

Lifting Introduction

Barry Hudson, our long-time Technical Sales Director, retired in 2023. Despite this, we thought his responses to his "FAQs" were useful and are re-printed below. The good news is that Barry's lovely, young assistant Ben Austin is now our Rigging Manager and available to deal with any rigging questions you may have.



"I have often been asked by people 'What is a lifting accessory?' or 'What is a lifting operation?'

According to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 [LOLER], an "accessory for lifting" is work equipment for attaching loads to machinery for lifting.

To further simplify this statement, one of the instructors at the Lifting Equipment Engineers Association [LEEAA] suggested that it can be looked at it in this way: If you have a crane – the lifting machine in this scenario – then anything used below the hook used to attach the load to it, is a lifting accessory. So examples are shackles, turnbuckles, round slings, chain slings and wire rope slings to name but a few. In most theatre settings the "hook" is a flying bar, so everything below it is a "lifting accessory" and everything above it is a component of the "lifting machine".

A lifting operation is defined in the LOLER regulation as an operation concerned with the lifting or lowering of a load. It is therefore dynamic, as opposed to "suspension" which is static and outside the scope of LOLER.



Our special hook symbol

Within this catalogue we have added a hook symbol next to the products that can be used for lifting operations. These products will be supplied with instructions for use and either a Declaration of Conformity or a Report of Thorough Examination For New Products. Which certification is supplied is dependant on whether Flints hold the Technical File for the product. The Technical File contains the original specifications of the product and so we would typically only hold it for our own products.

There are many other products in the following sections of the catalogue that can be used for suspending loads that are not subject to dynamic movement. These products will show a minimum breaking load [MBL] or minimum recommended load [MRL], but do not require certification.

The LEEAA Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Lifting Equipment [COPSULE] states that lifting accessories should be specified by [although not necessarily actually ordered by] the "competent person" in charge of the lifting operation, which is the term used to describe a person with the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge, experience, training, skill, and ability to perform the specific duty. There could be several competent persons with specific duties relating to lifting items.

With our experienced and knowledgeable staff, we search for quality products to suit your needs and budgets. We are continually monitoring new products that come onto the market, so you can have faith that we will be providing quality equipment suited to your requirements.

We also have a strong splicing team at Flints, and can help you with everything from 3 or 4 strand fibre rope, to braided ropes, or even modern ropes such as Dyneema Pro.

A brief introduction to UKCA Marking



What happened to the UKCA mark?

Returning readers will remember that we introduced the UKCA mark in the last edition of the catalogue.

The UKCA mark, or the UK Conformity Assessed mark to give it its' full title, was intended to allow England, Scotland and Wales to diverge from European standards indicated by the CE (Conformité Européenne) mark, post-Brexit. At the time of the publication of the last catalogue, the UKCA mark was due to come into force on the 1st January 2022 with the use of the CE mark phasing out in Great Britain over the following year, Northern Ireland having a separate regulatory regime which continued to recognise CE marks alongside its' own marking system.

To begin with the UKCA mark indicated compliance with the same European Norms ("EN number") as the CE mark and so Flints, along with many UK companies, decided to show both marks on our products so that we could continue to offer those products to customers at home and abroad. We would have had to revise this policy in the event that UK regulations diverged from European ones.

Under pressure from industry and regulators, the UK government delayed the introduction of the UKCA scheme several times before postponing it indefinitely in August 2023, which is the situation as it currently stands. However, the UKCA mark will be with us for some time yet. Many of our own products that carry the CE mark are lifting products. Lifting regulations stipulate that marking indicating compliance with standards must be indelibly stamped onto a product rather than just using a label. We re-drew all of our lifting products to show that stamping and so we will be showing the old UKCA mark until such time as we re-draw the product.

Ultimately, the purpose of these markings, whether they are CE or UKCA, is to give end users a guarantee that a product reaches the necessary quality standards for it to fulfil its' designed function. Flints work hard to ensure that the products shown on the following pages do exactly that.

If you come across a new product you think we should stock, do let us know! You can scan this qr code to visit our handy form to register any new ideas:

