

mb-microtec inaugurates spectacular new building

The start of a bright future

Swiss company mb-microtec is the world's leading manufacturer of the trigalight self-powered illumination technology. The production of the functional gaseous tritium light sources that provide illumination for tens of years requires a great deal of expertise and also places special demands on the production facilities. The one-of-a-kind new building in Niederwangen, near Berne, meets these demands.

It is not only the outside of the new mb-microtec production facilities that looks different to the other constructions in the industrial area of Niederwangen, near Berne; the interior is also quite spectacular. The building took three years to construct, with CHF 23 million being invested into the project as a whole.

A unique global leader

During the construction of the new building, the highest requirements were stipulated in terms of fire, earthquake and anti-burglary protection. Some of the rooms feature sub-pressure conditions, which are regulated optimally, while others have generators which guarantee an uninterrupted power supply.

The reason for this expense is that mb-microtec works with tritium, a low-level radioactive gas that is stored in tiny glass pipes coated with a layer of coloured zinc sulphide. The layer makes the electrons emitted by the tritium glow – for decades and without an external energy source. mb-microtec is the inventor of the self-illumination

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technology and is the world's leading manufacturer of the glass pipes that are sold under the trivalight brand.

Decades of guaranteed light

The company produces 15 million of the tiny pipes every year. They are used, for example, in the aerospace sector and to make sights and watch dials and hands light up. mb-microtec supplies some 50 watch brands around the world. Since 1989, the company has also been producing its own timepieces under the brand traser swiss H3 watches. The company's first major customer was the US Army. Today, about 30,000 watches are produced every year.

traser guarantees a constant luminosity of ten years, based on the half-life of tritium (12.3 years). The gas is hermetically sealed in the glass housing and is as harmless as the radioactive potassium isotope found, for example, in bananas.

More workstations for a bright future

The production division of mb-microtec moved into the new building last autumn, with the rest of the company set to follow by the end of October 2018. The number of employees has already doubled to 80, with a further 20 still to come, thus promising a truly bright future for an innovative company!

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