

Media Information
22 July 2020

BMW Group Plant Munich gears up for fully-electric future

Remodelling for new BMW i4 requires production interruption from 24 July to 4 September

Munich. In preparation for production of the fully-electric BMW i4, BMW Group Plant Munich will pause vehicle production for six weeks this summer. No cars will be produced between the end of the late shift on 23 July and the start of the early shift on 7 September. Plant Munich will take advantage of this break in production to implement numerous structural and remodelling measures before the fully-electric BMW i4 goes into standard production next year.

“We are gearing up our Munich plant for the future. Once remodelling is finished, we will be able to produce vehicles with diesel, petrol and hybrid drive trains, as well as the fully-electric BMW i4, all on the same line. This will allow us to respond flexibly to customer demand,” said plant director Robert Engelhorn.

Integrating the BMW i4 into the existing production system will be a major challenge for Plant Munich. The high-voltage battery makes the BMW i4 body concept different to that of the vehicle models previously built at the plant. Nevertheless, about 90 percent of the existing production systems used in the body shop can be integrated and enabled for future BMW i4 production. Only 10 percent – specifically, equipment used in production of the rear end – cannot be integrated, because of the high-voltage battery, and require new systems to be set up.

The high-voltage battery in the BMW i4 is installed from below. A new and separate battery assembly will be set up for this within vehicle assembly. “Confined structures make any remodelling and installation measures at Plant Munich particularly challenging. Old systems have to be removed, and new ones installed and put into service, in very tight spaces within six weeks. This takes meticulous planning and a lot of creativity,” underlined Engelhorn.

As well as installing new systems, existing production equipment will also have to be converted so the BMW 3 Series Sedan and BMW 3 Series Touring – both with combustion

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engines and hybrid drive train, the new BMW M3 and the fully-electric BMW i4 can all be produced on the same line.

This production interruption has been planned and prepared for since early 2019. Virtual reality (VR) is also being used across the board in transmission and final assembly to optimise future processes. The VR pilot project provides a sneak preview of planned structures and processes, increases planning accuracy in the early phases of a project and reduces planning time.

Employees are able to get a feel for their new workplace in a VR training space. VR goggles provide them with a glimpse of their new working environment and planned work processes. As a result, employees often come up with ideas for improvement that enable new operations to be optimised in advance and adapted for rollout.

From 28 August, systems will be refilled so production can resume after the break and, starting with the early shift on 7 September, vehicles can once again roll off the production lines at the main plant in Munich.

Certain areas of the Munich plant, such as engine production, will continue to operate at full scale to secure supplies for the global production network.

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The BMW Group production network

In 2019, strong customer demand and new models kept capacity utilisation high across the BMW Group production network. Production volumes for the BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brands reached record levels, with output totalling 2,564,025 units. Of those, 2,205,841 were BMW vehicles, 325,729 MINI, and 5,455 Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Approximately 1 million vehicles were manufactured by the German plants.

Uniquely flexible and highly efficient, the BMW Group production network is able to respond quickly to changing markets and regional sales fluctuations. Expertise in manufacturing is a key contributor to the BMW Group's profitability.

The BMW Group production network uses a range of innovative digital and Industry 4.0 (IoT) technologies, including virtual reality, artificial intelligence and 3D printing applications. Standardised processes and structures across the production system ensure consistent premium quality and allow a high degree of customisation.

The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2019, the BMW Group sold over 2,520,000 passenger vehicles and more than 175,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2018 was € 9.815 billion on revenues amounting to € 97.480 billion. As of 31 December 2018, the BMW Group had a workforce of 134,682 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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