



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification⁴ : H01L 39/00, 39/24, 39/12 C01F 1/00, C01G 1/02, 3/02	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 88/ 10009 (43) International Publication Date: 15 December 1988 (15.12.88)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US88/02024 (22) International Filing Date: 8 June 1988 (08.06.88) (31) Priority Application Number: 059,848 (32) Priority Date: 9 June 1987 (09.06.87) (33) Priority Country: US (71) Applicant: E.I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY [US/US]; 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, DE 19898 (US). (72) Inventor: HOROWITZ, Harold, Saul ; 22 Stable Court, Wilmington, DE 19803 (US). (74) Agent: WOLFSON, Herbert, M.; E.I. du Pont de Ne- mours and Company, Legal Department, Patent Divi- sion, Wilmington, DE 19898 (US).	(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (Eu- ropean patent), CH (European patent), DE (Euro- pean patent), DK, FR (European patent), GB (Euro- pean patent), HU, IT (European patent), JP, KR, LU (European patent), NL (European patent), NO, SE (European patent), SU. Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the</i> <i>claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt</i> <i>of amendments.</i>	
(54) Title: IMPROVED PROCESS FOR MAKING SUPERCONDUCTORS		
(57) Abstract		
<p>There is disclosed an improved process for preparing a superconducting composition having the formula $M_w A_z Cu_v O_x$, wherein M is selected from the group consisting of Bi, Tl, Y, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb and Lu; A is at least one alkaline earth metal selected from the group consisting of Ba, Ca and Sr; x is at least 6; w is at least 1; z is at least 2 and v is at least 1; said composition having a superconducting transition temperature of above 77 K, preferably above about 90 K; said process consisting essentially of (a) forming a suspension having an M:A:Cu atomic ratio of w:z:v by mixing $A(OH)_2$, AO or AO_2 and M_2O_3 with an aqueous solution of cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, or mixing $A(OH)_2$ with an aqueous solution of Cu carboxylate, nitrate or a mixture thereof and M carboxylate, nitrate or a mixture thereof at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C; (b) drying the suspension formed in step (a) to obtain a precursor powder; and (c) heating and cooling the powder under specified conditions to form the desired superconducting composition. Shaped articles thereof are also disclosed.</p>		

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	FR	France	ML	Mali
AU	Australia	GA	Gabon	MR	Mauritania
BB	Barbados	GB	United Kingdom	MW	Malawi
BE	Belgium	HU	Hungary	NL	Netherlands
BG	Bulgaria	IT	Italy	NO	Norway
BJ	Benin	JP	Japan	RO	Romania
BR	Brazil	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SD	Sudan
CF	Central African Republic	KR	Republic of Korea	SE	Sweden
CG	Congo	LI	Liechtenstein	SN	Senegal
CH	Switzerland	LK	Sri Lanka	SU	Soviet Union
CM	Cameroon	LU	Luxembourg	TD	Chad
DE	Germany, Federal Republic of	MC	Monaco	TG	Togo
DK	Denmark	MG	Madagascar	US	United States of America
FI	Finland				

TITLE

IMPROVED PROCESS FOR MAKING SUPERCONDUCTORS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a
5 continuation-in-part application of Serial No.
059,848 filed on June 9, 1987.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONField of the Invention

This invention relates to an improved
10 process for making copper oxide-containing
superconductors.

Description of Related Art

Bednorz and Muller, Z. Phys. B64, 189-193
(1986), disclose a superconducting phase in the
15 La-Ba-Cu-O system with a superconducting transition
temperature of about 35 K. Samples were prepared
by a coprecipitation method from aqueous solutions
of Ba-, La- and Cu-nitrate in their appropriate
ratios. An aqueous solution of oxalic acid was
20 used as the precipitant.
Chu et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 405-407 (1987),
report detection of an apparent superconducting
transition with an onset temperature above 40 K
under pressure in the La-Ba-Cu-O compound system
25 synthesized directly from a solid-state reaction of
La₂O₃, CuO and BaCO₃, followed by a decomposition of
the mixture in a reduced atmosphere. Chu et al.,
Science 235, 567-569 (1987), disclose that a
superconducting transition with an onset
30 temperature of 52.5 K has been observed under
hydrostatic pressure in compounds with nominal
compositions given by (La_{0.9}Ba_{0.1})₂CuO_{4-y}, where y
is undetermined. They state that the K₂NiF₄ layer
structure has been proposed to be responsible for
35 the high-temperature superconductivity in the
La-Ba-Cu-O system (LBCO). They further state that,

however, the small diamagnetic signal, in contrast to the presence of up to 100% K_2NiF_4 phase in their samples, raises a question about the exact location of superconductivity in LBCO.

- 5 Cava et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 408-410 (1987), disclose bulk superconductivity at 36 K in $La_{1.8}Sr_{0.2}CuO_4$ prepared from appropriate mixtures of high purity $La(OH)_3$, $SrCO_3$ and CuO powders, heated for several days in air at $1000^\circ C$ in quartz
- 10 crucibles. Rao et al., Current Science 56, 47-49 (1987), discuss superconducting properties of compositions which include $La_{1.8}Sr_{0.2}CuO_4$, $La_{1.85}Ba_{0.15}CuO_4$, $La_{1.8}Sr_{0.1}CuO_4$, $(La_{1-x}Pr_x)_2Sr_yCuO_4$, and $(La_{1.75}Eu_{0.25})Sr_{0.2}CuO_4$.
- 15 Bednorz et al., Europhys. Lett. 3, 379-384 (1987), report that susceptibility measurements support high- T_c superconductivity in the Ba-La-Cu-O system. In general, in the La-Ba-Cu-O system, the superconducting phase has been identified as the
- 20 composition $La_{1-x}(Ba,Sr,Ca)_xCuO_{4-y}$ with the tetragonal K_2NiF_4 -type structure and with x typically about 0.15 and y indicating oxygen vacancies.

- Wu et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 908-910
- 25 (1987), disclose a superconducting phase in the Y-Ba-Cu-O system with a superconducting transition temperature between 80 and 93 K. The compounds investigated were prepared with nominal composition $(Y_{1-x}Ba_x)_2CuO_{4-y}$ and $x = 0.4$ by a solid-state
- 30 reaction of appropriate amounts of Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$ and CuO in a manner similar to that described in Chu et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 405-407 (1987). Said reaction method comprises more specifically heating the oxides in a reduced oxygen atmosphere of 2×10^{-5}
- 35 bars (2 Pa) at $900^\circ C$ for 6 hours. The reacted mixture was pulverized and the heating step was

repeated. The thoroughly reacted mixture was then pressed into 3/16 inch (0.5 cm) diameter cylinders for final sintering at 925°C for 24 hours in the same reduced oxygen atmosphere. The material prepared showed the existence of multiple phases.

Hor et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 911-912 (1987), disclose that pressure has only a slight effect on the superconducting transition temperature of the Y-Ba-Cu-O superconductors described by Wu et al., supra.

Sun et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 1574-1576 (1987), disclose the results of a study of Y-Ba-Cu-O samples exhibiting superconductivity with transition temperatures in the 90 K range. The samples were prepared from mixtures of high-purity Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$, and CuO powders. The powders were premixed in methanol or water and subsequently heated to 100°C to evaporate the solvent. Two thermal heat treatments were used. In the first, the samples were heated in Pt crucibles for 6 hours in air at 850°C and then for another 6 hours at 1000°C. After the first firing, the samples were a dark-green powder, and after the second firing, they became a very porous, black solid. In the second method, the powders were heated for 8-10 hours at 1000°C, ground and then cold pressed to form disks of about 1 cm diameter and 0.2 cm thickness. The superconducting properties of samples prepared in these two ways were similar. X-ray diffraction examination of the samples revealed the existence of multiple phases.

Cava et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 1676-1679 (1987), have identified this superconducting Y-Ba-Cu-O phase to be orthorhombic, distorted, oxygen-deficient perovskite $YBa_2Cu_3O_{9-\delta}$ where δ is about 2.1, and have presented the X-ray

diffraction powder pattern and lattice parameters for the phase. The single-phase $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{9-\delta}$ was prepared in the following manner. BaCO_3 , Y_2O_3 and CuO were mixed, ground and then heated at 950°C in air for 1 day. The material was then pressed into pellets, sintered in flowing O_2 for 16 hours and cooled to 200°C in O_2 before removal from the furnace. Additional overnight treatment in O_2 at 700°C was found to improve the observed properties.

10 Takita et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L506-L507 (1987), disclose the preparation of several Y-Ba-Cu compositions with superconducting transitions around 90 K by a solid-state reaction method in which a mixture of Y_2O_3 , CuO , and BaCO_3 was heated in an oxygen atmosphere at 950°C for more than 3 hours. The reacted mixture was pressed into 10 mm diameter disks for final sintering at 950° or 1000°C for about 3 hours in the same oxygen atmosphere.

20 Takabatake et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L502-L503 (1987), disclose the preparation of samples of $\text{Ba}_{1-x}\text{Y}_x\text{CuO}_{3-z}$ ($x = 0.1, 0.2, 0.25, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.8$ and 0.9) from the appropriate mixtures of BaCO_3 , Y_2O_3 and CuO . The mixture was pressed into a disc and sintered at 900°C for 15 hours in air. The sample with $x = 0.4$ exhibited the sharpest superconducting transition with an onset near 96 K.

30 Syono et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L498-L501 (1987), disclose the preparation of samples of superconducting $\text{Y}_{0.4}\text{Ba}_{0.6}\text{CuO}_{2.22}$ with T_c higher than 88 K by firing mixtures of 4N Y_2O_3 , 3N BaCO_3 and 3N CuO in the desired proportions. The mixtures were prefired at 1000°C for 5 hours. They were ground, pelletized and sintered at 900°C for 15 hours in air and cooled to room temperature in

the furnace. They also disclose that almost equivalent results were also obtained by starting from concentrated nitrate solution of 4N Y_2O_3 , GR grade $Ba(NO_3)_2$ and $Cu(NO_3)_2$.

5 Takayama-Muromachi et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L476-L478 (1987), disclose the preparation of a series of samples to try to identify the superconducting phase in the Y-Ba-Cu-O system. Appropriate amounts of Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$ and CuO
10 were mixed in an agate mortar and then fired at 1173 ± 2 K for 48-72 hours with intermediate grindings. X-ray diffraction powder patterns were obtained. The suggested composition of the superconducting compound is $Y_{1-x}Ba_xCuO_y$ where
15 $0.6 < x < 0.7$.

Hosoya et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L456-L457 (1987), disclose the preparation of various superconductor compositions in the L-Ba-Cu-O systems where L = Tm, Er, Ho, Dy, Eu and
20 Lu. Mixtures of the proper amounts of the lanthanide oxide (99.9% pure), CuO and $BaCO_3$ were heated in air. The obtained powder specimens were reground, pressed into pellets and heated again.

Hirabayashi et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L454-L455 (1987), disclose the preparation of
25 superconductor samples of nominal composition $Y_{1/3}Ba_{2/3}CuO_{3-x}$ by coprecipitation from aqueous nitrate solution. Oxalic acid was used as the precipitant and insoluble Ba, Y and Cu compounds
30 were formed at a constant pH of 6.8. The decomposition of the precipitate and the solid-state reaction were performed by firing in air at $900^\circ C$ for 2 hours. The fired products were pulverized, cold-pressed into pellets and then
35 sintered in air at $900^\circ C$ for 5 hours. The authors found that the the sample was of nearly single

phase having the formula $Y_1Ba_2Cu_3O_7$. The diffraction pattern was obtained and indexed as having tetragonal symmetry.

Ekino et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L452-L453 (1987), disclose the preparation of a superconductor sample with nominal composition $Y_{1.1}Ba_{0.9}CuO_{4-y}$. A prescribed amount of powders of Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$, and CuO was mixed for about an hour, pressed under 6.4 ton/cm^2 (14 MPa) into pellet shape and sintered at 1000°C in air for 3 hours.

Akimitsu et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L449-L451 (1987), disclose the preparation of samples with nominal compositions represented by $(Y_{1-x}Ba_x)_2CuO_{4-y}$. The specimens were prepared by mixing the appropriate amounts of powders of Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$, and CuO . The resulting mixture was pressed and heated in air at 1000°C for 3 hours. Some samples were annealed at appropriate temperatures in O_2 or CO_2 for several hours. The authors noted that there seemed to be a tendency that samples annealed in O_2 showed a superconducting transition with a higher onset temperature but a broader transition than non-annealed samples.

Semba et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L429-L431 (1987), disclose the preparation of samples of $Y_xBa_{1-x}CuO_{4-d}$ where $x = 0.4$ and $x = 0.5$ by the solid state reaction of $BaCO_3$, Y_2O_3 , and CuO . The mixtures are heated to 950°C for several hours, pulverized, and then pressed into disk shape. This is followed by the final heat treatment at 1100°C in one atmosphere O_2 gas for 5 hours. The authors identified the phase that exhibited superconductivity above 90 K as one that was black with the atomic ratio of Y:Ba:Cu of 1:2:3. The diffraction pattern was obtained and indexed as having tetragonal symmetry.

Hatano et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26,
L374-L376 (1987), disclose the preparation of the
superconductor compound $Ba_{0.7}Y_{0.3}Cu_1O_x$ from the
appropriate mixture of $BaCO_3$ (purity 99.9%), Y_2O_3
5 (99.99%) and CuO (99.9%). The mixture was calcined
in an alumina boat heated at $1000^\circ C$ for 10 hours in
a flowing oxygen atmosphere. The color of the
resulting well-sintered block was black.

Hikami et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26,
10 L347-L348 (1987), disclose the preparation of a
Ho-Ba-Cu oxide, exhibiting the onset of
superconductivity at 93 K and the resistance
vanishing below 76 K, by heating a mixture of
powders Ho_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$ and CuO with the composition
15 Ho:Ba:Cu = 0.246:0.336:1 at $850^\circ C$ in air for two
hours. The sample was then pressed into a
rectangular shape and sintered at $800^\circ C$ for one
hour. The sample looked black, but a small part
was green.

20 Matsushita, et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys.
26, L332-L333 (1987), disclose the preparation of
 $Ba_{0.5}Y_{0.5}Cu_1O_x$ by mixing appropriate amounts of
 $BaCO_3$ (purity 99.9%), Y_2O_3 (99.99%) and CuO
(99.9%). The mixture was calcined at $1000^\circ C$ for 11
25 hours in a flowing oxygen atmosphere. The
resultant mixture was then pulverized and
cold-pressed into disks. The disks were sintered
at $900^\circ C$ for 4 hours in the same oxygen atmosphere.
The calcined powder and disks were black. A
30 superconducting onset temperature of 100 K was
observed.

Maeno, et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26,
L329-L331 (1987), disclose the preparation of
various Y-Ba-Cu oxides by mixing powders of Y_2O_3 ,
35 $BaCO_3$ and CuO , all 99.99% pure, with a pestle and
mortar. The powders were pressed at 100 kgf/cm^2

(98×10^4 Pa) for 10–15 minutes to form pellets with a diameter of 12 mm. The pellets were black. The heat treatment was performed in two steps in air. First, the pellets were heated in a horizontal, tubular furnace at 800°C for 12 hours before the heater was turned off to cool the pellets in the furnace. The pellets were taken out of the furnace at about 200°C . About half the samples around the center of the furnace turned green in color, while others away from the center remained black. The strong correlation with location suggested to the authors that this reaction occurs critically at about 800°C . The pellets were then heated at 1200°C for 3 hours and then allowed to cool. Pellets which turned light green during the first heat treatment became very hard solids whereas pellets which remained black in the first heat treatment slightly melted or melted down. Three of the samples exhibited an onset of superconductivity above 90 K.

Iguchi et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L327–L328 (1987), disclose the preparation of superconducting $\text{Y}_{0.8}\text{Ba}_{1.2}\text{CuO}_y$ by sintering a stoichiometrical mixture of Y_2O_3 , BaCO_3 and CuO at 900°C and at 1000°C in air.

Hosoya et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L325–L326 (1987), disclose the preparation of various superconducting specimens of the L–M–Cu–O systems where L = Yb, Lu, Y, La, Ho and Dy and M = Ba and a mixture of Ba and Sr by heating the mixtures of appropriate amounts of the oxides of the rare earth elements (99.9% pure), CuO , SrCO_3 and/or BaCO_3 in air at about 900°C . Green powder was obtained. The powder samples were pressed to form pellets which were heated in air until the color became black.

Takagi et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26,
L320-L321 (1987), disclose the preparation of
various Y-Ba-Cu oxides by reacting mixtures
containing the prescribed amounts of powders of
5 Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$, and CuO at $1000^\circ C$, remixing and
heat-treating at $1100^\circ C$ for a few to several hours.
An onset temperature of superconductivity at 95 K
or higher was observed for a specimen with the
nominal composition of $(Y_{0.9}Ba_{0.1})CuO_y$.

10 Hikami et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26,
L314-L315 (1987), disclose the preparation of
compositions in the Y-Ba-Cu-O system by heating the
powders of Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$, and CuO to $800^\circ C$ or $900^\circ C$ in
air for 2-4 hours, pressing into pellets at 4 kbars
15 (4×10^5 Pa) and reheating to $800^\circ C$ in air for 2
hours for sintering. The samples show an onset of
superconductivity at 85 K and a vanishing
resistance at 45 K.

Bourne et al., Phys. Letters A 120,
20 494-496 (1987), disclose the preparation of
Y-Ba-Cu-O samples of $Y_{2-x}Ba_xCuO_4$ by pressing finely
ground powders of Y_2O_3 , $BaCO_3$, and CuO into pellets
and sintering the pellets in an oxygen atmosphere
at $1082^\circ C$. Superconductivity for samples having x
25 equal to about 0.8 was reported.

Moodenbaugh et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58,
1885-1887 (1987), disclose superconductivity near
90 K in multiphase samples with nominal composition
 $Lu_{1.8}Ba_{0.2}CuO_4$ prepared from dried Lu_2O_3 ,
30 high-purity $BaCP_3$ ($BaCO_3$, presumably), and fully
oxidized CuO . These powders were ground together
in an agate mortar and then fired overnight in air
at $1000^\circ C$ in Pt crucibles. This material was
ground again, pelletized, and then fired at $1100^\circ C$
35 in air for 4-12 hours in Pt crucibles. Additional

samples fired solely at 1000°C and those fired at 1200°C show no signs of superconductivity.

Hor et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 1891-1894 (1987), disclose superconductivity in the
5 90 K range in $ABa_2Cu_3O_{6+x}$ with A = La, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Ho, Er, and Lu in addition to Y. The samples were synthesized by the solid-state reaction of appropriate amounts of sesquioxides of La, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Ho, Er, and Lu, $BaCO_3$ and CuO in a manner
10 similar to that described in Chu et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 58, 405 (1987) and Chu et al., Science 235, 567 (1987).

Morgan, "Processing of Crystalline Ceramics, Palmoor et al., eds., Plenum Press, New
15 York, 67-76 (1978), in discussing chemical processing for ceramics states that where direct synthesis is not immediately achieved, the use of co-precipitation, even if not completely homogeneous on a molecular scale is so vastly
20 superior for uniform powder preparation to the use of ball milled oxides, that it should be the method of choice. He further discusses conditions for preparing perovskites or potassium nickel fluoride type structures using the oxides of Ca, Sr, Li, lanthanides, etc. and hot solutions of transition
25 metal nitrates and acetates.

C. Michel et al., Z. Phys. B - Condensed Matter 68, 421 (1987), disclose a novel family of superconducting oxides in the Bi-Sr-Cu-O system
30 with composition close to $Bi_2Sr_2Cu_2O_{7+\delta}$. A pure phase was isolated for the composition $Bi_2Sr_2Cu_2O_{7+\delta}$. The X-ray diffraction pattern for this material exhibits some similarity with that of perovskite and the electron diffraction pattern
35 shows the perovskite subcell with the orthorhombic cell parameters of $a = 5.32 \text{ \AA}$ (0.532 nm), $b = 26.6$

A (2.66 nm) and $c = 48.8 \text{ \AA}$ (4.88 nm). The material made from ultrapure oxides has a superconducting transition with a midpoint of 22 K as determined from resistivity measurements and zero resistance below 14 K. The material made from commercial grade oxides has a superconducting transition with a midpoint of 7 K. In each case a mixture of Bi_2O_3 , CuO and SrCO_3 was heated at 800°C for 12 hours in air, sintered at 900°C for 2 hours in air and quenched to room temperature.

Akimitsu et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 26, L2080 (1987) disclose a Bi-Sr-Cu-O composition with a superconducting onset temperature of near 8 K made by firing well-dried mixtures of Bi_2O_3 , SrCO_3 and CuO powders at about 880°C in air for 12 hours.

H. Maeda et al., Jpn. J. Appl. Phys. 27, L209 (1988), disclose a superconducting oxide in the Bi-Sr-Ca-Cu-O system with the composition near $\text{BiSrCaCu}_2\text{O}_x$ and a superconducting transition temperature T_c of about 105 K. The samples were prepared by calcining a mixture of Bi_2O_3 , SrCO_3 , CaCO_3 , and CuO powders at $800\text{--}870^\circ\text{C}$ for 5 hours. The material was reground, cold-pressed into pellets at a pressure of 2 ton/cm^2 , sintered at about 870°C in air or oxygen and furnace-cooled to room temperature.

The commonly assigned application, "Superconducting Metal Oxide Compositions and Process For Making Them", S. N. 153,107, filed Feb. 8, 1988, a continuation-in-part of S. N. 152,186, filed Feb. 4, 1988, disclose superconducting compositions having the nominal formula $\text{Bi}_a\text{Sr}_b\text{Ca}_c\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ wherein a is from about 1 to about 3, b is from about $3/8$ to about 4, c is from about $3/16$ to about 2 and $x = (1.5 a + b + c + y)$ where y is from about 2 to about 5, with the proviso that b

+ c is from about 3/2 to about 5, said compositions having superconducting transition temperatures of about 70 K or higher. It also discloses the superconducting metal oxide phase having the formula $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_{3-z}\text{Ca}_z\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_{8+w}$ wherein z is from about 0.1 to about 0.9, preferably 0.4 to 0.8 and w is greater than zero but less than about 1. M. A. Subramanian et al., Science 239, 1015 (1988) also disclose the $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_{3-z}\text{Ca}_z\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_{8+w}$ superconductor and a method for preparing it. Single crystals were grown from a mixture of Bi_2O_3 , CaCO_3 , $\text{SrO}_2/\text{Sr}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and CuO in proportions such that the atomic ratio Bi:Sr:Ca:Cu = 2:2:1:3. The mixture was heated to 850 to 900°C, held for 36 hours and cooled at the rate of 1°C per minute.

L. F. Schneemeyer et al., Nature 332, 422 (1988), disclose an alkali chloride flux method to grow superconducting single crystals in the Bi-Sr-Ca-Cu-O system. Pre-reacted Bi-Sr-Ca-Cu-O mixtures were prepared from high-purity Bi_2O_3 , SrCO_3 , $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$, and CuO by slowly heating to 800-850°C with intermediate grinding steps. Charges consisting of 10-50 wt% Bi-Sr-Ca-Cu-O mixtures thoroughly mixed with NaCl, KCl or other alkali halide salt or salt mixtures were placed in crucibles, heated above the melting temperature of the salt or salt mixture, and cooled at rates of 1-10°C per hour.

S. Kondoh et al., Solid State Comm. 65, 1329 (1988), disclose a superconductor composition in the Tl-Ba-Cu-O system with an onset of superconductivity as high as 20 K. These superconductors were prepared by heating a mixture of Tl_2O_3 , BaO and CuO at about 650°C for 12 hours. The product was reground, pressed into pellets and heated again at 700°C for about 20 hours.

Z. Z. Sheng et al., Nature 332, 55 (1988) and Z. Z. Sheng et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 60, 937 (1988) disclose superconductivity in the Tl-Ba-Cu-O system. These samples are reported to have onset temperatures above 90 K and zero resistance at 81 K. The samples were prepared by mixing and grinding appropriate amounts of BaCO₃ and CuO with an agate mortar and pestle. This mixture was heated in air at 925°C for more than 24 hours with several intermediate grindings to obtain a uniform black oxide Ba-Cu oxide powder which was mixed with an appropriate amount of Tl₂O₃, completely ground and pressed into a pellet with a diameter of 7 mm and a thickness of 1-2 mm. The pellet was then put into a tube furnace which had been heated to 880-910°C and was heated for 2-5 minutes in flowing oxygen. As soon as it had slightly melted, the sample was taken from the furnace and quenched in air to room temperature. It was noted by visual inspection that Tl₂O₃ had partially volatilized as black smoke, part had become a light yellow liquid, and part had reacted with Ba-Cu oxide forming a black, partially melted, porous material.

Z. Z. Sheng et al., Nature 332, 138 (1988) disclose superconductivity in the Tl-Ba-Ca-Cu-O system. Samples are reported to have onset temperatures at 120 K and zero resistance above 100 K. The samples were prepared by mixing and grinding appropriate amounts of Tl₂O₃, CaO and BaCuO₄. This mixture was pressed into a pellet with a diameter of 7 mm and a thickness of 1-2 mm. The pellet was then put into a tube furnace which had been heated to 880-910°C and was heated for 3-5 minutes in flowing oxygen. The sample was then taken from the furnace and quenched in air to room temperature.

R. M. Hazen et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 60, 1657 (1988), disclose two superconducting phases in the Tl-Ba-Ca-Cu-O system, $Tl_2Ba_2Ca_2Cu_3O_{10}$ and $Tl_2Ba_2CaCu_2O_8$ and the method of preparation.

5 Appropriate amounts of Tl_2O_3 , CaO, and $BaCu_3O_4$ or $Ba_2Cu_3O_4$ were completely mixed, ground and pressed into a pellet. A quartz boat containing the pellet was placed in a tube furnace which had been preheated to 880-910°C. The sample was heated for
10 3 to 5 minutes in flowing oxygen and the furnace cooled to room temperature in 1 to 1.5 hours.

Subramanian et al., Nature 332, 420 (1988) disclose the preparation of superconducting phases in the Tl-Ba-Ca-Cu-O system by reacting
15 Tl_2O_3 , CaO_2 or $CaCO_3$, BaO_2 and CuO at 850-910°C in air or in sealed gold tubes for 15 minutes to 3 hours.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The present invention provides an improved process for preparing a precursor to a copper oxide-containing superconducting composition. the composition may be of a rare earth metal- , bismuth- or thallium-based alkaline
25 earth metal-copper-oxide composition. The process for preparing the superconducting composition involves heating the precursor and in addition, in the case of the rare earth metal-based compositions, cooling the previously-heated
30 precursor under prescribed conditions. The resulting superconducting powder can be pressed into a desired shape and then, under prescribed conditions, sintered, and for the rare earth metal-based compositions cooled, to provide a
35 superconducting shaped article. This invention

also includes providing the shaped articles prepared by the process of the invention.

In its broadest sense, the invention involves preparing the precursor from an aqueous suspension by mixing an aqueous solution of a
5 carboxylate e.g. an acetate or a nitrate of copper at a temperature of 50-100°C with either (1) a hydroxide or an oxide or a peroxide of an alkaline earth metal, e.g. barium, calcium or strontium and
10 bismuth oxide (Bi_2O_3) or thallium oxide (Tl_2O_3) or a rare earth oxide, e.g. Y_2O_3 , or (2) a hydroxide of the alkaline earth metal and a carboxylate or a nitrate of bismuth, thallium or the rare earth.

The relative quantities of the compounds are
15 selected to provide the atomic ratios of M (Bi, Tl or rare earth) -to- A (alkaline earth metal) -to- copper -to- oxygen that are known to provide superconducting compositions, e.g. $\text{M}(\text{rare earth})\text{Ba}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ where x is 6.5-7.0,
20 $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CuO}_x$ where x is 6-6.5,
 $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CaCu}_2\text{O}_x$ where x is 8-9,
 $\text{Tl}_2\text{Ba}_2\text{CuO}_x$ where x is 6-6.5,
 $\text{Tl}_2\text{Ba}_2\text{CaO}_x$ where x is 8-9,
 $\text{Tl}_2\text{Ba}_2\text{Cu}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ where x is 10-11.5.

25 Thus, the invention as it relates to the rare earth metal-containing superconducting compositions involves a process for preparing a superconducting composition having the formula $\text{MBA}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ wherein
30 M is selected from the group consisting of Y, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb and Lu;
x is from about 6.5 to about 7.0;
said composition having a superconducting transition temperature of about 90 K;
35 said process consisting essentially of
(a) mixing $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$, BaO or BaO_2 and M_2O_3 with

- an aqueous solution of cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, or mixing $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ with an aqueous solution of Cu and M carboxylates or nitrates at a
- 5 temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, to obtain a suspension having M:Ba:Cu present in an atomic ratio of about 1:2:3;
- (b) drying the suspension formed in step (a) to obtain a powder precursor;
- 10 (c) heating said precursor in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature from about 850°C to about 950°C for a time sufficient to form $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_y$, where y is from about 6.0 to about 6.4; and
- 15 (d) maintaining the $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_y$ in an oxygen-containing atmosphere while cooling for a time sufficient to obtain the desired product. The $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ powder can be pressed into a desired shape and then, under prescribed conditions
- 20 sintered and cooled to provide a $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ shaped article.

The invention provides an improved process for preparing a superconducting composition of bismuth-based alkaline earth metal-copper-oxide

25 wherein

the alkaline earth metal is Sr or both Sr and Ca;

the process consisting essentially of

- (a) mixing $\text{Sr}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$, SrO or SrO_2 and,
- 30 if both Sr and Ca are to be present, $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$, CaO or CaO_2 and Bi_2O_3 with an aqueous solution of cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C to
- 35 obtain a suspension having Bi:Sr:Ca:Cu present in the desired atomic ratio;

17

(b) drying the suspension formed in step (a) to obtain a powder precursor; and

(c) heating said precursor in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature from about 850°C to about 875°C for a time sufficient to form the superconducting oxide.

Preferred is the process in which Bi:Sr:Ca:Cu are in the atomic ratios 2:2:0:1 or 2:2:1:2 and the respective superconducting oxide has the nominal formula $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CuO}_x$ where x is from about 6 to about 6.5 or the nominal formula $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CaCu}_2\text{O}_x$, where x is from about 8 to about 9, both with orthorhombic symmetry.

The invention also provides an improved process for preparing a superconducting composition of thallium-based alkaline earth metal-copper-oxide wherein

the alkaline earth metal is Ba or both Ba and Ca;

the process consisting essentially of (a) mixing $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$, BaO or BaO_2 and, if both Ba and Ca are to be present, $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$, CaO or CaO_2 and Tl_2O_3 with an aqueous solution of cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, or mixing $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and, if both Ba and Ca are to be present, $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ with an aqueous solution of Cu and Tl carboxylates or nitrates at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, to obtain a suspension having Tl:Ba:Ca:Cu present in the desired atomic ratio;

(b) drying the suspension formed in step (a) to obtain a powder precursor; and

(c) heating said precursor in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature from

about 850°C to about 920°C for a time sufficient to form the superconducting oxide.

Preferred is the process in which Tl:Ba:Ca:Cu are in the atomic ratios 2:2:0:1, 2:2:1:2 or 2:2:2:3 and the respective superconducting oxide has the nominal formula $Tl_2Ba_2CuO_x$ where x is from about 6 to about 6.5, the nominal formula $Tl_2Ba_2CaCu_2O_x$ where x is from about 8 to about 9 or the nominal formula $Tl_2Ba_2Ca_2Cu_3O_x$ where x is from about 10 to about 11.5, all with tetragonal symmetry.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The various products of the process of this invention is a nearly single-phase superconducting oxide. No additional grinding, annealing or refining is necessary to produce the superconducting oxide composition.

The use of a suspension to form a very finely divided precursor powder assures a high degree of homogeneity of the reactant cations relative to conventional solid state techniques and results in the preparation of a uniform, nearly single-phase superconducting oxide composition by a process in which this precursor is heated in air or oxygen.

In the process, a suspension is prepared which is then used to generate a precursor powder for later heating. The suspension is prepared by using, as the source of the alkaline earth metal, the alkaline earth metal hydroxide, the alkaline earth metal peroxide or the alkaline earth metal oxide. Preferably, the alkaline earth metal hydroxide is used. To facilitate mixing, particularly when preparing large size batches, the alkaline earth metal hydroxide can be added as an aqueous solution. If the alkaline earth metal

peroxide is used, it should be added slowly to the solution of the copper compound because of the evolution of oxygen. The copper compound used in preparing the suspension is an aqueous, preferably concentrated, solution of cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate. Preferably, the source of copper is cupric carboxylate. Suitable carboxylates include the formate, acetate, and other water soluble carboxylates, but the acetate is preferred.

In one embodiment of the invention, the suspension is prepared by mixing either M_2O_3 as a source of the rare earth metal, Bi_2O_3 as a source of bismuth, or Tl_2O_3 as a source of thallium and the alkaline earth metal compound with an aqueous solution of cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from about $50^\circ C$ to about $100^\circ C$. Preferably, the rare earth metal, bismuth or thallium compound and the alkaline earth metal compound are mixed together prior to addition to the aqueous solution.

In another embodiment of the invention, the suspension is prepared by mixing the alkaline earth metal compound with an aqueous solution of copper carboxylate, nitrate or a mixture thereof and either a rare earth metal or a thallium carboxylate, nitrate or a mixture thereof at a temperature from about $50^\circ C$ to about $100^\circ C$. In this embodiment, first as in the previous embodiment, the preferred source of copper is a cupric carboxylate and of these the acetate is preferred. Preferably, the source of the rare earth metal is a rare earth metal carboxylate. Suitable carboxylates include the acetate and other water soluble carboxylates, but the acetate is preferred. This latter embodiment of the invention can also be used to prepare the bismuth-based

oxide. However, the low solubilities of the bismuth salts such as bismuth nitrate, bismuth acetate and the other bismuth carboxylates offer no significant advantage regarding homogeneity of the suspension formed over that obtained by using Bi_2O_3 ,
5 as in the previous embodiment.

In either embodiment, the concentration of the aqueous solution is below saturation, and heating can be effected before, during or after the
10 solids are added.

The resulting suspension is then dried to remove the solvent and form the powder precursor. Drying can be effected by conventional techniques. For instance, drying can be accomplished by
15 continued heating of the suspension at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C while the suspension is stirred. As the solvent is removed from the suspension, the viscosity of the suspension increases until a thick paste is formed.
20 This paste is further heated at a temperature from about 100°C to about 200°C to produce the precursor solid which is then gently milled to form a powder precursor. Alternatively, the suspension can be spray-dried or freeze-dried using conventional
25 techniques to produce a powder precursor without milling.

The powder precursor can be heated in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature appropriate for the specific metal-based oxide,
30 where for the rare earth metal-based oxide the temperature is from about 850°C to about 950°C , for the bismuth-based oxide the temperature is from about 850°C to about 875°C , and for the thallium-based oxide the temperature is from about
35 850°C to about 920°C , for a time sufficient to form the superconducting oxide except in the case of the

rare earth metal-based oxide where the product formed is during the heating is maintained in an oxygen-containing atmosphere while cooling for a time sufficient to form the superconducting oxide.

5 For heating, the powder precursor is placed in a non-reactive container, e.g., an alumina or gold crucible or tray.

The superconducting product powder can be pressed into a desired shape and then sintered in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature as indicated above for the preparation of the specific metal-based oxide, i. e., for the rare earth metal-based oxide the temperature is from about 850°C to about 950°C, for the bismuth-based oxide the temperature is from about 850°C to about 875°C, and for the thallium-based oxide the temperature is from about 850°C to about 920°C, with the proviso that in the case of the rare earth metal-based oxide the shaped article is maintained in an oxygen-containing atmosphere while cooling.

The process of this invention provides a method for preparing a superconducting composition that requires no special atmosphere during the heating step, no subsequent grinding, reheating or annealing, no extended heating times and no refining of the product to separate the desired superconducting composition from other phases.

The product of the process of the invention involving the use of the rare earth metal is essentially a single-phase, superconducting compound with orthorhombic symmetry. No additional grinding, annealing or refiring is necessary to produce the $MBa_2Cu_3O_x$ composition. The process of the invention is an improved process for preparing superconducting compositions having the formula $MBa_2Cu_3O_x$, M being selected from the group

consisting of Y, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb
and Lu, preferably Y. The parameter x is from
about 6.5 to about 7.0, but is preferably from
about 6.8 to 7.0. The use of a suspension to form
5 a precursor powder assures a high degree of mixing
of the starting materials relative to conventional
solid state techniques and results in the
preparation of a uniform, practically single-phase
superconducting $M\text{Ba}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ composition by a process
10 in which this precursor is heated in air at a
temperature of about 850°C to about 950°C.

In the process of the invention a
suspension is prepared which is then used to
generate a precursor powder for later heating. The
15 suspension is prepared by using, as the source of
barium, $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$, BaO_2 or BaO . Preferably,
 $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ is used. If BaO_2 is used, it should
be added slowly to the Cu solution because of the
evolution of oxygen. The second component used in
20 preparing the suspension is an aqueous, preferably
concentrated, solution of cupric carboxylate or
cupric nitrate. Preferably, the source of copper
is cupric carboxylate. Suitable carboxylates
include the formate, acetate, and other water
25 soluble cupric carboxylates, but the acetate is
preferred. In one embodiment of the invention, the
suspension is prepared by mixing M_2O_3 and the
barium compound with an aqueous solution of cupric
carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from
30 about 50°C to about 100°C. Preferably, the M_2O_3
and barium compound are mixed together prior to
addition to the aqueous solution. In another
embodiment of the invention, the suspension is
prepared by mixing the barium compound with an
35 aqueous solution of Cu carboxylate, nitrate or a
mixture thereof and M carboxylate, nitrate or a

mixture thereof at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C. In this embodiment the preferred Cu source is the same as for the other embodiment. Preferably, the rare earth metal source is an M

5 carboxylate. Suitable carboxylates include the acetate, and other water-soluble carboxylates, but the acetate is preferred. In either embodiment, the concentration of the aqueous solution is below saturation, and heating of the aqueous solution can

10 be effected before, during or after the solids are added. The relative amounts of the sources of M, Ba and Cu used in forming the suspension from which the precursor is prepared are chosen such that the atomic ratio of M:Ba:Cu is about 1:2:3.

15 Preferably, the starting materials used in the process of the invention are of relatively high purity, e.g., 99.9% by weight for copper acetate, 99.99% by weight for copper nitrate, >98% by weight for Ba(OH)₂·8H₂O, 99.5% by weight for BaO₂ and

20 99.9% by weight for M₂O₃. Less pure starting materials can be used; however, the product may then contain an amount of another phase material comparable to the amount of impurity in the starting materials. It is particularly important

25 to avoid the presence of impurities containing iron and other transition, but non-rare earth, metals in the reactants. The resulting suspension is then dried to remove the solvent and form the powder precursor. Drying can be effected by conventional

30 techniques. For instance, drying can be accomplished by continued heating of the suspension at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C while the suspension is stirred. As the solvent is removed from the suspension, the viscosity of the

35 suspension increases until a thick paste is formed. This thick paste is further heated at a temperature

from about 100°C to 200°C to produce the precursor solid which is then gently milled to form a powder precursor. Alternatively, the suspension can be spray dried or freeze-dried using conventional techniques to produce a powder precursor without milling. The powder precursor is then heated in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature from about 850°C to about 950°C, preferably from about 875°C to about 900°C, for a time sufficient to form $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_y$, where y is from about 6.0 to about 6.4. It has been determined by TGA that when the powder precursor is heated to 900°C, y is from about 6.0 to about 6.4. For heating, the powder precursor is placed in a non-reactive container, e.g., an alumina or gold crucible or tray. The oxygen-containing atmosphere can be air or oxygen gas, but is preferably air. The container with the powder precursor is placed in a furnace and brought to a temperature of about 850°C to about 950°C. It is the total time that the powder precursor is at temperatures in this range that is important. For example, when a heating rate of 20°C per minute is used to raise the temperature of the furnace containing the sample from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature is 900°C, 1/2 to 2 hours at this temperature are sufficient to produce, after cooling as prescribed herein, practically single-phase superconducting $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$. Longer heating times can be used. At the end of the heating time, the furnace is turned off, and the resulting material is allowed to cool in the oxygen-containing atmosphere for a time sufficient to obtain the desired product. Preferably, the material is cooled to below about 100°C (a time interval of about 4-5 hours) before the sample container is removed from the furnace. During the

cooling step, the oxygen content of the material increases to give the desired $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ product. The additional oxygen which enters into the crystalline lattice of the material during this cooling step to form the desired product does so by diffusion. The rate at which oxygen enters the lattice is determined by a complex function of time, temperature, oxygen content of the atmosphere, sample form, etc. Consequently, there are numerous combinations of these conditions that will result in the desired product. For example, the rate of oxygen uptake by the material at 500°C in air is rapid, and the desired product can be obtained in less than an hour under these conditions when the sample is in the form of a loosely packed, fine particle powder. However, if the sample is in the form of larger particles, or densely packed powders, the times required to obtain the desired product at 500°C in air will increase. The $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ powder can be pressed into a desired shape, sintered in an oxygen-containing atmosphere at a temperature from about 900°C to about 950°C , and maintained in the oxygen-containing atmosphere while cooling as prescribed above to obtain a $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ shaped article. Well sintered, shaped articles will take longer to form the desired product while cooling than will more porous ones, and for larger, well sintered, shaped articles many hours may be required. A convenient procedure for obtaining the desired product when the material is in the form of a powder or a small shaped object is to turn off the furnace in which the heating was conducted and to allow the material to cool in the furnace to a temperature approaching ambient (22°C) which typically requires a few hours. In the examples,

cooling in the furnace to below about 100°C was found to be sufficient. Increasing the partial pressure of oxygen in the atmosphere surrounding the sample during cooling increases the rate at which oxygen enters the lattice. If, in a particular experiment, the material is cooled in such a manner that the $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ product is not obtained, the material can be heated to an intermediate temperature, such as 500°C, between ambient temperature and the final temperature used in the heating step and held at this temperature for a sufficient time to obtain the desired product.

The product formed is practically single-phase and has orthorhombic symmetry as determined by X-ray diffraction measurements.

The process of this invention as it relates to the rare earth metal superconductor provides a method for preparing a superconducting $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ composition that does not require a special atmosphere during the heating step, subsequent grinding, reheating or annealing, extended heating times or refining of the product to separate the desired superconducting $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ composition from other phases.

As used herein the phrase "consisting essentially of" means that additional steps can be added to the process of the invention so long as such steps do not materially alter the basic and novel characteristics of the invention. The presence of superconductivity at any given temperature can be determined by the Meissner effect, i. e., the exclusion of magnetic flux by a sample when in the superconducting state.

The invention is further illustrated by the following examples in which temperatures are in degrees Celsius unless otherwise indicated. The

chemicals (with purity indicated) used in the following examples of the process of this invention were $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ - (>98%) obtained from Morton Thiokol Inc. or Research Organic/Inorganic Chemical Corp., BaO_2 - (99.5%) obtained from Atomergic Chemetals Corp., $\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ - (99.9%) obtained from J. T. Baker Chemical Co., $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ - (99.999%) obtained from Johnson and Matthey Chemicals Ltd., $\text{Y}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_3 \cdot \text{XH}_2\text{O}$ (20.6% H_2O) - (99.9%) obtained from Morton Thiokol Inc., and Y_2O_3 - (99.9%) obtained from Alfa Research Chemicals and Materials, Bi_2O_3 - (99.8%) obtained from Alfa Research Chemicals and Materials, $\text{Sr}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ - (Technical Grade) obtained from Alfa Research Chemicals and Materials, and $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ - (>96%) obtained from EM Science..

EXAMPLE 1

$\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (14.37 g, 0.048 mole) was dissolved in 100 cc distilled water and the resulting solution was heated to about 75°. $\text{Y}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_3 \cdot \text{XH}_2\text{O}$ (8.04 g, 0.024 mole) was dissolved in 25 cc distilled water and the resulting solution was heated to about 75°. These two solutions were combined to give a mixed solution containing copper and yttrium acetates to which 15.14 g $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was slowly added with stirring. The resulting reaction suspension slowly changed color from blue to greenish-black and finally to a blackish-brown. The suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75° until a paste was obtained. This paste was further heated until dry to obtain a solid which was placed in a vacuum oven at 170° for 1 hour. The solid was then converted to a dark brown powder by hand grinding in an agate mortar and pestle. The X-ray diffraction pattern of this precursor solid showed that it was predominantly amorphous

with some very poorly crystalline CuO also evident in the x-ray diffraction pattern. The yield was 25.90 g.

5 A 5.26 g portion of the above precursor was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 900° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 900° for 2 hours. The furnace was
10 then turned off and allowed to cool to a temperature below 100° before the sample was removed. The resulting product was black and the yield was 3.14 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the product showed that it was
15 $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$. The indices of the observed reflections, the d-spacings and relative intensities are shown in Table I. These results indicate that the $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ product has orthorhombic symmetry. A very slight trace amount
20 of BaCuO_2 is also evident in the pattern.

Scanning electron micrographs of the powder revealed that it consisted of isotropic particles with dimensions ranging from about 0.2 μm to about 3 μm , with relatively little
25 agglomeration.

Measurement of the Meissner effect showed the powder sample to have a T_c , a superconducting transition temperature, onset of about 90 K.

30

35

TABLE I

X-ray diffraction data for $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$

		<u>hkl</u>	<u>d(nm)</u>	<u>Intensity</u>
5		002	0.5786	vvw
	m	003)	0.3863	
		100)		
10	w	012)	0.3206	
		102)		
	vs	013)	0.2720	
		103)		110)
15	vw	111	0.2642	
	w	112	0.2460	
	m	005)	0.2325	
20		104)		
	m	113	0.2225	
	m	020)	0.1936	
25		006)		
	m	200	0.1905	
	w	115	0.1770	
30	w	016)	0.1732	
		023)		
		106)		
		120)		
	vw	203)	0.1711	
		210)		
35		121)		
		122	0.1660	

			30	
	vw			
		123)	0.1579	
5	ms	116)		
		213	0.1567	
	m			

* Legend:

- 10 s - strong
- m - moderate
- w - weak
- v - very

15

20

25

30

35

EXAMPLE 2

A 1.08 g portion of the precursor powder prepared using a procedure very similar to that described in Example 1 was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 900° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 900° for 30 minutes. The furnace was turned off and allowed to cool below 100° before the sample was removed. The product was black and the yield was 0.66 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed that the product was orthorhombic $YBa_2Cu_3O_x$. The results were very similar to those given in Table I. There were also slight traces of $BaCuO_2$, $Y_2Cu_2O_5$ and $BaCO_3$.

Scanning electron micrographs of the powder showed that it was very similar in morphology to that described in Example 1. Measurement of the Meissner effect showed the powder sample to have a T_c onset of about 90 K.

EXAMPLE 3

$Cu(C_2H_3O_2)_2 \cdot H_2O$ (28.75 g, 0.144 mole) was dissolved in 200 cc distilled water. The resulting solution was then heated to about 75°. $Ba(OH)_2 \cdot 8H_2O$ (30.28 g, 0.096 mole) and 5.40 g of Y_2O_3 (0.024 mole) were then ground together, by hand, in an agate mortar with a pestle. The resulting solid mixture was then added to the heated copper acetate solution to obtain a suspension which was at first bright blue, but within 10 minutes had turned to dark greenish-black, and after another 10 minutes had turned a uniform black. The suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75° until a paste was obtained. This paste was further heated until dry

and the resulting solid was placed in a vacuum oven at 170° for 1 hour. The solid was then converted to a dark brown powder by hand grinding in an agate mortar using a pestle. The X-ray diffraction powder pattern of this precursor solid showed that the powder was amorphous with some poorly crystalline CuO and a small amount of a poorly crystalline unidentified phase also present. The yield was 46.51 g.

10 A 21.2 g portion of this precursor powder was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 900° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was
15 maintained at 900° for 8 hours. The furnace was then turned off and allowed to cool to a temperature below 100°C before the sample was removed. The product was black and the yield was 14.25 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of
20 the material showed that it was orthorhombic $YBa_2Cu_3O_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. Trace amounts of $BaCuO_2$ and $Y_2Cu_2O_5$ are also evident in the pattern.

Scanning electron micrographs of the
25 powder showed that it was very similar in morphology to that described in Example 1. Measurement of the Meissner effect showed the powder sample to have a T_c onset of about 90 K.

EXAMPLE 4

30 A 1.14 g of precursor powder made by a procedure very similar to that described in Example 3 was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 900°
35 at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 900° for 2 hours. The furnace

was then turned off and allowed to cool to a temperature below 100°C before the sample was removed. The product was black. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed
5 that it was orthorhombic $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. Trace amounts of BaCuO_2 and $\text{Y}_2\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_5$ are also evident in the pattern.

Measurement of the Meissner effect showed
10 the powder sample to have a T_c onset of about 90 K.

EXAMPLE 5

$\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (14.37 g, 0.072 mole) was dissolved in 100 cc distilled water, and the resulting solution was heated to about 75°.
15 $\text{Y}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_3 \cdot \text{XH}_2\text{O}$ (8.04 g, 0.024 mole) was dissolved in 25 cc distilled water, and the resulting solution was also heated to about 75°. These two solutions were combined to give a mixed solution of copper and yttrium acetates to which 15.14 g (0.048
20 mole) of $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was slowly added with stirring. The resulting suspension slowly changed color from blue to greenish blue and finally to blackish-brown. The suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75° for a little less than one
25 hour. The heated suspension was then sprayed through an air atomization nozzle into a covered beaker containing liquid nitrogen. The nozzle, manufactured by Spraying Systems Co., Wheaton, Illinois, was Model 9265-1/4 J-LUC fitted with
30 fluid cap # 2850-LUC, liquid orifice diameter of 0.7 mm (0.028 in) and air cap # 70-LUC. The nozzle was pressurized by 140 kPa (20 psi) of air. The resulting slurry of liquid nitrogen and finely divided frozen powder was then freeze dried. The
35 powder obtained was medium grey and very fluffy. Its bulk density was 18 times lower than that of

powder obtained by conventional evaporation of the solvent to dryness reflecting the extremely fine particle size and low degree of agglomeration in the freeze-dried powder. The yield was 23.9 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed that the powder was almost totally amorphous with some very poorly crystalline CuO also present.

A 1.05 g portion of this freeze-dried powder was spread in a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 900° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 900° for 2 hours. The furnace was turned off and allowed to cool below 100° before the sample was removed. The resulting powder was black and the yield is 0.61 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed that the product was orthorhombic $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. There were a minor impurity of $\text{Y}_2\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_5$ and a trace amount of Y_2BaCuO_5 . Measurement of the Meissner effect showed the powder to have a T_c onset of about 90 K.

EXAMPLE 6

$\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (11.50 g, 0.058 mole) was dissolved in 80 cc of distilled water, and the resulting solution was heated to about 75°. $\text{Y}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2) \cdot \text{XH}_2\text{O}$ (6.43 g, 0.019 mole) was dissolved in 25 cc of distilled water, and the resulting solution was also heated to about 75°. These two solutions were combined after which 12.11 g of $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (.038 mole) were slowly added with stirring. The resulting suspension turned from dark blue, to greenish black, to black, all within about 20 min. The suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75° for one hour. The heated

suspension was then spray dried using a Buchi laboratory Model spray dryer operated with an inlet temperature of 215°. The resulting powder was a medium grey, free-flowing powder made up of 5 spherical agglomerates, characteristic of the spray-drying process. The yield was 13.03 g.

A portion (1.25 g) of this precursor powder was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and then heated in air in a furnace from 10 ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 875° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 875° for 2 hours. The furnace was turned off and allowed to cool below 100° before the sample was removed. The 15 resulting product was black and the yield was 0.72 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed that the product was orthorhombic $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. There were trace amounts 20 of BaCuO_2 and $\text{Y}_2\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_5$.

EXAMPLE 7

$\text{Cu}(\text{CHO}_2)_2$ (11.06 g, 0.072 mole) was dissolved in 100 cc of distilled water with the aid of a few drops of formic acid. The resulting 25 solution was heated to 75°. $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (15.14 g, 0.048 mole) and 2.70 g of Y_2O_3 (0.012 mole) were ground together, by hand, using an agate mortar and pestle. The resulting solid mixture was then slowly added to the copper formate solution. The 30 resulting suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75° until a paste was obtained. This paste was further heated until dry and the resulting solid was placed in a vacuum oven at 170° for one hour. The solid was then converted to a black 35 powder by hand-grinding using an agate mortar and pestle. The X-ray diffraction powder pattern of

this precursor solid showed that it was a poorly crystalline unidentified phase or phases.

A portion (1.04 g) of this precursor powder was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 900° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 900° for 2 hours. The furnace was turned off and allowed to cool below 100° before the sample was removed. The resulting product was black and the yield is 0.67 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed that the product was orthorhombic $YBa_2Cu_3O_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. There were minor impurity phases of $BaCuO_2$ and $Y_2Cu_2O_5$.

EXAMPLE 8

$Cu(NO_3)_2 \cdot 6H_2O$ (10.65 g, 0.036 mole) was dissolved in 25 cc of distilled water.

$Y(NO_3)_3 \cdot 6H_2O$ (5.39 g, 0.012 mole) was dissolved in 25 cc of H_2O . These two solutions were added together to yield a mixed solution of copper and yttrium nitrates which was then heated to about 75°. $Ba(OH)_2 \cdot 8H_2O$ (7.57 g, 0.024 mole) was then slowly added with stirring to the heated solution. A light blue suspension was obtained. This suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75° until a paste was obtained. This paste was further heated until dry and the resulting solid was placed in a vacuum oven at 170° for several hours. The solid was then converted to a light blue powder by grinding by hand using an agate mortar and pestle. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of this precursor showed that it consisted of a crystalline unidentified phase or phases. The yield was 14.69 g.

A portion (1.12) g of this precursor powder was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 875°
5 at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 875° for 2 hours. The furnace was turned off and allowed to cool substantially as described in previous examples. The resulting powder was black and the yield was 0.62 g. An
10 X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the material showed that the product was orthorhombic $YBa_2Cu_3O_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. There were minor amounts of $BaCuO_2$ and CuO also present. Measurement of the Meissner
15 effect showed the powder to have a T_c onset of about 90 K.

EXAMPLE 9

$Cu(C_2H_3O_2)_2 \cdot H_2O$ (7.19 g, 0.036 mole) was dissolved in 50 cc of distilled water. The
20 resulting solution was then heated to about 75°. BaO_2 (4.06 g, 0.024 mole) and 1.35 g of Y_2O_3 (0.006 mole) were ground by hand using an agate mortar and pestle. The resulting solid mixture was slowly added to the heated copper acetate solution.
25 Addition had to be extremely slow since it is accompanied by the evolution of gas and foaming of the suspension. The resulting suspension eventually changed to a blackish-brown color. The suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75°
30 until a paste was obtained. This paste was further heated until dry to obtain a solid which was placed in a muffle furnace in air at 150° for about 16 hours. The solid was then converted to a dark brown powder by grinding it by hand using an agate
35 mortar and pestle. The yield was 11.24 g.

A portion (1.11 g) of this precursor powder was spread into a thin layer in an alumina tray and heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 875° at a rate of about 20° per minute. The temperature was maintained at 875° for 2 hours. The furnace was then turned off and allowed to cool substantially as described in the previous examples to give 0.76 g of a black product. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the product showed that it was orthorhombic $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$, and the results were very similar to those given in Table I. There were trace amounts of BaCuO_2 , $\text{Y}_2\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_5$ and BaCO_3 .

EXAMPLE 10

$\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (7.294 g, 0.036 mole) was dissolved in 100 cc distilled water. The resulting solution was then heated to about 75°C. Bi_2O_3 (8.387 g, 0.018 mole), $\text{Sr}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (9.007 g, 0.036 mole) and $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ (1.363 g, 0.018 mole) were ground by hand using an agate mortar and pestle. The resulting solid mixture was slowly added to the heated copper acetate solution. The resulting suspension was initially bright blue but within five minutes changed to a blackish-brown color. The suspension was kept stirred and heated at about 75°C until a dry solid was obtained. The solid was then converted to a dark brown powder by grinding it by using an agate mortar and pestle. The yield was 19.87 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of this precursor solid showed that it was a crystalline unidentified phase or phases.

A portion (1.11 g) of this precursor powder was heated in air in a furnace from ambient temperature to a final heating temperature of 875°C at a rate of about 20°C per minute. The temperature was maintained at 875°C for 2 hours.

The furnace was then turned off and allowed to cool to a temperature below 100°C before the sample was removed. The product was black and the yield was 0.79 g. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the product showed that it was the orthorhombic phase with the nominal formula $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CaCu}_2\text{O}_{8+y}$ plus a small amount of orthorhombic $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CuO}_{6+x}$. Measurement of the Meissner effect showed the powder to have a T_c onset of about 72 K.

The sample was reground and then heated using essentially the same conditions used in the original heating described above. An X-ray diffraction powder pattern of the product showed even more orthorhombic phase with the nominal formula $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CaCu}_2\text{O}_{8+y}$ plus a reduced amount of orthorhombic $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_2\text{CuO}_{6+x}$. Measurement of the Meissner effect showed the powder to have a T_c onset of about 82 K.

20

EXAMPLE 11

$\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (7.294 g, 0.036 mole) and $\text{Tl}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_3$ (6.867 g, 0.018 mole) are dissolved in 150 cc distilled water. The resulting solution was then heated to about 75°C. $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (11.357 g, 0.036 mole) and $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ (1.363 g, 0.018 mole) are ground by hand using an agate mortar and pestle. The resulting solid mixture is slowly added to the heated copper and thallium acetate solution. The suspension is kept stirred and heated at about 75°C until a dry solid was obtained. The solid is then converted to a powder by grinding it by using an agate mortar and pestle. This precursor powder can then be heated in air in a furnace to a final heating temperature of about 850°C to about 915°C and maintained at that temperature for 15 minutes

40

to 2 hours. The product will be the tetragonal phase with the nominal formula $Tl_2Ba_2CaCu_2O_{8+y}$.

5

10

15

20

25

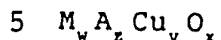
30

35

CLAIMS

The Invention Being Claimed Is:

1. In a process for preparing a superconducting composition having the formula



wherein M is at least one selected from the group consisting of Bi, Tl, Y, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb and Lu

A is at least one alkaline earth metal selected from the group consisting of barium, calcium and strontium,

w is at least 1,

z is at least 2,

v is at least 1 and

15 x is at least 6

in which compounds of M, A and Cu are mixed in the presence of oxygen attached to at least one of said compounds to form a dry precursor, said M,A,Cu and O being present in the precursor in an atomic ratio of w:z:v:x; and the precursor is then heated and cooled in an oxygen-containing atmosphere to form $M_w A_z Cu_v O_x$, the improvement wherein the precursor, before drying, is obtained in the form of an aqueous suspension by mixing an aqueous solution of a carboxylate or a nitrate of copper at a temperature of 50°-100°C with either

(1) a hydroxide or an oxide or a peroxide of A and M_2O_3 , or

(2) a hydroxide of A and a carboxylate or a nitrate of M, and said suspension is dried to form the precursor.

2. The process of Claim 1 wherein M is selected from the group consisting of Y, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb and Lu, A is barium, w is 1, z is 2, v is 3 and x is 6.5-7, and the precursor is heated in an oxygen-containing

atmosphere at a temperature of 850-950°C for a time sufficient to form $MBa_2Cu_3O_y$ wherein y is 6-6.4; and maintaining said $MBa_2Cu_3O_y$ in an oxygen-containing atmosphere while cooling for a time sufficient to obtain $MBa_2Cu_3O_x$.

3. The process of Claim 1 wherein M is bismuth, A is strontium, w is 2, z is 2, v is 1 and x is 6-6.5

4. The process of Claim 1 wherein M is bismuth, A is strontium and calcium, w is 2, z is 3 but it is obtained from Sr_2Ca , v is 2 and x is 8-9.

5. The process of Claim 1 wherein M is thallium, A is barium, w is 2, z is 2, v is 1 and x is 6-6.5

6. The process of Claim 1 wherein M is thallium, A is barium and calcium, w is 2, z is either (1) 3 as in Ba_2Ca , v is 2 and x is 8-9, or (2) 4 as in Ba_2Ca_2 , v is 3 and x is 10-11.5.

7. An improved process for preparing a precursor of a superconducting composition of a rare earth metal-, bismuth- or thallium-based alkaline earth metal-copper-oxide, wherein for the rare earth metal-based oxide the rare earth metal is selected from the group consisting of Y, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, and Lu and the alkaline earth metal is Ba, for the bismuth-based oxide the alkaline earth metal is Sr or both Sr and Ca and for the thallium-based oxide the alkaline earth is Ba or both Ba and Ca,

said process consisting essentially of (a) mixing the alkaline earth metal hydroxide, the alkaline earth metal oxide or the alkaline earth metal peroxide and M_2O_3 , where M is said rare earth metal, bismuth or thallium, with an

aqueous solution of at least cupric carboxylate or cupric nitrate at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, or for said rare earth metal- or thallium-based oxides, mixing an alkaline earth metal hydroxide with an aqueous solution of at least the carboxylates or nitrates of copper and of said rare earth metal or thallium at a temperature from about 50°C to about 100°C, to obtain a suspension having M:alkaline earth metal:Cu present in the desired atomic ratio; and

(b) drying the suspension formed in step (a) to obtain a powder precursor.

8. A process as in Claim 7 wherein an aqueous solution of at least the carboxylate(s) are used.

9. A process as in Claim 8 wherein said carboxylate(s) is the acetate(s).

10. A process as in Claim 7 wherein the source of alkaline earth metal is the alkaline earth metal hydroxide selected from the group consisting of $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Sr}(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$, and said hydroxide is added as an aqueous solution.

11. A process as in Claim 7 wherein, in the case of said rare earth metal-based oxide, said precursor is heated to a temperature from about 850°C to about 950°C for a time sufficient to form $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_y$ where y is from about 6 to about 6.4 and maintaining said $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_y$ in an oxygen-containing atmosphere while cooling for a time sufficient to obtain a powder of $\text{MBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_x$ where x is from about 6.5 to 7.

12. A process as in Claim 11 wherein said rare earth metal-based oxide is Y_2O_3 .

13. As process as in Claim 7 wherein, in the case of the said bismuth-based oxide, said precursor is heated to a temperature from about

850°C to about 875°C for a time sufficient to form the superconducting composition.

14. A process as in Claim 7 wherein, in the case of the thallium-based oxide, said precursor is heated to a temperature from about 850°C to about 920°C.

15. A process as in Claim 11 or 12, wherein said precursor is pressed into a desired shape, sintered in an oxygen-containing atmosphere during heating and maintained in an oxygen-containing atmosphere during cooling to obtain a shaped article.

16. A process as in Claim 13 or 14 wherein said precursor is pressed into a desired shape and sintered during heating to obtain a shaped article.

17. The shaped article prepared according to the process of Claim 15 or 16.

20

25

30

35

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/US88/02024

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶				
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC IPC⁴ H01L 39/00, 39/24, 39/12; C01F 1/00; C01G 1/02, 3/02 U.S. CL. 505/1				
II. FIELDS SEARCHED				
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷				
Classification System	Classification Symbols			
U.S. C.L.	505/1; 502/341, 525; 423/593			
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸				
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹				
Category *	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³		
Y	US, A, 4,661,682 CLARK 28 APRIL 1987, (col. 1, line 50 to col. 2, line 10 shows preparation of a hydrate. Col. 3, lines 64-67 shows that the selection of the anion to make a precursor is not as important as the metal. See also col. 4, lines 2-11).	1,7-9		
X	AKIMITSU ET AL. "Superconductivity in the Bi-Sr-Cu-O System" December 1987, Jap. J. App. Phy 26(12)pp. L 2080-2081 (p. L2080 shows a rod structure made of Bi-Sr-CuO).	3,15-17		
X	MAEDA ET AL. "A New High-Tc Oxide Superconductor without a Rare Earth" February 1988, Jap. J. App. Phy. 27(2) PP. L209-210 (p. L210 shows the Bi-Sr-Ca-CuO compound).	4,7,13, 15-17		
<p>* Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁰</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>
<p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p>	<p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>			
IV. CERTIFICATION				
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report			
20 SEPTEMBER 1988	01 NOV 1988			
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer			
ISA/US	<i>Ronald A. Krasnow</i>			

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT (CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET)		
Category *	Citation of Document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to Claim No
Y	Subramanian et al. "A New High-Temperature Superconductor: $\text{Bi}_2\text{Sr}_{3-x}\text{Ca}_x\text{Cu}_2\text{O}_{8-y}$ " <u>Science</u> , 239 (26 February 1988) pp. 1015-1017 (The article discloses superconductors made by a solution process p. 1015, col. 1-2).	1,4,7-9,13 and 15-17
X	Syono et al. "X-Ray and Electron Microscopic study of a High Temperature Superconductor YBaCuO " <u>Jap. J. App. Phy.</u> 26(4) April 1987, pp. L498-L501. (The article shows manufacture of superconductors by mixing a solution of the components, drying and firing in air at 900°C).	1,2,7-9,11 12 and 15-17
X	US, A, 4,636,378, Pastor et al. 13 January 1987, (The use specifically of barium hydroxide hydrate to make perovskite type compounds is taught col. 5, lines 54-55).	1,7 and 10
X	Wang et al., "The Oxalate Route to Superconducting $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-x}$ " <u>Solid State Communications</u> 64(6) pp. 881-883, 1987 (The reference generally shows the precipitation method of producing pure powders from which to make superconductors p. 881, col. 1-2).	1,2,7-9,11, 12 and 15-17
Y	Hirabayashi et al., "Structure and Superconductivity in a New Type Oxygen Deficient Perovskites $\text{Y}_1\text{Ba}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_7$ " <u>Jap. J. App. Phy.</u> 26(4) April 1987, pp. L454-455. (coprecipitation of superconductors by nitrate solution p. L454, col. 2).	7-9,11,12 and 15-17
Y	US, A, 4,643,984 Abe et al. 17 February 1987, (The process of making a perovskite compound by precipitation of a hydroxide mixture of metals col. 4, lines 15-39).	1,7-10

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET

A	US, A, 4,049,789, MANABE ET AL. 20 September 1977, (Generally the precipitation method of making oxide powders is discussed for materials closely related to superconductors, col. 3, lines 7-65).	1,7-10
Y	US, A, 4,482,644, BEYERLEIN ET AL. 13 NOVEMBER 1984, (An oxygen deficient perovskite is taught which is made by precipitation and regrinding and then heating (col. 3, lines 50-62).	1,3,4,7-10

V. OBSERVATIONS WHERE CERTAIN CLAIMS WERE FOUND UNSEARCHABLE ¹

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2) (a) for the following reasons:

1. Claim numbers _____, because they relate to subject matter ¹² not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claim numbers _____, because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out ¹³, specifically:

3. Claim numbers _____, because they are dependent claims not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of PCT Rule 6.4(a).

VI. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING ²

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims of the international application.
2. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims of the international application for which fees were paid, specifically claims:
3. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claim numbers:
4. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the International Searching Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by applicant's protest.
 No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET

A	US, A, 4,567,031, RILEY 28 JANUARY 1986, (A typical precipitation procedure is disclosed for preparing oxides of mixed metals, col. 1, line 64 to col. 2, line 49).	1,7,10
Y	SHENG ET AL. "Superconductivity at 90K in Tl-Ba-Cu-O System" <u>Phy. Rev. Ltr.</u> 60(10) 07 March 1988, pp. 937-940 (The thallium compound is shown as useful as a superconductor, p. 937, col. 2).	5&14

V. OBSERVATIONS WHERE CERTAIN CLAIMS WERE FOUND UNSEARCHABLE¹

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2) (a) for the following reasons:

1. Claim numbers _____, because they relate to subject matter¹² not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claim numbers _____, because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out¹³, specifically:

3. Claim numbers _____, because they are dependent claims not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of PCT Rule 6.4(a).

VI. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING²

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims of the international application.
2. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims of the international application for which fees were paid, specifically claims:

3. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claim numbers:

4. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the International Searching Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by applicant's protest.
 No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET

A	SERA ET AL. "On the Structure of High Tc OXIDE SYSTEM Tl-Ba-Cu-O" <u>Solid State Comm.</u> 66(7) pp. 707-709, 1988 (The Thallium compound is shown to be similar in structure to other known superconductors p. 707, col.2).	5&14
A	Pool "New Superconductors Answer Some Questions" <u>Science</u> , Vol. 240, 08 APRIL 1988 pp. 146-147. (Many questions as to the utility or industrial applicability of the claimed invention are raised see p. 240, cols. 2-3 and p. 241 generally).	1, 3-7 and 14-17

V. OBSERVATIONS WHERE CERTAIN CLAIMS WERE FOUND UNSEARCHABLE ¹

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2) (a) for the following reasons:

1. Claim numbers _____, because they relate to subject matter ¹² not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claim numbers _____, because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out ¹³, specifically:

3. Claim numbers _____, because they are dependent claims not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of PCT Rule 6.4(a).

VI. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING ²

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims of the international application.
2. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims of the international application for which fees were paid, specifically claims:

3. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claim numbers:

4. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the International Searching Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by applicant's protest.
 No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.