel has been demonstrated by bonding zirconia tubes with uneven surfaces onto flat zirconia plates and evaluating their sealing characteristics under dual environmental conditions. The quality of the seals has been assessed using infrared imaging.

Summary

Engineered composite seals, consisting of a multicomponent silicate glass matrix and zirconia-based second phase (frangible particles or fibers) have been developed for SOFCs. Their physical properties (e.g., compliance, viscosity, cte) can be tailored to address the wide distribution of temperatures experienced by SOFCs and to seal cells with large active surface area, which might not be parallel or flat. The effect of time of exposure (in air or in a gas mixture of H_2+N_2+H_2O) on the microstructure and chemical composition of two multicomponent silicate glasses has been studied for times of exposure in excess of 10,000 hrs. Low-cost manufacturing procedures are being developed.

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Acknowledgments. Research sponsored by the US Department of Energy, Office of Fossil Energy, SECA Core Technology Program at ORNL under Contract DEAC05-00OR22725 with UT-Battelle, LLC.

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