

So that the Head is well protected



During the race, an 800 gram spring flew into his head. Split seconds before, it had worked its way loose from Rubens Barrichello's vehicle. For Massa, there was practically no reaction time to avoid the piece of metal. It took a hundredth of a second for the part to glance off his helmet. For the Magdeburg-based company, there was praise from all sides. It provided the proof that research in the safety area is worth it. The 1,350 gram carbon helmet had passed its performance test in an emergency.

“We can say, with a little pride, that it was a Schubert helmet, which offered the driver the optimal safety,” says Marcel Lejeune, chairperson of the management board of Schubert GmbH. During the development of this helmet, the company worked closely with Michael Schumacher. The helmet is made of up to 18 layers of a high-strength carbon fibre. The visor measures about four millimetres and is made of polycarbonate. Titanium was used for the screws in the visor and the chin strap.

The knowledge was also incorporated into the latest SF1 carbon helmet for Formula 1. The latest generation of Formula 1 helmet. In comparison with the previous RF1 model, it has a reinforced forehead area, which is about 15 percent stronger, and optimised ventilation, among other things. After the new FIA regulation, a new 50-millimetre-wide carbon visor shield can be used, which should provide additional protection for the visor and forehead area. At Schubert, high-technology is relied upon. And not just for such products for racing. A huge range of users benefit from the technology, guarantees Lejeune. A huge range of technologies, which are developed for special applications, are incorporated into new developments. Heat resistance is needed for protective helmets for the fire service. Police helmets can withstand blows, for example, with an axe. The visor mentioned above can also repel a light bullet in an emergency.

In the company's own test laboratory, material tests are constantly undertaken, reports Franz-Josef Görge, who is responsible for sales in the Schubert management team. For example, weights are dropped from various heights onto the helmets to investigate their strength. The secret of stability is not just in the constant research and development work. The company's own helmet pressing plant implements the ultra-modern technology. The blanks then pass through the extensive production department. A motorbike helmet alone is made up of about 180 individual parts.

These models are the “bread and butter” business for Schubert. About a third of all helmets from Magdeburg are produced for this purpose. The C3 model, for example, can be equipped with a fully integrated communication system, the only one of its kind in the world, since last year. Among other things, this means that telephone conversations and information from navigation systems can be carried out and heard directly in the helmet without any problems. Up to three bikers can maintain contact via Bluetooth up to a distance of 300 metres.

Schubert GmbH produces about 1.5 million helmets a year. 70 percent of these are models for health and safety. For police and the fire service, an average of 60,000 helmets are produced. In 2010, the company achieved a turnover of 50 million Euro and wants to retain this result this year. Deliveries are made to 55 countries in the world. Since July of last year, there has been a company branch in California. The company hopes this will provide them with a further “surge in sales”.

The company, which was founded in Braunschweig in 1922, relocated its production department to Magdeburg in 2004 and had moved completely to the new site by 2009. Here, it employs about 350 workers and trains 20 apprentices.

Author: Klaus-Peter Voigt

Caption: Production of motorsport helmets at Schubert in Magdeburg. A motorbike helmet is made up of about 180 individual parts.

Contact

Schubert GmbH

Marc-Thorsten Lenze

Tel. +49 (0) 391 8106 214

E-Mail: lenze@schubert.de

www.schubert.com

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