

thyssenkrupp Materials Services' Krefeld site receives prevention award from BGHW

The Krefeld site of thyssenkrupp Materials Processing Europe, part of thyssenkrupp Materials Services, is one of three winners of this year's "Die Goldene Hand" prevention award presented by the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Trade and Logistics Industry (BGHW). On November 11, 2025, representatives of the company accepted the award at the ceremony in Mannheim. The award was given for the installation of a robot for assembling and disassembling circular knives for the slitting of steel coils. The fully automatic robot handles the loading of the systems at the company's Steel Service Center in Krefeld.

For slitting, the steel coils, which weigh several tons, are unrolled and cut into slit strips of various widths. Depending on customer requirements, circular knives in different arrangements are pushed onto a roller-shaped upper and lower shaft together with rubber rings as spacers. Until now, both the assembly of the tools and their disassembly after each coil cut were carried out manually, as was the inspection and cleaning of the knives after each use. With approximately twelve knife changes per shift and up to 24 kilograms per knife, this was an enormous physical effort for the employees.

With the installation of the knife assembly robot in early 2025, everything is now automated and digitized: the robot receives all relevant information via a software interface. This tells it which tools are needed in which arrangement, and it can assemble and disassemble them accordingly. An integrated control unit measures the cutting edges of the circular knives using lasers after each use, and a washing system for the knives is also loaded by the robot. As a result, employees at the site not only save themselves the physical strain of lifting heavy tool parts, but also reduce the risk of accidents caused by falling tools and injuries when cleaning the knives. Supported by appropriate training, employees now have fewer physical demands and are instead responsible for controlling the robot.

"For us, the safety of our employees is our top priority. With our knife assembly robot, we can relieve our colleagues in their daily work and at the same time reduce the risk of accidents," explains Martin Jacobs, site manager at thyssenkrupp Materials Processing Europe in Krefeld. "Of course, we are delighted that this project has been recognized by BGHW. Receiving the Prevention Award confirms our efforts to promote safety and automation in production."

"Die Goldene Hand" (The Golden Hand) is the BGHW's prevention award. Every two years, it recognizes innovative ideas and projects for safety and health in the workplace.

About thyssenkrupp Materials Services

thyssenkrupp Materials Services is a global leader in materials distribution and services. Around 16,000 employees serve 250,000 customers in the core markets of Europe and North America. The focus is on three fields of activity: storage, distribution and trading of materials, their targeted processing and services related to supply chains. The company is currently the only materials distributor and processor at scale with a significant share of digital solution businesses. In fiscal year 2023/24, thyssenkrupp Materials Services generated total sales of €12.1 billion and adjusted EBIT of €204 million.

Image material is available for download under the following link:

https://transfer.thyssenkrupp.com/public/r155271b_b7d109f25bbae0c8b66422/

Image captions:

Image 1: Karsten Röper, Christian Emde, Michael Schappach from thyssenkrupp Materials Processing Europe at the award ceremony on November 11, 2025. Source: BGHW/Michael Bauer

Image 2: Knife assembly robot at the Krefeld site of thyssenkrupp Materials Processing Europe.

Source: thyssenkrupp Materials Processing Europe.

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