

MOUNTING AND SOLDERING**Mounting methods**

There are two basic forms of electronic component construction, those with leads for through-hole mounting and microminiature types for surface mounting (SMD). Through-hole mounting gives a very rugged construction and uses well established soldering methods. Surface mounting has the advantages of high packing density plus high-speed automated assembly. Surface mounting techniques are complex and this chapter gives only a simplified overview of the subject.

Although many electronic components are available as surface mounting types, some are not and this often leads to the use of through-hole as well as surface mounting components on one substrate (a mixed print). The mix of components affects the soldering methods that can be applied. A substrate having SMDs mounted on one or both sides but no through-hole components is likely to be suitable for reflow or wave soldering. A double sided mixed print that has through-hole components and some SMDs on one side and densely packed SMDs on the other normally undergoes a sequential combination of reflow and wave soldering. When the mixed print has only through-hole components on one side and all SMDs on the other, wave soldering is usually applied.

Reflow soldering**SOLDER PASTE**

Most reflow soldering techniques utilize a paste that is a mixture of flux and solder. The solder paste is applied to the substrate before the components are placed. It is of sufficient viscosity to hold the components in place and, therefore, an application of adhesive is not required. Drying of the solder paste by preheating increases the viscosity and prevents any tendency for the components to become displaced during the soldering process. Preheating also minimizes thermal shock and drives off flux solvents.

Screen printing

This is the best high-volume production method of solder paste application. An emulsion-coated, fine mesh screen with apertures etched in the emulsion to coincide with the surfaces to be soldered is placed over the substrate. A squeegee is passed across the screen to force solder paste through the apertures and on to the substrate. The layer thickness of screened solder paste is usually between 150 and 200 μm .

Stencilling

In this method a stencil with etched holes to pass the paste is used. The thickness of the stencil determines the amount of amount of solder paste that is deposited on the substrate. This method is also suited to high-volume work.

Dispensing

A computer-controlled pressure syringe dispenses small doses of paste to where it is required. This method is mainly suitable for small production runs and laboratory use.

Pin transfer

A pin picks up a droplet of solder paste from a reservoir and transfers it to the surface of the substrate or component. A multi-pin arrangement with pins positioned to match the substrate is possible and this speeds up the process time.

REFLOW TECHNIQUES*Thermal conduction*

The prepared substrates are carried on a conveyor belt, first through a preheating stage and then through a soldering stage. Heat is transferred to the substrate by conduction through the belt. Figure 9 shows a theoretical time/temperature relationship for thermal conduction reflow soldering. This method is particularly suited to thick film substrates and is often combined with infrared heating.

Infrared

An infrared oven has several heating elements giving a broad spectrum of infrared radiation, normally above and below a closed loop belt system. There are separate zones for preheating, soldering and cooling. Dwell time in the soldering zone is kept as short as possible to prevent damage to components and substrate. A typical heating profile is shown in Fig.10. This reflow method is often applied in double-sided prints.

Vapour phase

A substrate is immersed in the vapours of a suitable boiling liquid. The vapours transfer latent heat of condensation to the substrate and solder reflow takes place. Temperature is controlled precisely by the boiling point of the liquid at a given pressure. Some systems employ two vapour zones, one above the other. An elevator tray, suspended from a hoist mechanism passes the substrate vertically through the first vapour zone into the secondary soldering zone and then hoists it out of the vapour to be cooled. A theoretical time/temperature relationship for this method is shown in Fig.11.

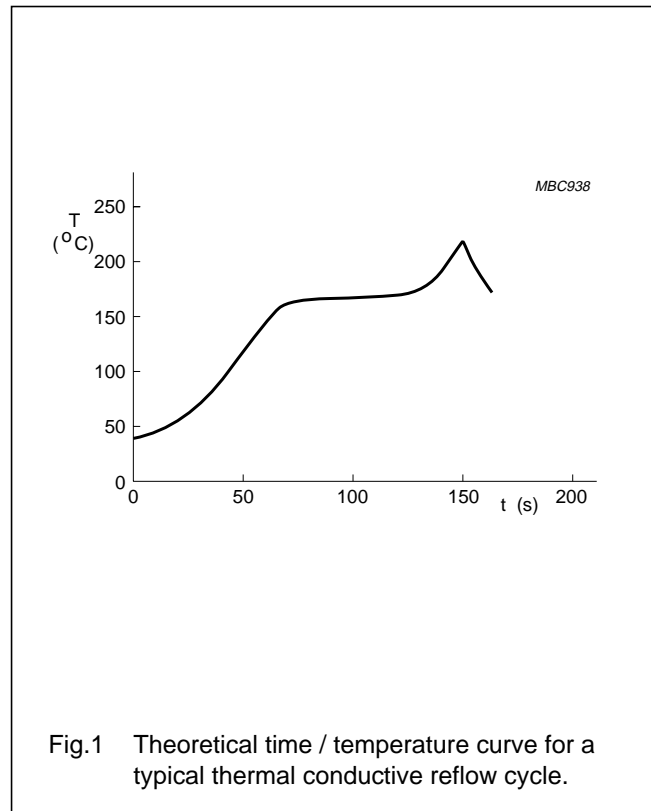


Fig.1 Theoretical time / temperature curve for a typical thermal conductive reflow cycle.

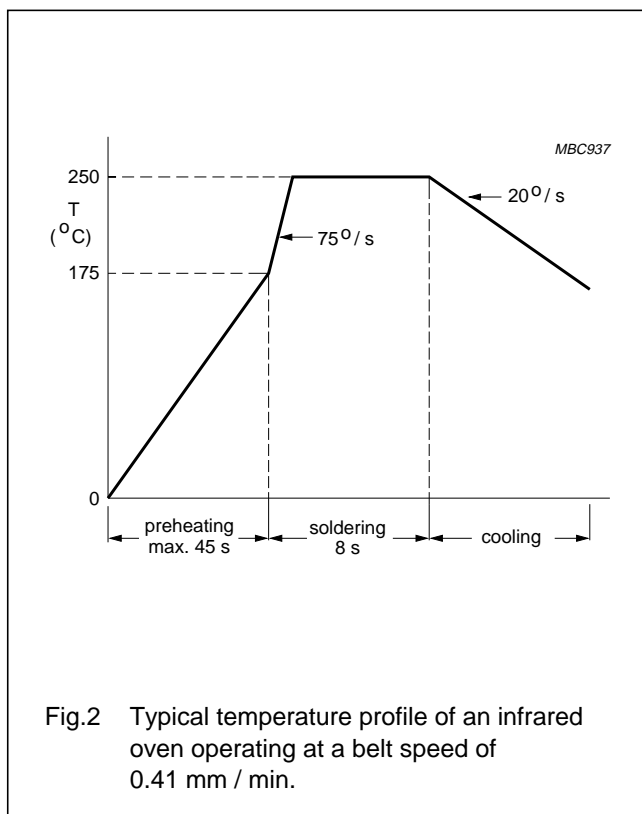


Fig.2 Typical temperature profile of an infrared oven operating at a belt speed of 0.41 mm / min.

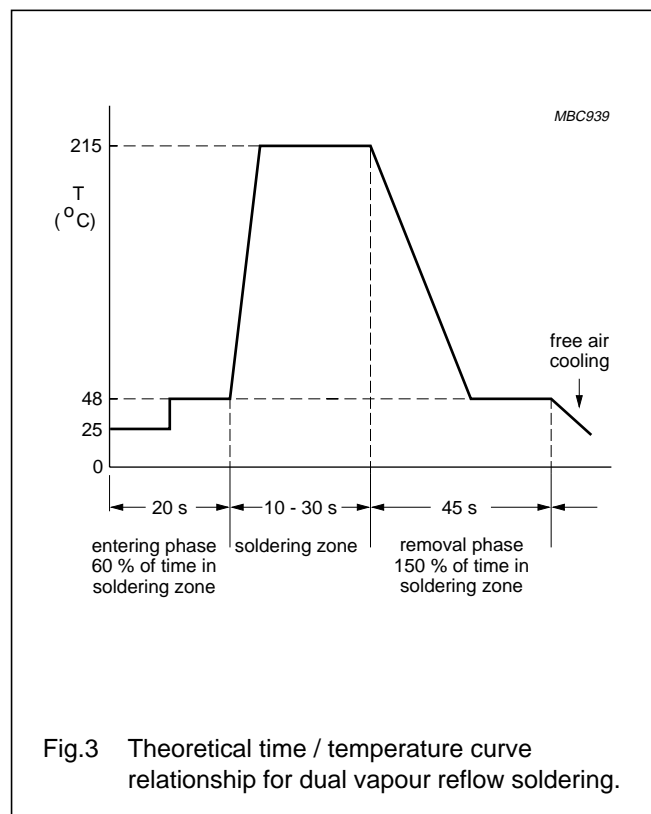


Fig.3 Theoretical time / temperature curve relationship for dual vapour reflow soldering.

Wave soldering

This soldering technique is not recommended for SOT89.

ADHESIVE APPLICATION

Since there are no connecting wires to retain them, leadless and short-leaded components are held in place with adhesive for wave soldering. A spot of adhesive is carefully placed between each SMD and the substrate. The adhesive is then heat-cured to withstand the forces of the soldering process, during which the components are fully immersed in solder. There are several methods of adhesive application.

Pin transfer method

A pin is used to transfer a droplet of adhesive from a reservoir to a precise position on the surface where it is required. The size of the droplet depends on pin diameter, depth to which the pin is dipped in the reservoir, rheology of the adhesive, and the temperature of adhesive and surrounds. The pin can be part of a pin array (bed of nails) that corresponds exactly with the required adhesive positions on the substrate. With this method, adhesive can be applied to the whole of one side of a substrate in one operation and is therefore suitable for high-volume production and can be used with pre-loaded mixed prints.

Alternatively, pins can be used to transfer adhesive to the components before they are placed on the substrate. This adds flexibility to production runs where variations in layout must be accommodated.

Screen printing method

A fine mesh screen is coated with emulsion except in the positions where the adhesive is required to pass. The screen is placed on the substrate and a squeegee passing across it forces adhesive through the uncoated parts of the screen. The amount of adhesive printed-through depends on the size of the uncoated screen areas, the thickness of the screen coating, the rheology of the adhesive and various machine parameters. With this method, the substrate must be flat and pre-loaded mixed prints cannot be accommodated.

Pressure syringe method

A computer-controlled syringe dispenses adhesive from an enclosed reservoir by means of pulses of compressed air. The adhesive dot size depends on the size of the syringe nozzle, the duration and pressure of the pulsed air and the viscosity of the adhesive. This method is most

suited to low volume production. An advantage is the flexibility provided by computer programmability.

FLUXING

The quality of the soldered connections between components and substrate is critical for circuit performance and reliability. Flux promotes solderability of the connecting surfaces and is chosen for the following attributes:

- removal of surface oxides
- prevention of reoxidation
- transference of heat from source to joint area
- residue that is non-corrosive or, if residue is corrosive, should be easy to clean away after soldering
- ability to improve wettability (readiness of a metal surface to form an alloy at its interface with the solder) to ensure strong joints with low electrical resistance
- suitability for the desired method of flux application.

In wave soldering, liquified flux is usually applied as a foam, a spray or in a wave.

Foam

Flux foam is made by forcing low-pressure, water-free clean air through an aerator immersed in liquid flux. Fine bubbles of flux are directed onto the substrate/component surfaces where they burst and form a thin, even layer. The flux also penetrates any plated-through holes. The flux has to be chosen for its foaming capabilities.

Spray

Several methods of spray fluxing exist, the most common involves a mesh drum rotating in liquid flux. Air is blown into the drum which, when passing through the fine mesh, directs a spray of flux onto the underside of the substrate. The amount of flux deposited is controllable by the speed of the substrate passing through the spray, the speed of rotation of the drum and the density of the flux.

Wave

A wave fluxer creates a double flowing wave of liquid flux which adheres to the surface as the substrate passes through. Wave height control is essential and a soft wipe-off brush is usually incorporated to remove excess flux from the substrate.

PRE-HEATING

Pre-heating of the substrate and components is performed immediately before soldering. This reduces thermal shock as the substrate enters the soldering process, causes the flux to become more viscous and accelerates the chemical action of the flux and so speeds up the soldering action.

SOLDERING

Wave soldering is usually the best method to use when high throughput rates are required. The single-wave soldering principle (see Fig. 12) is the most straight forward method and can be used on simple substrates with two-terminal SMD components. More complex substrates with increased circuit density and closer spacing of conductors can pose the problems of nonwetting (dry joints) and solder bridging. Bridging can occur across the closely spaced leads of multi-leaded devices as well as across adjacent leads on neighbouring components. Nonwetting is usually caused by components with plastic bodies. The plastic is not wetted by solder and creates a depression in the solder wave, which is augmented by surface tension. This can cause a shadow behind the component and prevent solder from reaching the joint surfaces. A smooth laminar solder wave is required to

avoid bridging and a high pressure wave is needed to completely cover the areas that are difficult to wet. These conflicting demands are difficult to attain in a single wave but dual wave techniques go a long way in overcoming the problem.

In a dual wave machine (see Fig. 13), the substrate first comes into contact with a turbulent wave which has a high vertical velocity. This ensures good solder contact with both edges of the components and prevents joints from being missed. The second smooth laminar wave completes the formation of the solder fillet, removes excess solder and prevents bridging. Figure 14 indicates the time/temperature relationship measured at the soldering site in dual wave soldering.

New methods of wave soldering are developing continually. For example, the Omega System is a single wave agitated by pulses, which combines the functions of smoothness and turbulence. In another, a lambda wave injects air bubbles in the final part of the wave. A further innovation is the hollow jet wave in which the solder wave flows in the opposite direction to the substrate.

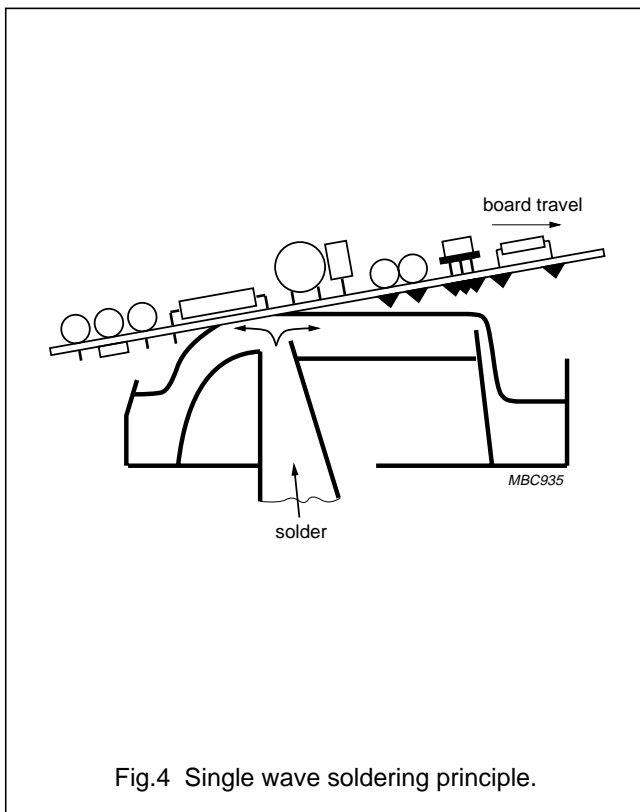


Fig.4 Single wave soldering principle.

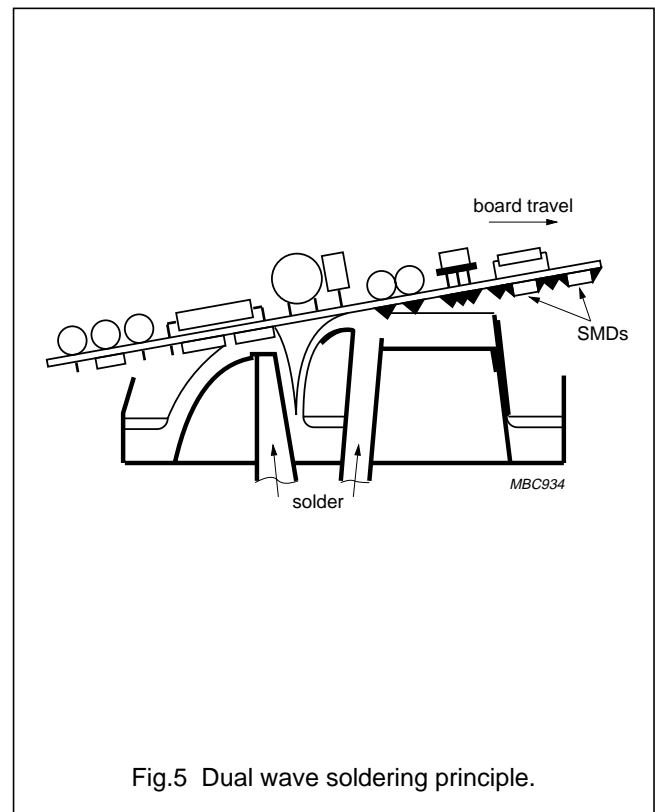
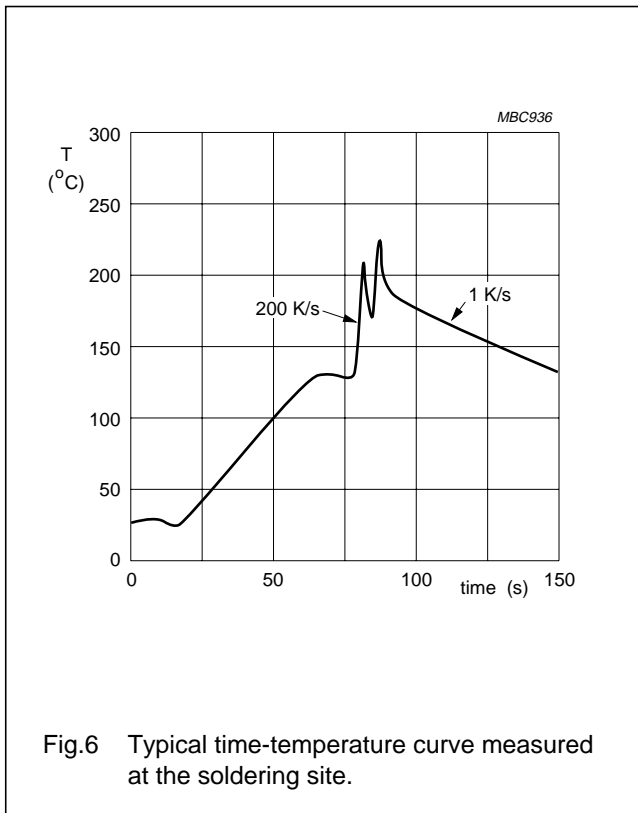


Fig.5 Dual wave soldering principle.

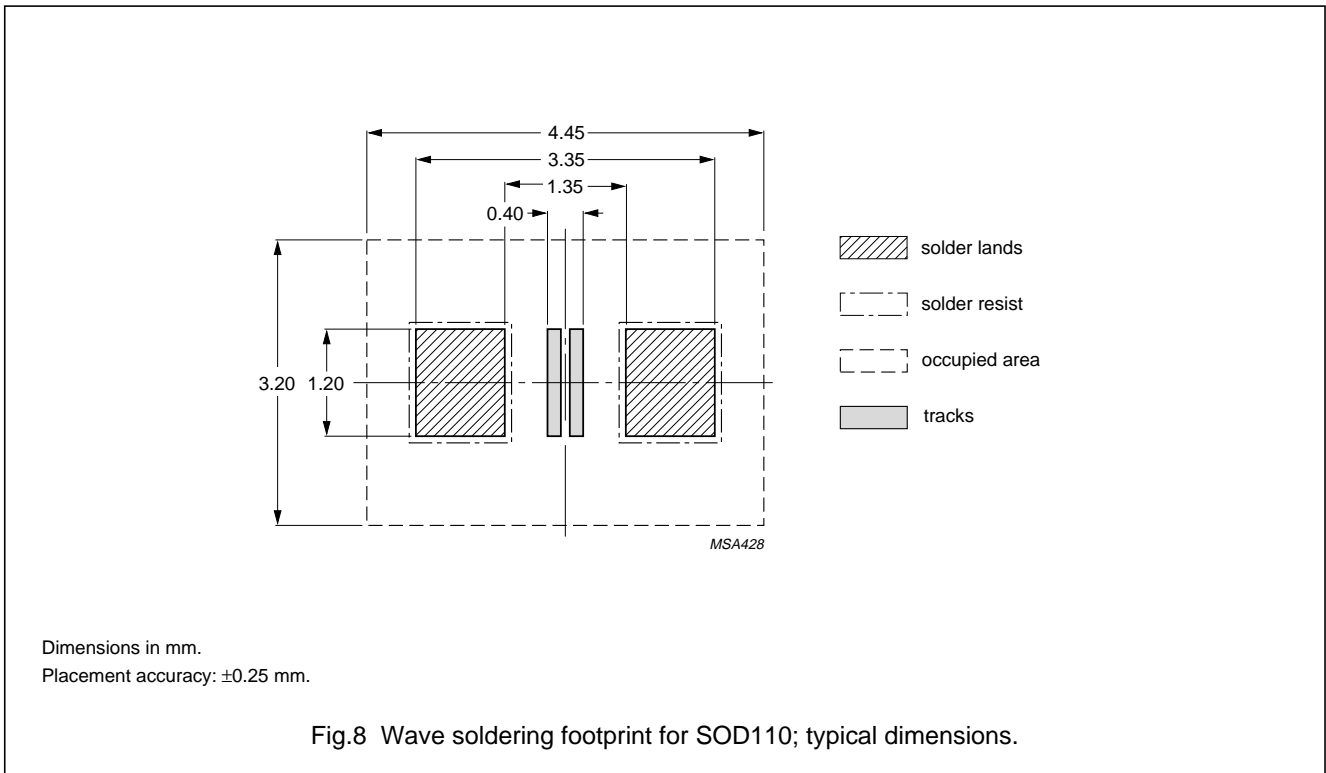
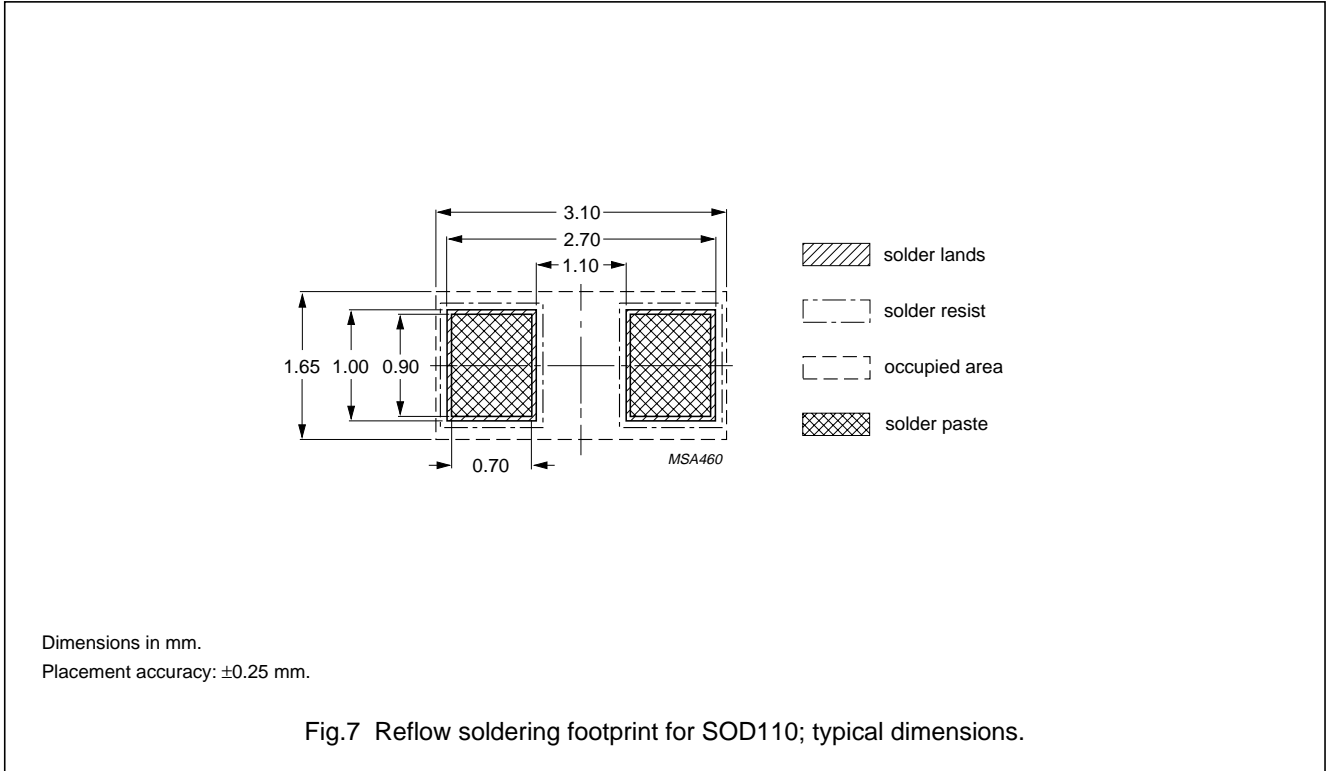


Footprint design

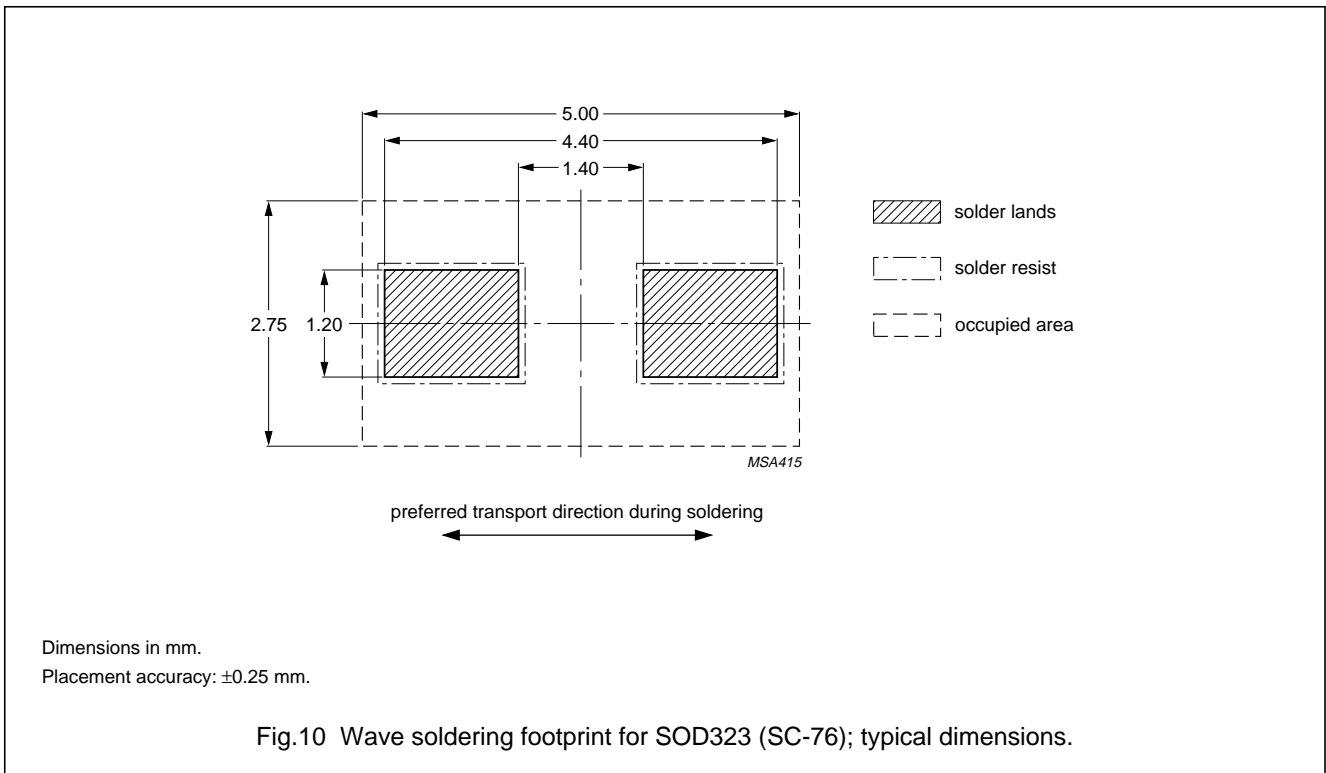
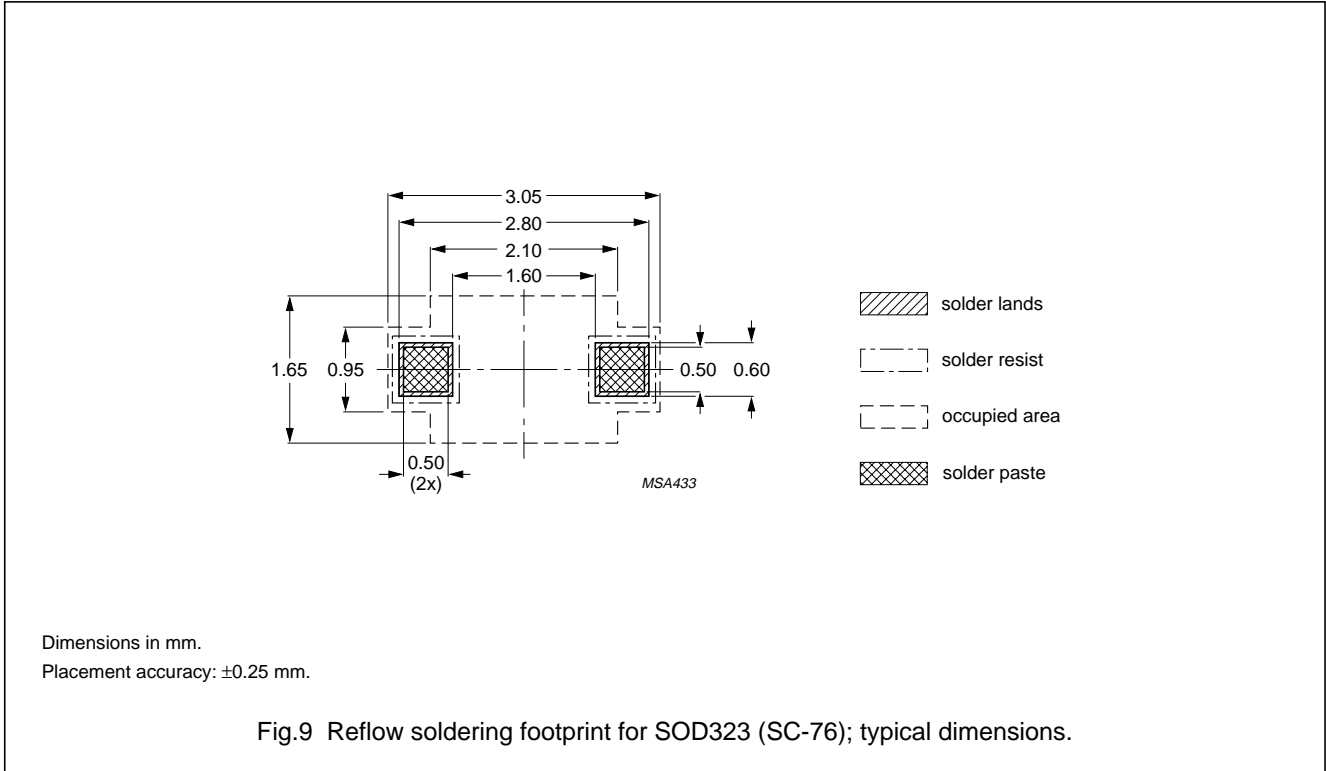
The footprint design of a component for surface mounting is influenced by many factors:

- features of the component, its dimensions and tolerances
- circuit board manufacturing processes
- desired component density
- minimum spacing between components
- circuit tracks under the component
- component orientation (if wave soldering)
- positional accuracy of solder resist to solder lands
- positional accuracy of solder paste to solder lands (if reflow soldering)
- component placement accuracy
- soldering process parameters
- solder joint reliability parameters.

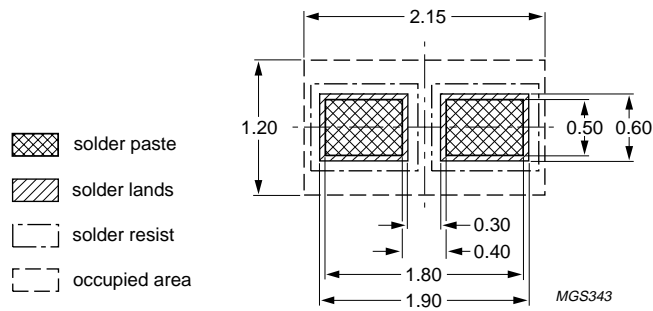
SOD110 FOOTPRINTS



SOD323 FOOTPRINTS



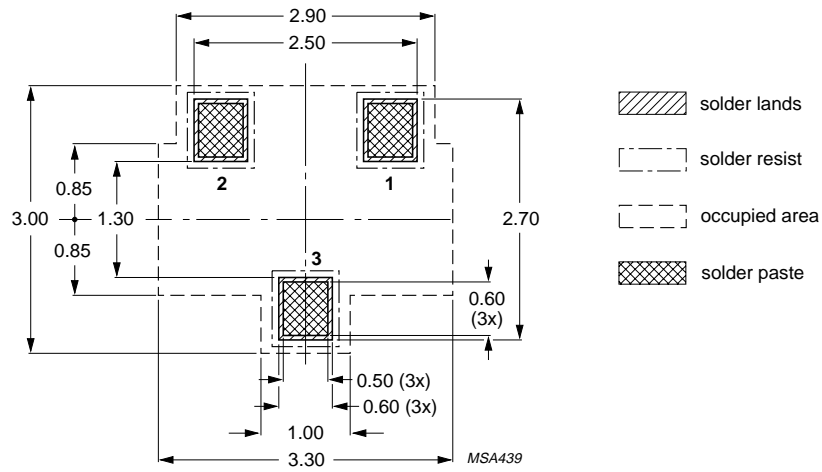
SOD523 FOOTPRINTS



Dimensions in mm.
Placement accuracy: ± 0.25 mm.

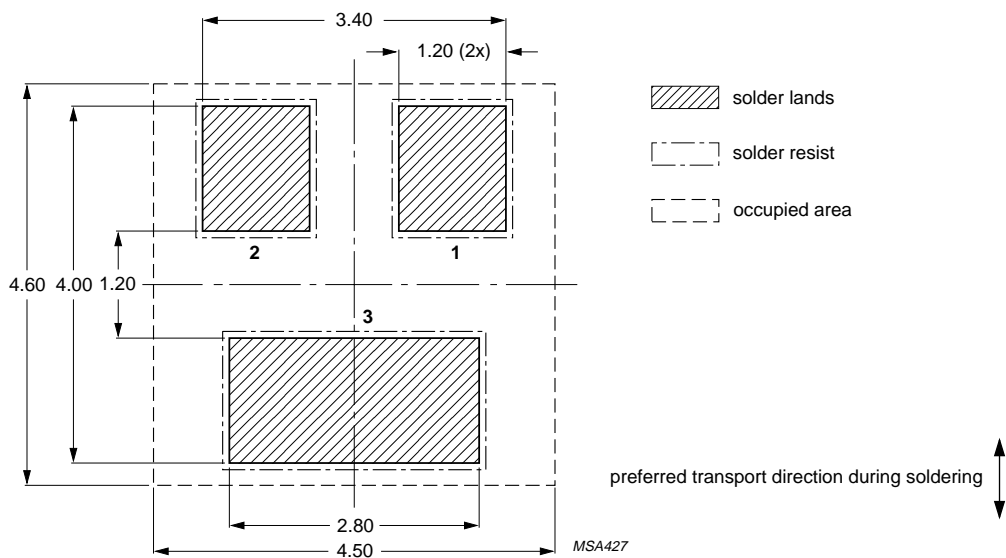
Fig.11 Reflow soldering footprint for SOD523; typical dimensions.

SOT23 FOOTPRINTS



Dimensions in mm.
 Placement accuracy: ± 0.25 mm.

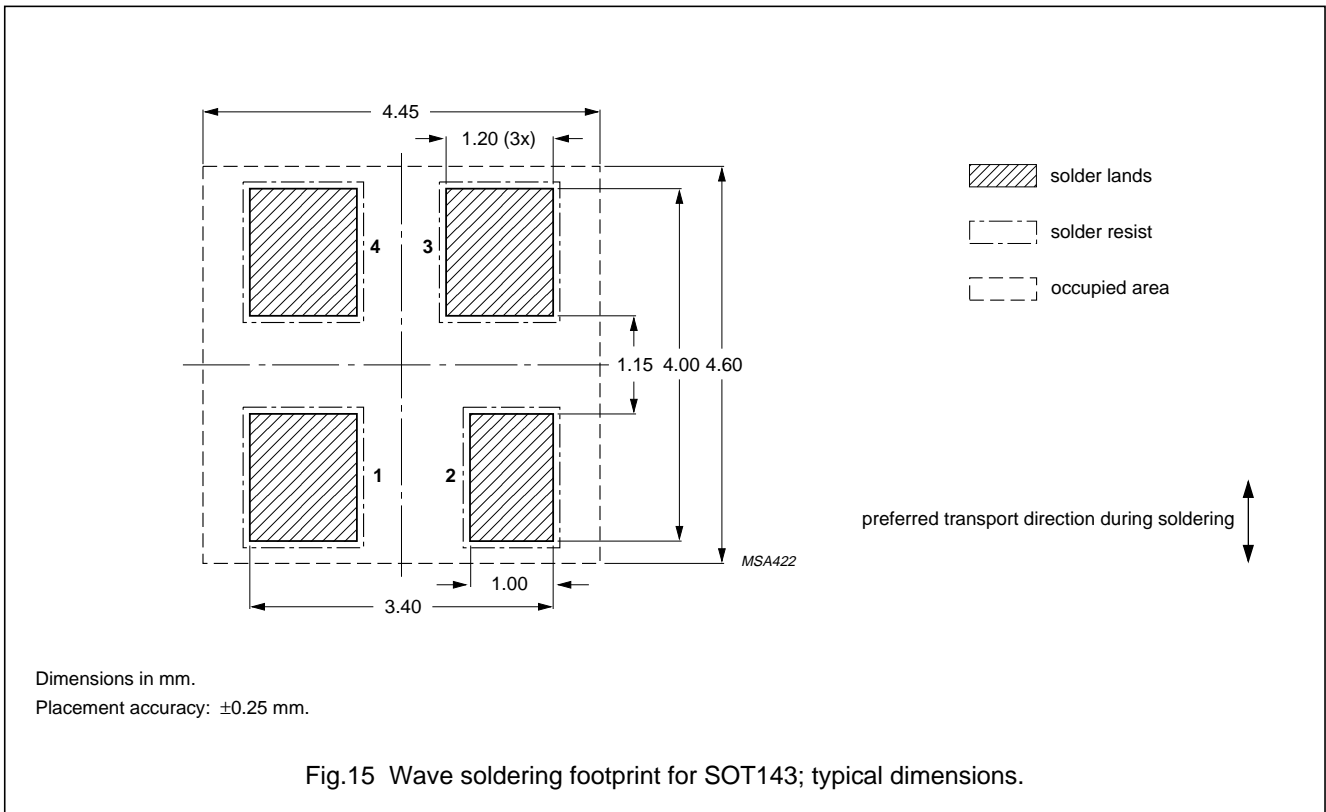
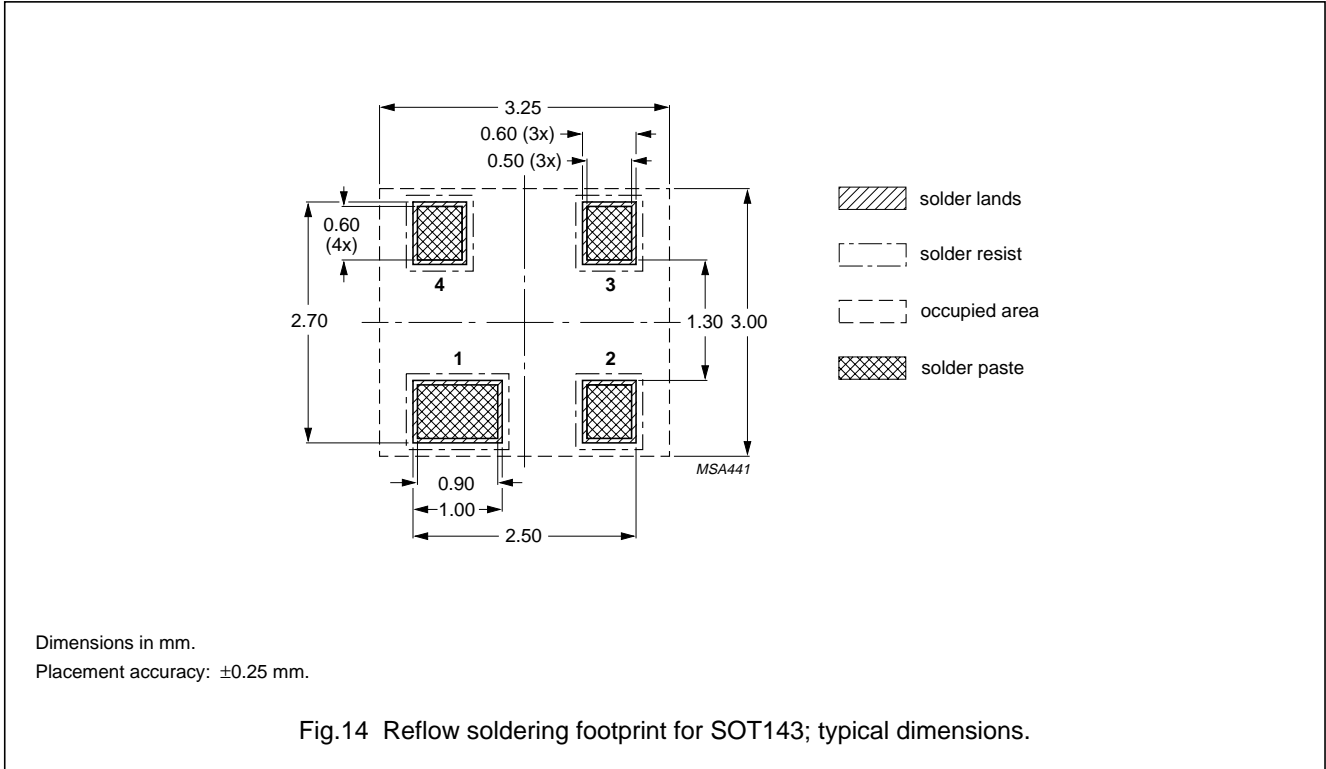
Fig.12 Reflow soldering footprint for SOT23; typical dimensions.



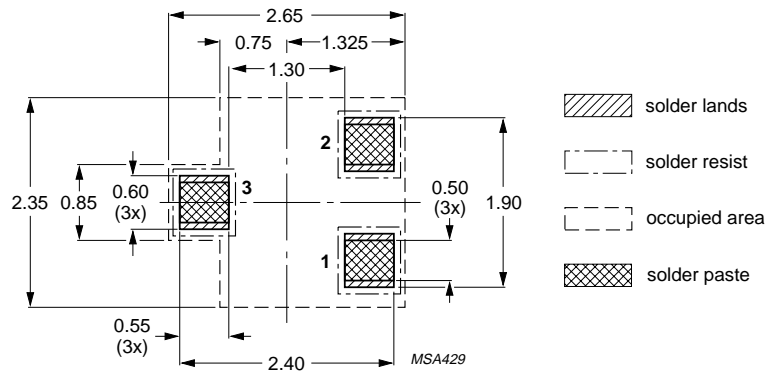
Dimensions in mm.
 Placement accuracy: ± 0.25 mm.

Fig.13 Wave soldering footprint for SOT23; typical dimensions.

SOT143/SOT143R FOOTPRINTS

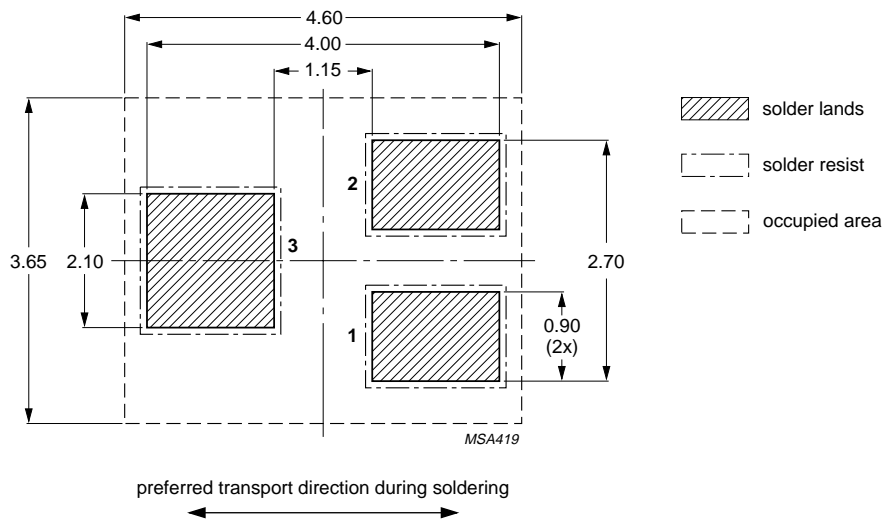


SOT323 FOOTPRINTS



Dimensions in mm.
Placement accuracy: ± 0.25 mm.

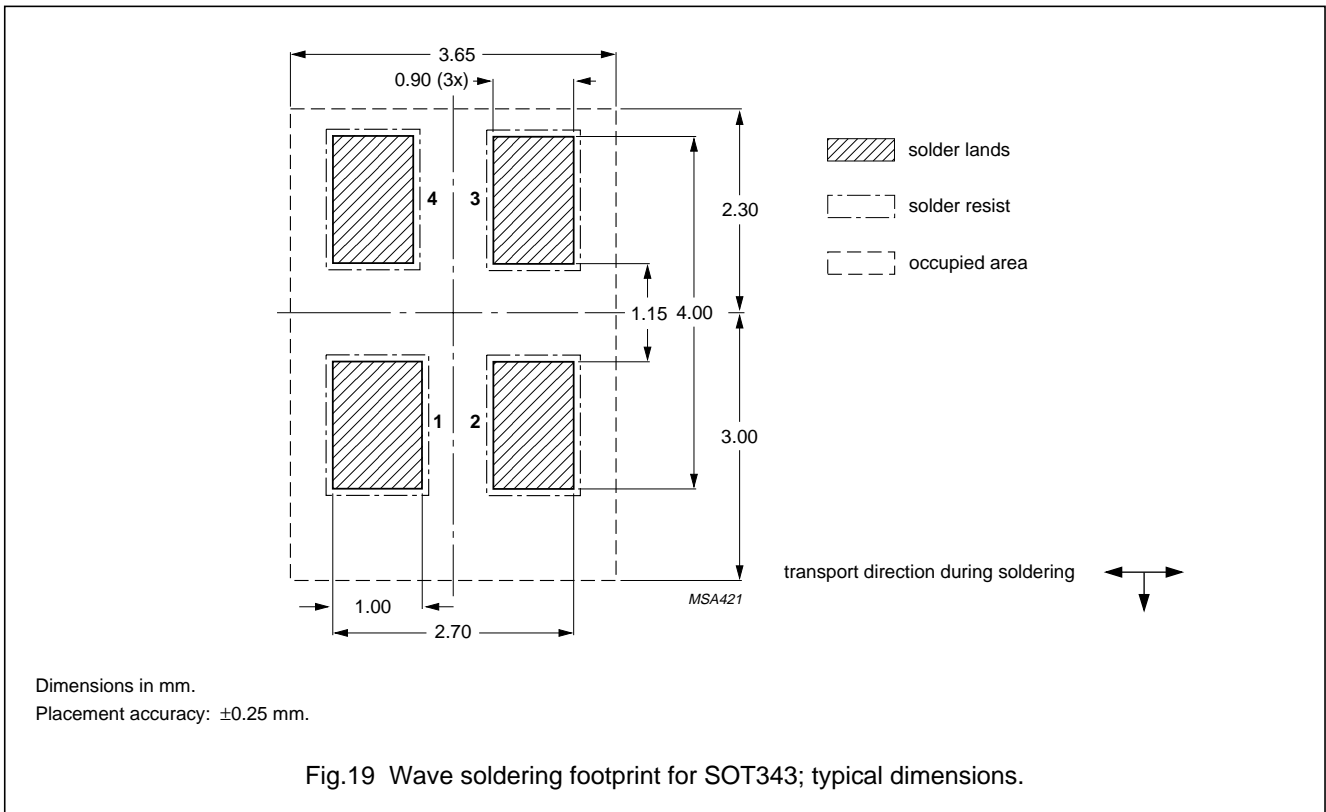
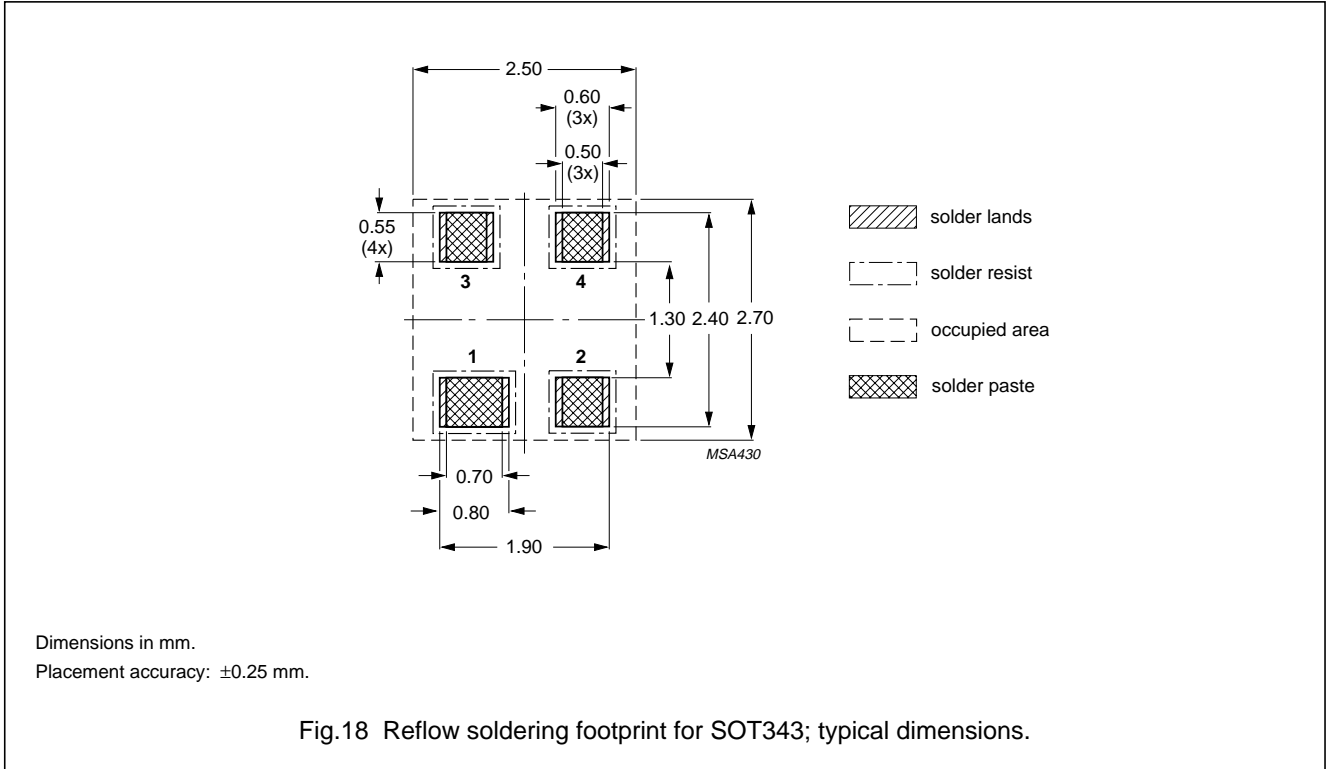
Fig.16 Reflow soldering footprint for SOT323; typical dimensions.



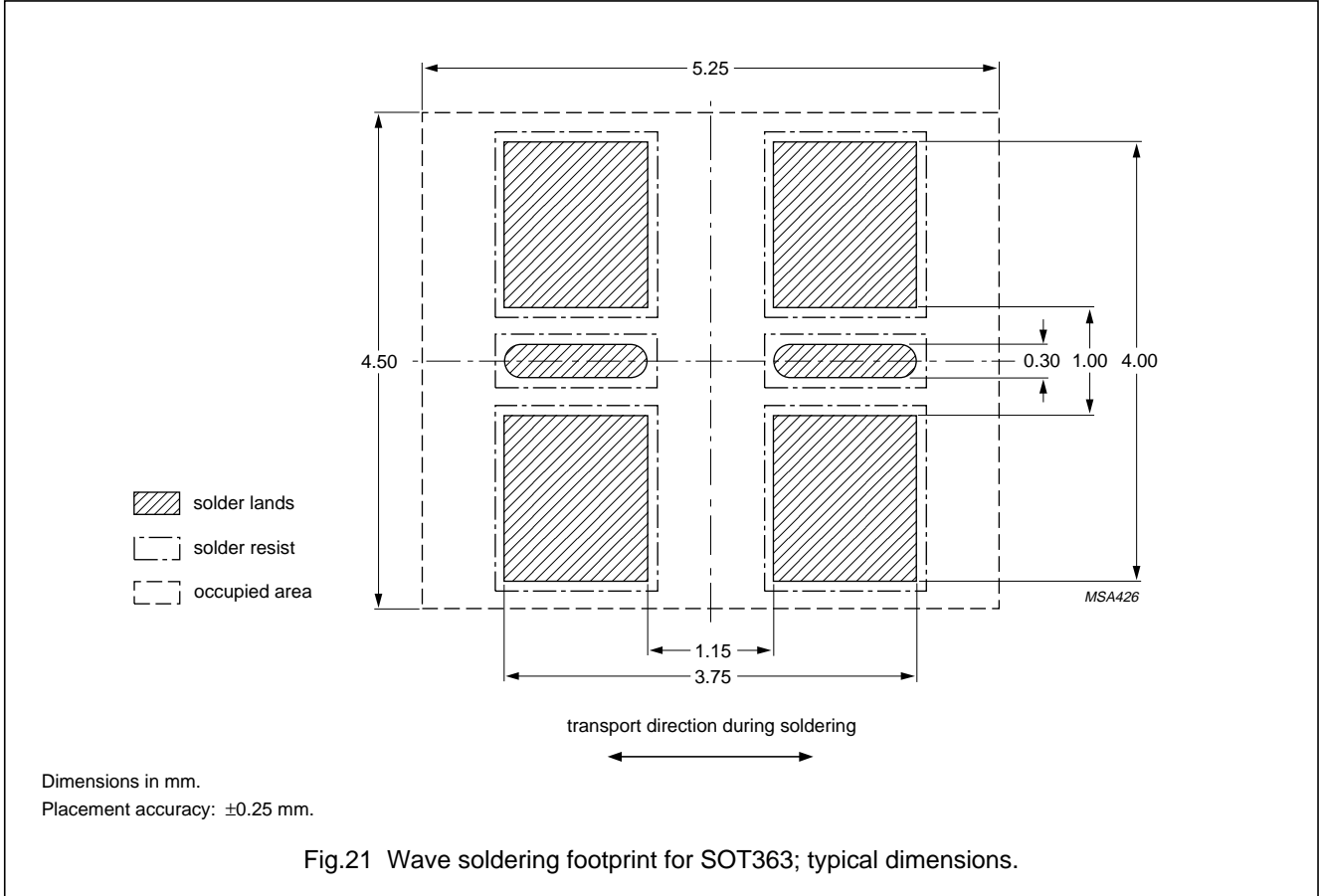
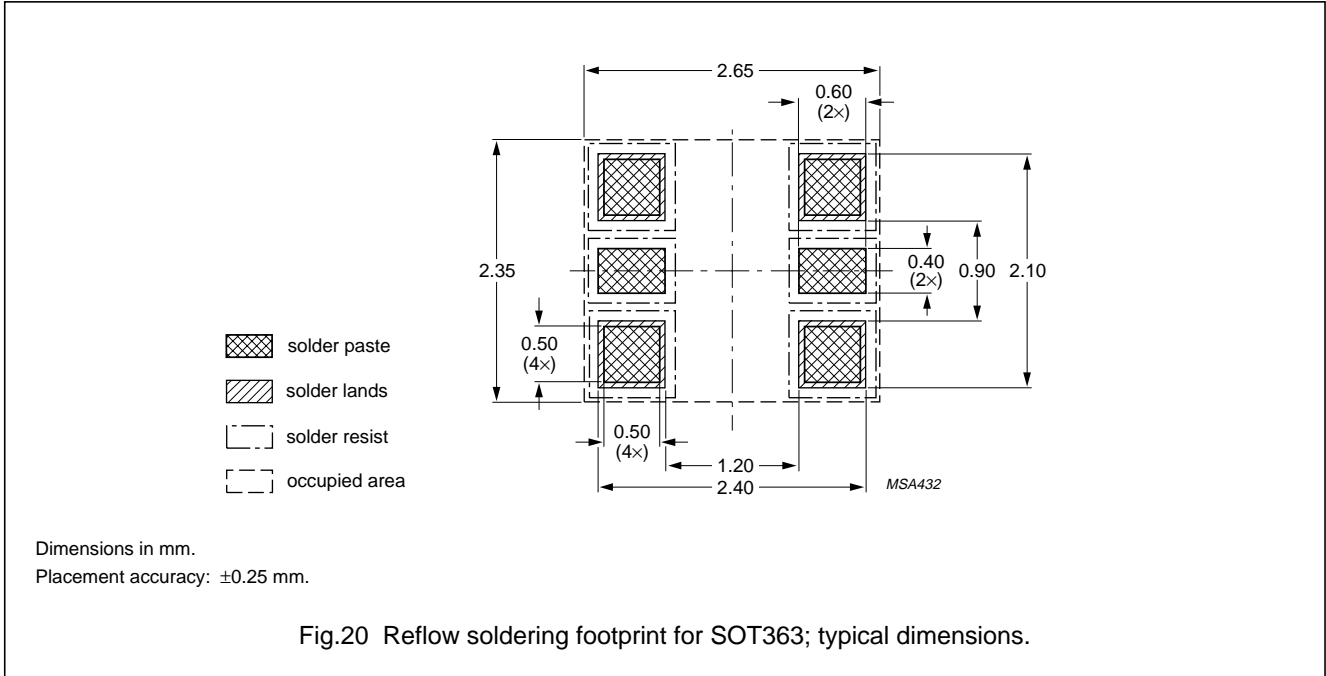
Dimensions in mm.
Placement accuracy: ± 0.25 mm.

Fig.17 Wave soldering footprint for SOT323; typical dimensions.

SOT343 FOOTPRINTS



SOT363 FOOTPRINTS



Hand soldering microminiature components

It is possible to solder microminiature components with a light-weight hand-held soldering iron, but this method has obvious drawbacks and should be restricted to laboratory use and/or incidental repairs on production circuits:

- hand-soldering is time-consuming and therefore expensive.
- the component cannot be positioned accurately and the connecting tags may come into contact with the substrate and damage it.
- there is a risk of breaking the substrate and internal connections in the component could be damaged.
- the component package could be damaged by the iron.

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