

Press Release

Millions of proven engine components: Schaeffler celebrates production milestones for finger followers and roller tappets

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- The Schaeffler plant in Homburg has produced eight billion finger followers over 30 years of production.
- The Schaeffler plant in Hirschaid has manufactured 160 million roller tappets for the "HEMI" engine over 25 years of production.
- Schaeffler's precision engineering and manufacturing expertise deliver efficient powertrain solutions

Schaeffler is actively shaping transformation within the automotive industry. This includes not only the development and production of new solutions for software-driven, autonomous, and electrified mobility, but also the continuous optimization of components for high-performance, efficient internal combustion engines used in hybrid powertrains.

Two of these products recently celebrated impressive milestones. During its 30th year of production, the eight-billionth finger follower rolled off the production line at the Schaeffler plant in Homburg. Meanwhile, the Schaeffler plant in Hirschaid has been manufacturing roller tappets for the "HEMI" engine for 25 years, during which 160 million roller tappets have been produced for the "HEMI" engine. "HEMI" stands for "hemispherical" and refers to combustion engines with hemispherical combustion chambers. Due to this special design, the valves in the cylinder head are positioned at an angle opposite each other. This ensures optimal fuel flow and particularly efficient combustion.

"We are proud to celebrate both a production milestone and a product anniversary for these two precision components, each spanning more than a quarter of a century," says Matthias Zink, CEO Powertrain & Chassis, Schaeffler AG. My sincere thanks go to all our employees in Hirschaid and Homburg. Their dedication and commitment have made these milestones possible. They are an integral part of these success stories."

Finger follower: A key transmission element in the valve train

Schaeffler has been manufacturing finger followers for automotive valve trains since 1996. They are used in conventional internal combustion engines as well as hybrid powertrains and range extender applications. The finger follower was

born of efforts to optimize friction compared with the traditional bucket tappet. Today, the finger follower serves as the key transmission element in the valve trains of many modern internal combustion engines, and has a significant impact on both fuel consumption and vehicle emissions. The component converts the rotational movement of the camshaft into precise, low-loss lift of the engine valve while combining precise motion with low-friction contact conditions. This increases engine life and enables the integration of modern functions, ranging from variable valve lift to cylinder deactivation. Compared with competing products, Schaeffler's finger follower impresses with consistently high quality in volume production.

Roller tappets for the "HEMI" engine: valve lift transmission with hydraulic valve lash adjustment element

The Schaeffler plant in Hirschaid has been manufacturing the roller tappet for the "HEMI" engine since 2001, covering the entire value chain. The Schaeffler plants in Homburg, Lahr, and Braşov support the facility. The roller tappet for the "HEMI" engine is particularly popular in North America. Following the resurgence of the V8 engine, Schaeffler has experienced increased customer demand. Effective August 2026, the Schaeffler plant in Ingolstadt will also support production to meet this elevated demand.

The roller tappet for the "HEMI" engine was specifically developed for internal combustion engines featuring selective cylinder deactivation to reduce fuel consumption. Its primary function is to maintain precise, clearance-free valve lash. In addition, the roller tappet compensates for mechanical wear and thermal expansion by using engine oil pressure to continuously maintain valve lash at zero millimeters. If a cylinder is to be deactivated, the switchable roller tappet is hydraulically unlocked within milliseconds, allowing the engine valve to remain closed. During this process, the roller tappet performs what is known as a "lost-motion stroke". Unlike conventional roller tappets, the HEMI roller tappet features a hydraulically actuated mechanical locking mechanism controlled by the engine management system.

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The Schaeffler finger follower converts the rotational movement of the camshaft into precise, low-loss lift of the engine valve. (Photo: Schaeffler)

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The Schaeffler roller tappet for the "HEMI" engine uses engine oil pressure to continuously maintain zero valve lash. (Photo: Schaeffler)

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