

Coolant in the space age

Thanks to an Ariane 44L rocket, a Skynet 4F satellite was launched in February 2001 from the European Space Agency's (ESA) South American launch centre at Kourou, French Guiana. It was placed in orbit above the Gulf of Guinea to provide strategic and tactical communications for British armed forces. This is one of many such missions undertaken by Arianespace - the commercial arm of the 13-nation ESA - and Master Chemical Europe is pleased to be playing a part in its success.

Precision machining of rocket components is of course critical to the Ariane's operational success. One subcontractor chosen by the ESA to provide this expertise is the Austrian company, VA Tech Voest MCE. It is responsible for the manufacture of a number of parts including the aluminium hatch cover, a task it undertakes with the use of Master Chemical's Trim C270 high pressure, synthetic coolant concentrate.

"The surface of this component has to be extremely smooth, so Voest's tool wear is

considerable," explains Master Chemical's Austrian distributor partner, Gerhard Margreiter. "However, thanks to Trim C270, it has been possible to significantly reduce this rate of wear, a benefit experienced by many other manufacturers of aerospace components around the world. All machines in the facility run on Trim C270. Some of them are among the largest turning mills in Austria, and can take components up to 18 metres in diameter and up to 300,000 kg in weight."

Trim C270 is especially efficient where high coolant velocities or volumes are needed to achieve maximum productivity. It is formulated to operate in such circumstances with the production of little or no foam, mist or odour. A 40 per cent increase in tool life is common with this product. A further benefit is its low iron pick-up. This characteristic makes it a particularly good choice for machining cast iron and steels.

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