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Reliability of electrical characteristics on cyclically bent flexible organic thin film transistors with different organic passivation layers

설영국, 박지수, 안정호, 이내응

성균관 대학교 신소재 공학부

One of the critical issues for applications of flexible organic thin film transistors (OTFTs) for flexible electronic systems is the electrical stabilities of the OTFT devices, including variation of the current on/off ratio (I_{on}/I_{off}), leakage current, threshold voltage, and hysteresis, under repetitive mechanical deformation. Inparticular, repetitive mechanical deformation accelerates the degradation of device performance at the ambient environment. In this work, electrical stabilities of the pentacene organic thin film transistors (OTFTs) employing various passivation layers were investigated under mechanical cyclic bending. Flexible bottom-gated pentacene-based OTFTs fabricated on flexible polyimide substrate with poly-4-vinyl phenol (PVP) dielectric as a gate dielectric were passivated by the solution-processed, evaporated, and plasma-deposited organic layers. For cyclic bending experiment of flexible OTFTs, the devices were cyclically bent up to 10^5 times with 5mm bending radius. In the most of the devices after 10^5 times of bending cycles, the off-current of the OTFT with no passivation layers was quickly increased due to increases in the conductivity of the pentacene caused by doping effects from O_2 and H_2O in the atmosphere, which leads to decrease in the I_{on}/I_{off} and increase in the hysteresis. With passivation layers, however, the electrical stabilities of the OTFTs were improved significantly. Changes in electrical properties of cyclically bent OTFTs with different organic passivation layers will be compared and discussed in detail.