

Chrysler's Refurbished Conner Ave. Plant Prepares for Launch of the Next-Generation SRT Viper

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In preparation for the launch of the next-generation Viper, every job on the line was rebalanced so the daily build could increase by four vehicles to a total of 12 per day. As a result, each operator has 100-200 elements to complete during each 32-minute cycle.

"The changes we made to each operation along the line will help improve the overall quality and efficiency of the build," said Gouin.

The SRT Viper begins to take shape on the chassis line. The frame is shipped to Conner from an outside supplier in Kentucky to begin its five- to six-day journey down the assembly line.

With a nod to modern production techniques and a focus on quality, Conner now has its first robots on the floor. The five robots that make up the Net Form & Pierce cell move the frame in and out five times during the 32-minute cycle, punching holes and creating features in the Viper frame to create the dimensional environment to hang panels such as the hood, deck lids, doors and fenders.

Along the chassis line, the operators turn the steel frame into a fully functioning, driveable "go cart." Operators install all of the components that make the Viper run, like front and rear suspension, rear brakes, exhaust, fuel

tank and the V10 engine.

As before, the Viper V10 engine is assembled at Conner along six stations with room for expansion, but now its all-important pistons are also built up onsite. Pistons for the previous-generation Viper came already assembled from Chrysler's Saltillo, Mexico, Engine Plant. To ensure the maximum performance quality of each engine, all V10s are now 100 percent dyno-tested before finding a home in the new vehicle.

Once the rolling chassis and its V10 engine are validated in the rolls station, it heads to the final line, where body panels, seats, window glass, and other interior and exterior components come together in sequence to form that easily recognizable Viper shape.

Like most Chrysler Group assembly plants, Conner now also has a state-of-the-art Metrology Center, equipped with upgraded CMM capabilities and a quality assurance fixture, to verify and maintain the dimensional quality of the new Viper.

The entire facility now has WiFi to support the use of radio frequency reporting tools throughout. These portable tools are used to assemble the car and help verify that the right torque is used in each assembly operation. Having wireless tools eliminates possible trip hazards and reduces maintenance costs.



Employees at Chrysler's Conner Avenue Assembly Plant work on the chassis of the next generation SRT Viper. On the right, the rolling chassis is placed on the aligner to ensure proper camber alignment. Nearly 150 employees hand build 12 of the legendary American muscle cars each day.

With the implementation of WCM, Conner is reducing the amount of line side inventory – considered waste – by doing more kitting. Kits, which include specific components for each station, are assembled in an adjacent kitting area and are then delivered just in

time and just in sequence to the operator on the line.

Just as important as the changes to the assembly line are the changes that have been made to the building itself.

To brighten the appearance inside the plant, more than 2,000

light bulbs were replaced with energy efficient T-8 fluorescent bulbs and the ceiling was painted white. Twenty-four giant ceiling fans provide air circulation, eliminating the need for personal cooling devices that could present safety hazards.

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