

# OSRAM German Date Codes Pre-1953

This 3-cipher system consists of a letter followed by two numbers. Its presence has been noted on German-made Osram lamps whose appearance would suggest that they were made during the 1930s / 1940s / 1950s.

No formal documentation has been found to allow these codes to be deciphered. Therefore a large number of historic lamps bearing this type of code were studied to look for patterns in the digits applied in each of the three positions, as well as the type of lamp, the likely production site, and the estimated period of production. This has led to the hypothesis described below, which in all known cases leads to a realistic date that is consistent with the design features of the lamps in question.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Digit – Factory & Quarter Identification ?

This is always a lower case letter, and a total of 14 letters have been observed (a b c d e f g h m n p s y z).

It is notable that all of the Werk-S (Berlin-Charlottenburg) type lamps (i.e. mercury and fluorescent) only bear letters m,n,p,z, and no other lamps have been observed with these letters. On the 1953-79 system k,m,n,p indicate Werk-S for the four quarters of the year, so it is postulated that m,n,p,z may have had a similar meaning prior to 1953.

It is also apparent that ordinary incandescent lamps and barretters only bear letters a,b,c,d – these same letters being consistent with Werk-B (Berlin-Wedding) on the 1953-79 system.

Finally it has been observed that special incandescent lamps only bear letters e,f,g,h. On the 1953-79 system these letters indicated the development labs, but the observed lamps are not new or experimental types that would be expected to have been produced in the laboratory. It is supposed that these letters may therefore indicate Osram's only other large incandescent factory existing at the time, Werk-D (Berlin Warsaw Bridge / Rotherstraße). The later adoption of these letters to denote the labs on the 1953-79 system is particularly appropriate, because Osram's central labs were originally established in 1926 within Werk-D and remained there until the 1945 confiscation of that site by the Soviet Military Administration of Eastern Germany.

One lamp has been observed with letter 's', and its type is consistent with an Augsburg product. One lamp has been observed with letter 'y', and is of a type consistent with a Herbrechtingen product. Therefore it seems likely that the Augsburg and Herbrechtingen quarterly codes may be same as on the 1953-79 system, but with Herbrechtingen's Q4 being the rather more logical 'y' instead of the later non-consecutive 'z'

<u>Factory</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Factory Years of Operation</u>
Berlin Wedding (Werk B)	a	b	c	d	1904 – 1988
Berlin Rotherstraße (Werk D)	e	f	g	h	1907 – 1945 (then Narva until 1992)
Berlin Charlottenburg (Werk S)	m	n	p	z	1899 – 1973/4
Augsburg (Werk A)	r?	s?	t?	u?	1917 – Present
Herbrechtingen (Werk H)	v?	w?	x?	y?	1945 – Present

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Digit – Month Code ?

This is always a number and lamps have only been observed bearing 1, 2 or 3. A 3-way code would be consistent with indicating the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the quarterly period given by the first letter.

<u>1<sup>st</sup> month</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> month</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> month</u>
Jan/Apr/Jul/Oct	Feb/May/Aug/Nov	Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Digit – Year Code ?

This is always a number and lamps have been observed with all possibilities of 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9. A 10-way code would be consistent with indicating in which year of a decade the lamp was made, with the number indicating the last digit of that decade. For instance 0 = 1940 or 1950, 1 = 1941 or 1951, etc.