

Achieving Effective Low Cost, Low Volume, Conformal Electromagnetic Shielding using Thermal Spray Coatings



Rod Williamson, Aaron Hall, Matt Higgins
and James McCloskey

Sandia National Laboratories
Albuquerque, NM 87185



EM Shielding using Thermal Spray Processes

- Thermal spray processes provide an inexpensive means to shield a wide variety of sensitive components from EM pulses
- Shielding can be applied to parts of all different sizes and shapes with minimal increases in volume and weight



Several Thermal Spray Technologies Available

Plasma

Powder flame

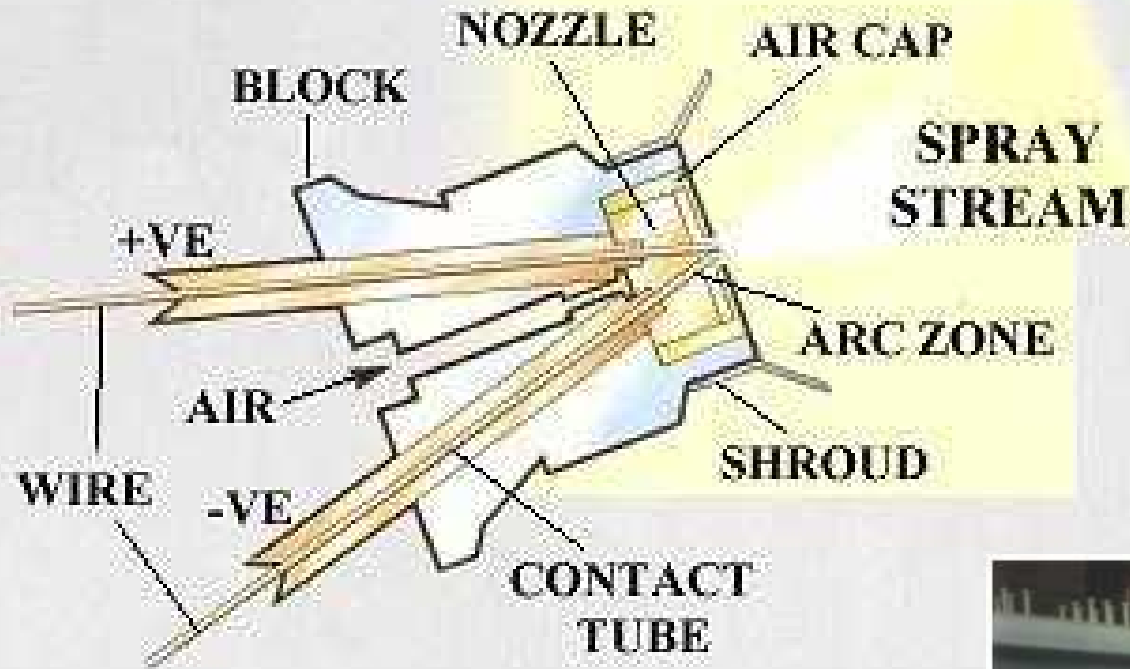
Wire flame

HVOF

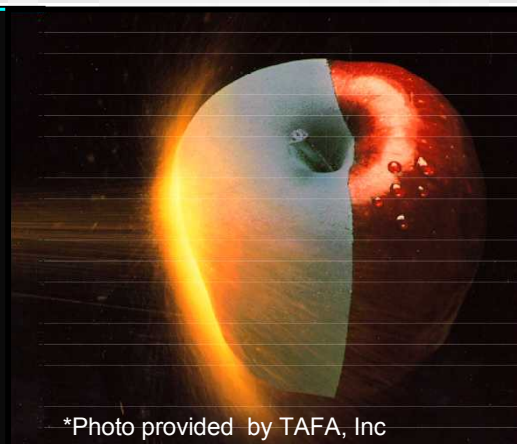
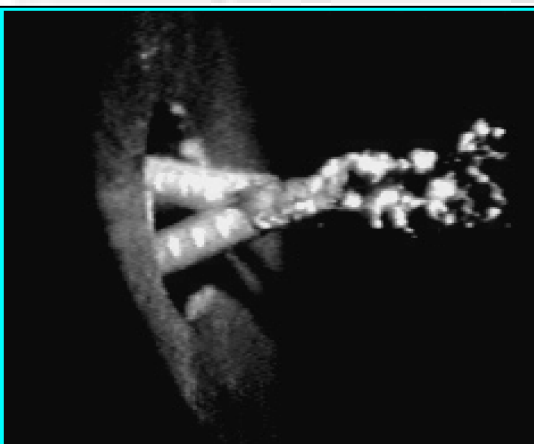
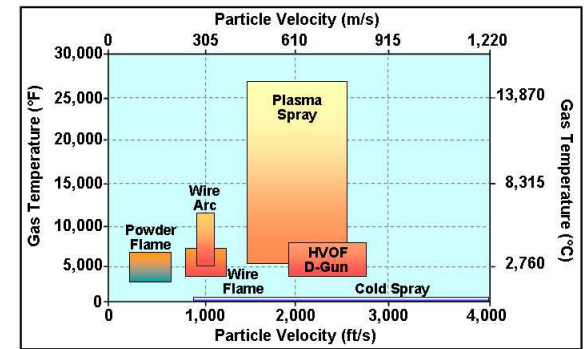
Cold spray

Twin wire arc

Twin Wire Arc Spray



- Low thermal input
- Steel, Cu, Al, & Zn
- Corrosion protection & EM shielding



*Photo provided by TAFA, Inc





EM Shielding using TWA Spray Technology

- Thermal spray allows one to apply low volume, low cost, highly conformable EM shielding to both small and large parts with complex geometries
- TWA is a robust, mature technology that can be adapted for this work
- TWA sprayed Zn puts very little heat into the part



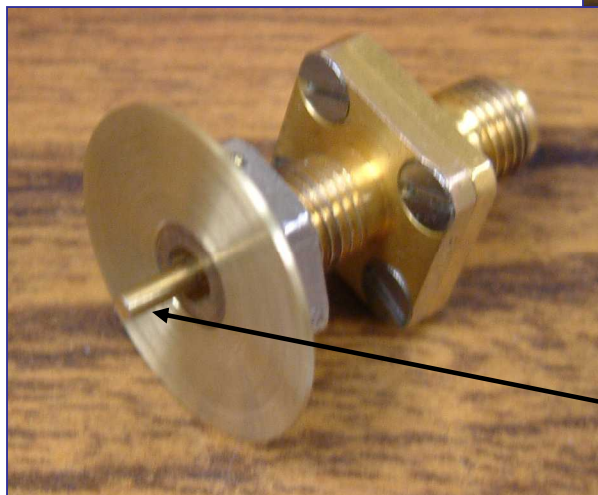
Testing Shielding Effectiveness

- Spray a nylon dummy part
- Place an antenna in the part
- Mount part in Sandia's mode stirred chamber and irradiate the part
- Measure the attenuation



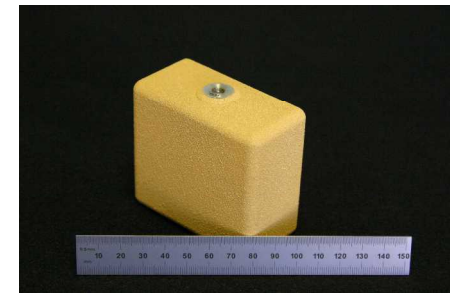
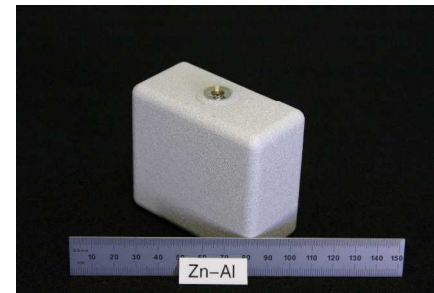
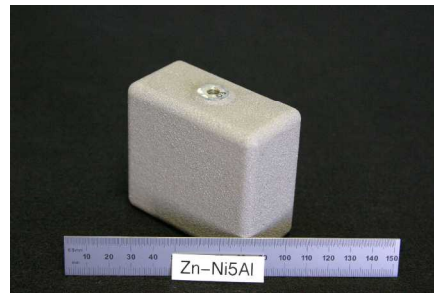
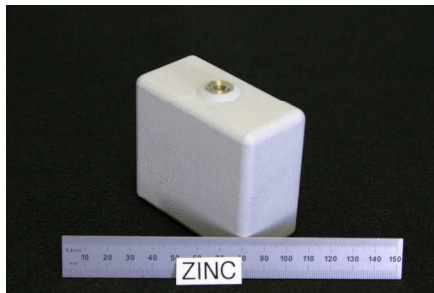
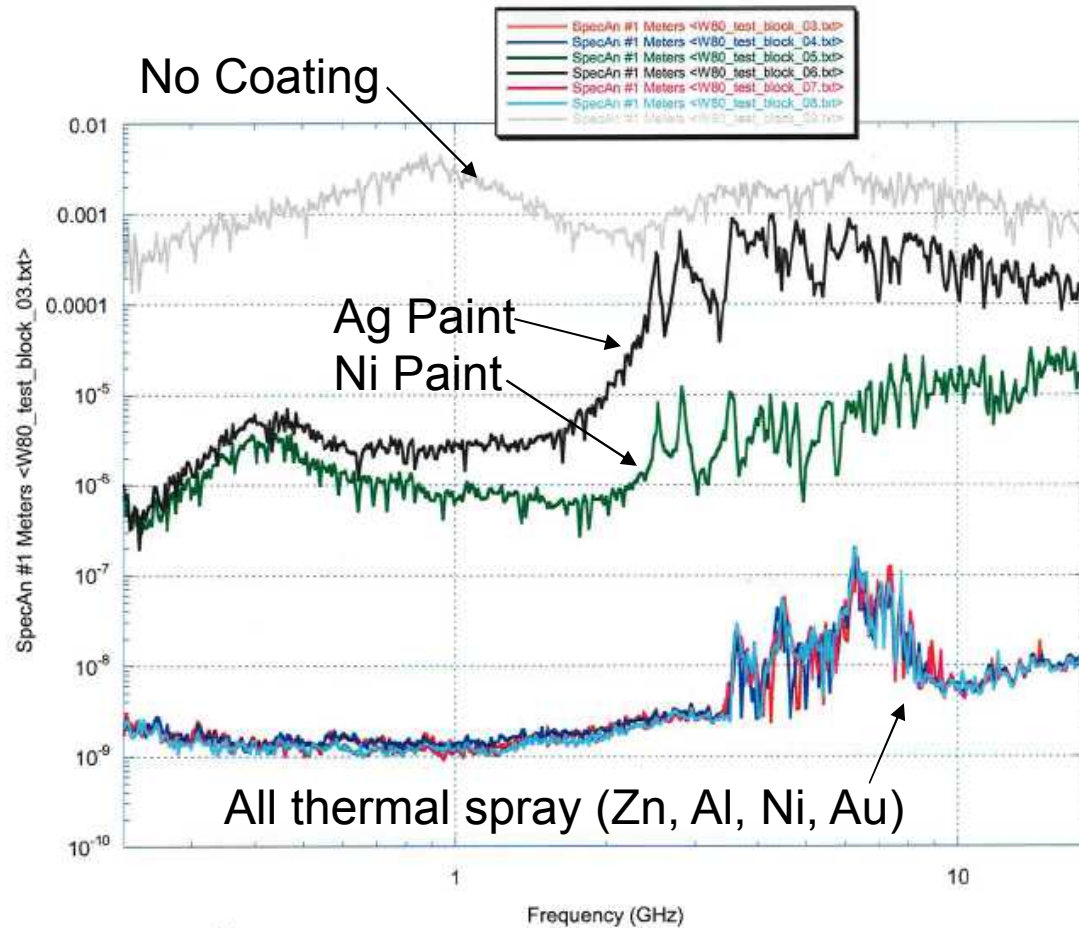
EM Shielding Test Vehicle

- Nylon block with monopole antenna
- Intended to allow relative comparisons between coatings
- Test vehicle developed



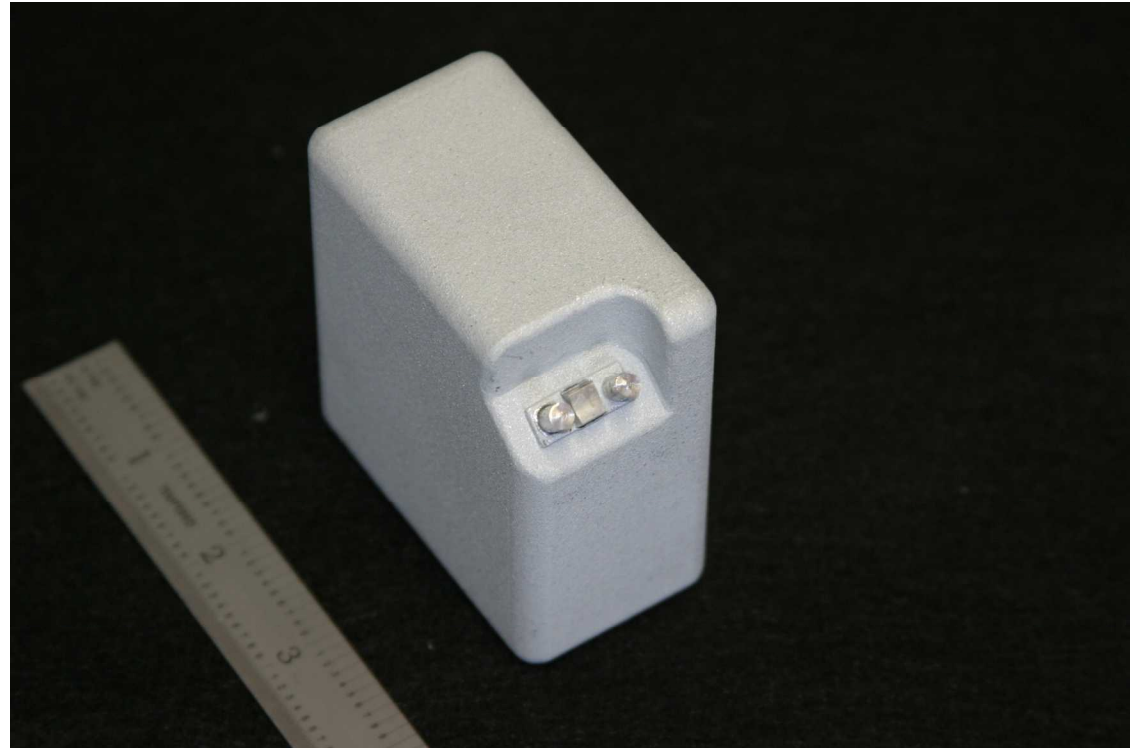
Monopole antenna

Initial Shielding Tests

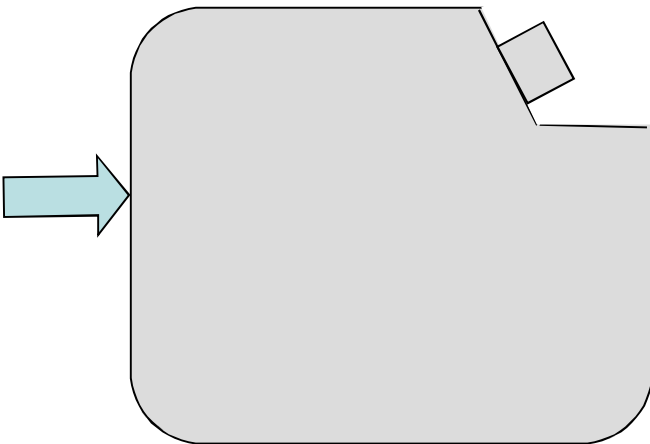
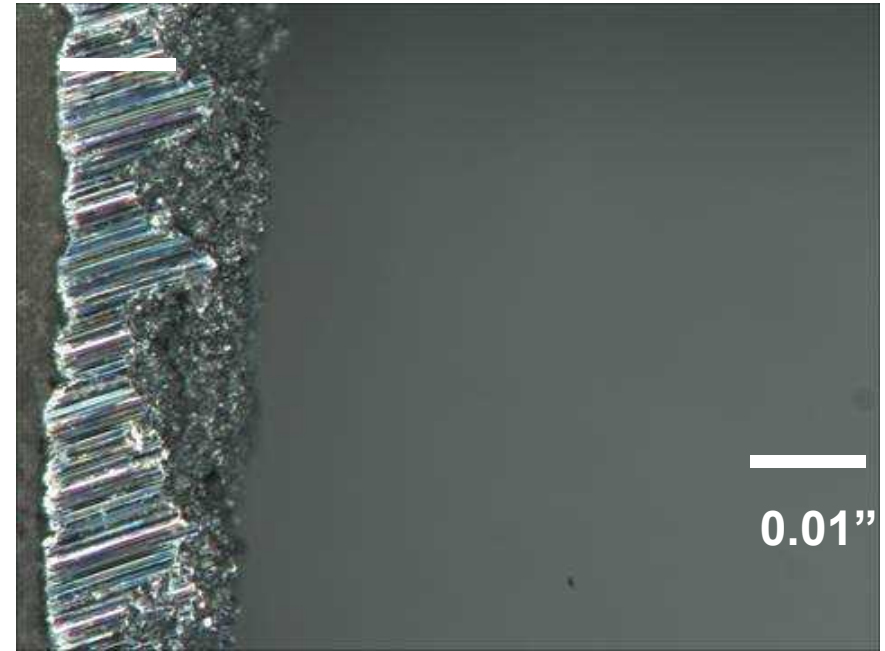
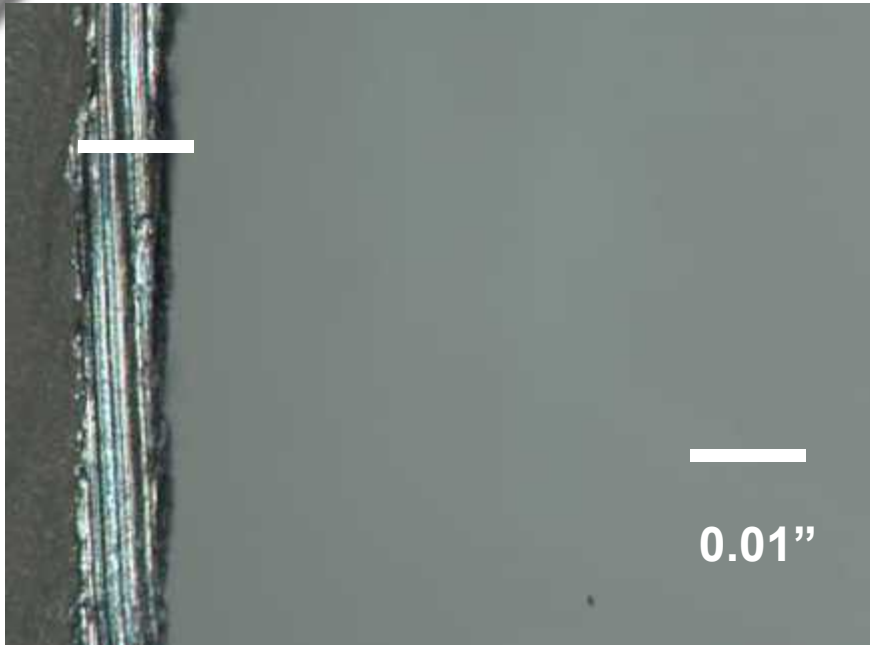


Developing the Process

The process is being developed by test spraying dummy parts machined from nylon

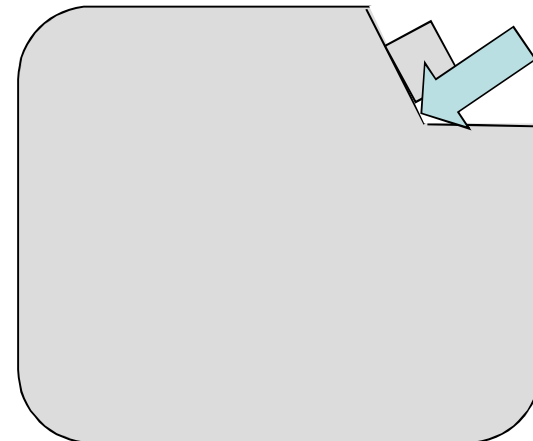


Process Development

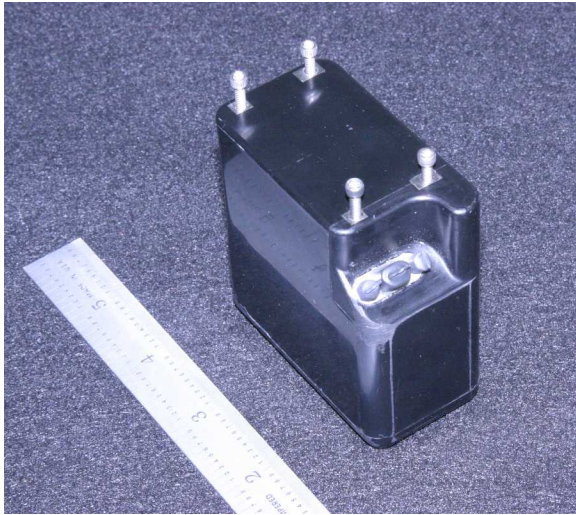


45° Spray
without
mask
16 ips
2 passes

Plus whole
coat of 2
passes at
16 ips



Shielding An Actual Part

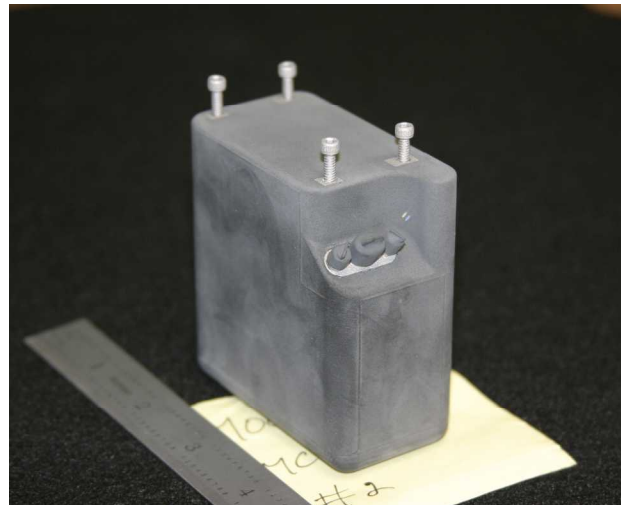


Masked part

Grit blasted
and prepared
for spraying



Finished part





Acknowledgement

This work was sponsored by the United States Department of Energy under Contract DE-AC04-94AL85000. Sandia is a multiprogram laboratory operated by Sandia Corporation, a Lockheed Martin Company, for the United States Department of Energy.