Stainless & Hard
BALITHERM IONIT ST treatment for austenitic steels for food processing industries
**BALITHERM IONIT ST – an alternative to carburising for stainless steel**

**Corrosion-resistant surface hardening of austenitic stainless steel**

- Nitrogen diffusion process with no formation of chromium nitride precipitation
- Hardness: 1,000 - 1,200 HV0.1
- Diffusion depths: 5 – 30 μm, depending on the material and treatment time
- High wear resistance
- High corrosion resistance
- Practically no dimensional change
- Typical steels: 1.4301; 1.4401; 1.4404

**SEM photo of cross section of BALITHERM IONIT ST, showing a standard 20 μm thick diffusion zone on a DIN 1.4301 steel**

**Hardness profile surface treated with Balitherm® Ionit ST versus a standard carburised surface**

Material: steel 1.4301

BALITHERM® IONIT ST achieves 1,200 HV while carburising achieves just 1,000 HV

**BALITHERM® IONIT ST is a low-temperature diffusion process**

It achieves a dense diffusion zone with no nitride precipitation, ensuring retention of corrosion resistance, high hardness and a graduated hardness profile.
BALITHERM IONIT ST – a reliable diffusion process for austenitic stainless steels

Food processing and other industries use austenitic stainless steel for mechanical components. This type of steel provides excellent corrosion resistance, but has the significant disadvantage of low hardness (approx. 250 HV). Consequently, they offer low wear resistance, both against particles (abrasion) and when sliding against another stainless steel component (adhesive wear, galling).

Frequently, hard chrome plating is used to improve the wear resistance. Hard chrome plating is prone to flaking off under severe load conditions or due to coating process failures.

Diffusion treatment can be considered as an alternative. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to nitride austenitic stainless steel, especially at the low temperatures, which are required in order to prevent a reduction of the steel’s corrosion resistance. One solution already on the market is a carburising process.

Oerlikon Balzers is now introducing a powerful alternative: the BALITHERM® IONIT ST process, in which nitrogen at low temperatures is diffused into austenitic steel.

Your advantages using austenitic steel parts treated with BALITHERM IONIT ST

- Significantly higher hardness and therefore wear resistance compared to untreated steel
- No danger of flaking compared to hard chromium
- Almost no loss of corrosion resistance
- Superior hardness, wear resistance and corrosion resistance compared to carburising
BALITHERM IONIT ST – friction and wear

High sliding wear resistance

Measurement conditions
Method: pin (1) and disc (2)
Load: 10 N
Distance: 1,000 m
Speed: 30 cm/s
Temperature: 20 °C
Humidity: 43%
Counterface: steel ball, 100Cr6, 3 mm

Result
BALITHERM® IONIT ST delivers significantly higher sliding wear resistance than the carburising process.

Excellent corrosion resistance

The measuring shows an improvement of the pitting behavior in comparison to an untreated 1.4301 sample.
Balitherm® Ionit ST – application examples

Powerful in food processing

Balitherm® Ionit ST is used in bottling and filling applications where either metal sliding wear or media particle wear must be prevented.

Seizure of a 1.4301 marmelade filling plunger which could be prevented with Balitherm® Ionit ST treatment.

Other applications: candy and medical tablet punches.

Balitherm Ionit ST – analytical results

Food acceptance analysis

Balitherm® Ionit ST is qualified for direct contact with food.

Within the scope of the analysed parameters, it has been ascertained that the material qualifies for prolonged direct contact with food. The results indicate that the material remains unaltered after exposure to the representative solutions.

Certified by Institut Prof. Kurz GmbH, Cologne, 2015

Chemical results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative solution</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aqua dem.</td>
<td>No peculiar reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acetic acid (CH₃COOH, 3%)</td>
<td>No peculiar reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acetic acid (CH₃CH₂OH, 15%)</td>
<td>No peculiar reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable oil</td>
<td>No peculiar reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migration analyses of substances into food with 4 representative solutions: (Methods ASU § 64 LFGB B-80.30-2 EG, RL 82/711/EWG)

Mechanical properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface treatment</th>
<th>Nitrogen diffusion zone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro hardness (HV0.1)</td>
<td>1,000 - 1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical thickness</td>
<td>10 - 20 µm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>Silver grey</td>
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Open a new world of possibilities with BALITHERM IONIT ST
Contact us today!

Headquarters
Oerlikon Balzers Coating AG
Balzers Technology & Service Centre
Iramai 18
9496 Balzers
Liechtenstein
T +423 388 7500

China
Oerlikon Balzers Coating (Suzhou) Co., Ltd.
No. 9 Changyang street
Suzhou Industry Park
Jiangsu Province
Suzhou 215024
China
T +86 512 67620369

Oerlikon Metco Surface Technology (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.
B1 & B2, No. 539, Baian Road,
Anting
Jiading District
Shanghai 201814
China
T +86 21 67087000

Germany
Oerlikon Balzers Coating Germany GmbH
Hohe-Flum-Straße 22
79650 Schopfheim
Germany
T +49 76 22 39 99-0

Oerlikon Metaplas GmbH
Theodor-Heuss-Straße 63
38228 Salzgitter
Germany
T +49 5341 8587-0

Oerlikon Metaplas GmbH
Am Böttcherberg 30 – 38
51427 Bergisch Gladbach
Germany
T +49 2204 299-0

Japan
Oerlikon Nihon Balzers Coating Co., Ltd.
Shizuoka Factory
1110-10 Kamo
Shizuoka Pref.
Kikugawa-City 439-0031
Japan
T +81 537 35 8805

Korea
Oerlikon Balzers Coating Korea Co., Ltd.
66, Gwahaksandan 1-ro
Gangseo-gu
Busan 618-230
South Korea
T +82 51 974 9900

USA
Oerlikon Balzers Coating USA, Inc.
109 Parkway East
Pell City, AL 35125
United States
T +1 205 884 1210

You can find a full listing of our locations at:
www.oerlikon.com/balzers