

Audi opens new primer facility in Neckarsulm

- **Audi is investing in the Neckarsulm site with a completely renovated paint shop**
- **Upon completion in 2025, it will be one of the most modern in the automotive industry**
- **The newly opened primer facility focuses on efficient and sustainable processes and paints both combustion and electric models**

Neckarsulm, October 16, 2024 – Ceremonial inauguration at the Neckarsulm site: Audi opened the new primer building on the factory premises in the presence of more than 200 guests. The facility sets new standards in the automotive industry with sustainable technologies and processes and is suitable for both combustion and electric vehicles. The top coat plant is also currently being restructured until 2025. With the renovation of the paint shop, AUDI AG is making a targeted investment in the site and gearing it towards a sustainable future.

15,000 cubic meters of earth excavated, 2,600 drill piles fitted, 1,100 tons of steel installed, and 13,700 cubic meters of concrete: After two years of construction, the new A22 building with a floor area of 12,000 square meters is now complete. The fully automated paint shop facility will prime all models produced at the Neckarsulm site and the neighboring Böllinger Höfe. These include the new Audi A5, the upcoming Audi A7, the Audi Sport models, and current and upcoming all-electric models. This is because the facility is designed for both combustion models as well as electric vehicles with their special requirements.

Around 200 guests from politics, the press, Audi, and its suppliers attended the opening today. Fred Schulze, Plant Manager at the Neckarsulm site: “With the investment in the new facility, Audi is setting the course for continuing its journey towards e-mobility and aligning the Neckarsulm site for a sustainable future. The construction project is an important milestone in the plant’s development and part of a future-proof infrastructure for production.”

Rainer Schirmer, Chairman of the Works Council, praised: “With the refurbished paint shop, we have one of the most advanced facilities in the automotive industry with modern working conditions. This investment underlines our commitment to sustainability and ensures the future viability of our site.”

Corrosion protection without heavy metals

Audi Neckarsulm relies on efficient and modern methods for corrosion protection. In cathodic dip painting, for example, the body is now immersed upside down in the tank and turned using a rotation process which is new to Neckarsulm. This is more space-saving and more thorough, as it helps to avoid minimal air bubble formation and dirt deposits. A new, more energy-efficient process is also used for drying the cathodic dip coating. Instead of the previous external drying process, a so-called transverse drying process is now used, in which air is blown into the interior and the body is heated from the inside. As well as being more energy-efficient, the cross-dryer is also better suited to future electric and hybrid vehicles with their requirements for longer setting times.

The new thin-film process, a new pre-treatment process that makes the previous phosphating process superfluous, also boosts system efficiency. This new process also eliminates several previously required steps, such as activation and passivation. In the new process, a 0.2-micrometer-thin layer of zirconium and silicon compounds is applied to the base metal. This layer – only visible under a microscope – serves as corrosion protection as well as an adhesive base for the subsequently applied primer. From an ecological point of view, the new pre-treatment process offers potential savings in terms of waste, water, and energy.

Ursula Noll, Head of Production Planning Paint Shop Corrosion Protection, comments: “The innovative thin-film technology in pre-treatment, combined with the new cross-drying process, makes a special contribution to the efficiency and sustainability of the new primer facility. This allows us to significantly reduce our electricity and water requirements and make an important overall contribution to our [Mission:Zero](#) environmental program.”

Audi also saves energy with the top coat

The A22 primer building is connected to the neighboring top coat building by a newly constructed bridge. The company has also already restructured the top coat facility. Audi has achieved energy savings of around 50 kilowatt hours per vehicle there thanks to a new paint separation process using filters instead of water. Previously, the paint mist was collected in water with 100 percent fresh air before being disposed of. In the new dry separation process, it is instead captured by state-of-the-art filters. With this process, more than 90 percent of the filtered process air can be reused. This largely eliminates the need for energy-intensive conditioning of fresh air. At the same time, in contrast to conventional wet separation, the use of fresh water and chemicals is completely eliminated.

Audi has also replaced the so-called filler with a pre-zone paint. It is no longer necessary for the filler to dry separately as before, which significantly reduces energy consumption: Up to 140 kilowatt hours can be saved per vehicle. With the new construction of the primer facility, Audi Neckarsulm has now reached another important milestone in the restructuring of the entire paint shop.

The [footage video](#) offers impressions of the new facility from 0:06:32 to 0:12:00.

Communication Production Sites

Manuela Schall

Spokesperson for Production and
Construction Projects at Neckarsulm site

Phone: +49-152-32746206

Email: manuela.schall@audi.de

www.audi-mediacyenter.com



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In 2023, the Audi Group delivered 1.9 million Audi vehicles, 13,560 Bentley vehicles, 10,112 Lamborghini vehicles, and 58,224 Ducati motorcycles to customers. In the 2023 fiscal year, Audi Group achieved a total revenue of €69.9 billion and an operating profit of €6.3 billion. Worldwide, an annual average of more than 87,000 people worked for the Audi Group in 2023, more than 53,000 of them at AUDI AG in Germany. With its attractive brands and numerous new models, the group is systematically pursuing its path toward becoming a provider of sustainable, fully networked premium mobility.
