

Oerlikon Nonwoven expands its laboratory nonwovens production capacities from May

Materials for in excess of one million protective masks



The Oerlikon Nonwoven meltblown technology is recognized by the market as being the technically most efficient method for producing highly-separating filter media made from plastic fibers.

Within the context of supporting the critical infrastructure in Germany, Oerlikon Nonwoven immediately began converting its laboratory systems in Neu- münster to manufacture nonwovens at the end of March. With this, only small local businesses and companies were initially supported in the manufacture of oronasal masks. The laboratory system at the R&D Center is normally used solely for research and development purposes and customer trials. It was never conceived for continuous operation in its original form. Now, Oer- likon Nonwoven has made further investments in order to enable continuous operation in the laboratory. With this, material for more than one million protective masks a month can be man- ufactured.

“Since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, we have received more than 500 inquiries that we are

progressively dealing with. To be quite honest, we had initially not anticipated such tremendous interest. But the demand is there and we quickly further adapted to the challenge”, states Andreas Frisch, Head of Operations at Oerlikon Nonwoven. The laboratory has meanwhile run out of raw materials and new orders for replacement materials had to be placed before Easter – with current delivery times of approx. 3 weeks. This will allow production to be resumed, and even considerably expanded, in May.

The laboratory system is now once again being deployed to produce nonwovens that will be used to make more than million face masks / oronasal masks a month, nonwovens of the very highest quality. “We will not be manufacturing the masks ourselves. We have meanwhile found both corresponding partner companies and also private individuals demanding nonwovens”, adds Andreas Frisch, commenting on the developments.

Boom in orders

Furthermore, Oerlikon Nonwoven has also fired up the production of the machines and systems used for its meltblown technology. The demand from Germany, Europe and the rest of the world has quickly secured the company a boom in orders. “In the meantime, we have been able to sign orders in the mid-range double-digit millions. We have adapted our delivery times as much as possible and will – this is our objective – start delivering the additional orders for nonwovens systems from the fall”, explains Rainer Straub, Head of Oerlikon Nonwoven. We will be commissioning the first meltblown system at the site of a leading Western European nonwovens producers in the second quarter of 2020. This system will be deployed exclusively in the manufacture of nonwovens for respiratory masks.

The Oerlikon Nonwoven Meltblown technology – with which nonwovens for respiratory masks can also be manufactured, among other things – is recognized by the market as being the technically most efficient method for producing highly-separating filter media made from plastic fibers. The capacities for respiratory masks available in Europe to date are predominantly manufactured on Oerlikon Nonwoven systems.