



SHARP CORPORATION
HEAD OFFICE 22-22 Nagaike-cho, Abeno-ku, Osaka 545-8522 JAPAN
Tel 06.6621.1272 Fax 06.6628.1667
TOKYO OFFICE 8-banchi, Ichigaya-Hachiman-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-8408 JAPAN
Tel 03.3260.1870 Fax 03.3260.1822

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Sharp to Start Production of "System LCDs" at Its Mie Plant No. 3

Sharp Corporation will start production of "System LCDs" at its Mie Plant No. 3, beginning in June, 2003. The early start-up of this production line represents a significant boost in production capacity, and will enable the company to maintain a consistent supply of these next-generation devices in the face of robust demand for use in mobile products where the trend toward higher display resolutions combined with greater functionality continues to strengthen.

The core technology on which System LCDs are based is CG-Silicon^{*1}, a material having properties close to single-crystal silicon. This technology allows peripheral circuitry and other necessary functional components to be integrated onto the same glass substrate as the display itself, enabling dramatic reductions in the surface area required for parts mounting and in the number of externally mounted components compared to existing approaches. Products equipped with these System LCDs can be made more compact, thinner in profile, and lighter in weight, plus offering greater reliability. Super-high-resolution displays capable of displaying images with the detail of gravure picture quality are possible, delivering realistic, life-like reproductions remarkably faithful to the originals. In addition, LCD displays offering even greater added value can be achieved by integrating this technology with Sharp's unique one-of-a-kind technologies such as Advanced TFT LCD Display^{*2} and 3D LCD Display^{*3} technologies.

This Mie No. 3 Plant was initially scheduled to begin production in October of this year, but in response to the rapid migration of LCD displays embedded in mobile equipment such as mobile phones, PDAs, mini-notebook PCs, etc., toward higher-resolutions, the need for additional production capacity became more urgent and the planned start of operations was moved up by four months. A production system built around two sites combining this plant with our Tenri Plant which began production in October last year will significantly enhance production capacity for System LCDs and enable Sharp face to strong demand.

System LCD Production Facilities

	Mie Plant No. 3	Tenri Plant
Start of operations	June, 2003	October, 2002
Production capacity (in terms of 2-inch units)	4 million units/month	2.5 million units/month
Mother glass size	730 x 920 mm	620 x 750 mm
Total investment	¥50 billion	¥46 billion
Products	Displays intended for mobile devices including digital still cameras, mobile phones, PDAs, mini-notebook PCs, etc.	

- *1 Continuous Grain Silicon (CG-Silicon) is a next-generation technology developed jointly by Sharp and Semiconductor Energy Laboratory Co., Ltd. (head office: Atsugi, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan; President: Shunpei Yamazaki). System-LCDs have high electron mobility faster than ordinary amorphous silicon and low-temperature polysilicon.
- *2 Advanced TFT LCD Technology combines reflective LCD technology with back-lit transmissive LCD technology to provide superior viewability for "Multi-Scene Display" in all kinds of indoor and outdoor environments. Increasingly adopted for use in such products as mobile handsets, PDAs, digital still cameras, Viewcams, mini-notebook PCs, and other equipment.
- *3 3D LCD Displays are electrically switchable between 3D (stereoscopic) images and 2D (flat-screen, planar) images, and are capable of 3D display without the need for special glasses.