Semiconductor protection: Protecting the mask work against imitation.

**Field of application** Microelectronic semiconductors (chips) with a multi-layer structure.

**Term** Maximum of ten years. Depending on the relevant conditions, the term of protection begins either upon filing of the application or at the time of the first commercial exploitation.

**Requirements** Protection is granted for “three-dimensional structures of microelectronic semiconductor products (topographies) if and provided that they have individual character”. That will as a rule always be the case whenever they are the creator’s own achievement, and are not a commonplace result of intellectual effort.

**Application and examination** The documents have to be filed with the German Patent and Trade Mark Office. There is no examination of novelty.