

AUTOMOTIVE

## Bentley returns to production, improves COVID-19 protocols

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*The Bentayga Hybrid is the first of two plug-in hybrid electric vehicles Bentley will launch this year. Image credit: Bentley*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

British automaker **Bentley Motors** has returned to production and bolstered its COVID-19 testing program after a winter shutdown.

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As part of its comeback efforts, Bentley is improving its rapid antigen testing program to make sure employees returning to its headquarters in Crewe, England are COVID-free before full production resumes. A new risk assessment app that encourages further vigilance about COVID-19 variants and provides a connection to health and safety representatives is now available.

"As we begin a new year under challenging circumstances, we remain committed to not only maintaining our strong lines of defense, but reinforcing them," said Dr. Astrid Fontaine, member of the board for people, digitalization and IT at **Bentley Motors**, in a statement. "The health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues, their families and our communities will always be our number one priority and the measures that we have put in place will protect us in the short-term, while also building a secure basis for our future exciting strategic ambitions and growth, in 2021 and beyond."

**Car production in focus**

About 60 percent of Bentley's 4,000 employees will continue working remotely if on-site working is not critical. This situation will help to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure at the production site.



*Bentley Motors has manufactured over 40,000 Flying Spurs since 2005. Image credit: Bentley Motors*

To help with home schooling in the wake of school closures in the U.K., work flexibility and additional laptop and Wi-Fi hotspots are being offered. Employees are also being encouraged to volunteer in the local community by delivering essentials such as food and medicine through the "Meals on 22 inch wheels" service.

Other volunteer initiatives now encouraged are help with vaccine deployment within Cheshire as well as local care programs and the donation of laptops to schools.

To allow for the safe return to Crewe of its 1,800 manufacturing workers, as many as 1,800 COVID-19 tests will be administered within a two day period, taking the total number of antigen tests provided by Bentley to nearly 15,000 since May of last year.

Thus far, 272 Bentley employees have tested positive to the virus and undergone self-isolation. Thanks to its testing program, there have been no proven cases of on-site transmission yet recorded.

At the start of 2021, Bentley asked researchers at Imperial College, London and occupational health specialists Optima Health to make sure its 250 hygiene and social distancing measures are adequate. The consultants confirmed that rules such as the wearing of compulsory face masks on site as well as improved cleaning routines and one-way traffic and movement flows are working.

Bentley recorded its best sales performance in its 101-year history in 2020, as it reported a 2 percent jump in yearly total car sales to 11,206, despite the production shutdowns triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Americas, where 3,035 cars were delivered compared to 2,913 in 2019, remained Bentley's highest performing sales territory. China, meanwhile, came in second, with 2,880 cars sold, up from 1,940 cars in 2019, as the country welcomed the new Flying Spur ([see story](#)).

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