



G07. Should master links be CE marked (CE/UKCA)?

In general, there are two types of master links/master assemblies on the European market

1. Master links/Master assemblies placed on the market for use as a component of a sling assembly. These may or may not be conformity marked, but they should be compliant with EN1677-4 or other relevant standards.
2. Master links/Master assemblies placed on the market for **USE** as an **individual** lifting accessory. These are to be conformity marked. They should be marked with the requirements of the legislation and will show the WLL, grade of material and traceable serial number. A Declaration of Conformity and Instructions for use must also be supplied. These instructions would not necessarily prohibit the use of these master links as components of a sling assembly, but it is the responsibility of the Distributor/Assembler to give the correct information with the completed product to ensure that is not overloaded.

Understanding the supply chain is critical as the roles and responsibilities of each participant change:

- **The Manufacturer** is the company making and supplying the components or accessory to the market for the first time. They take the responsibility of ensuring that the products are fit for purpose and comply with the standards and legislation and issue the appropriate certification.
- **The Assembler** of a completed lifting accessory (machine) takes on the responsibility of a manufacturer and is responsible for placing the completed product on to the market for the first time, and as such, by ensuring that the equipment is compliant with current legislation. They are also to issue the correct documentation and safe use instructions with the product.
- **A Distributor** may also be **an importer** of accessories/components to an assembler of slings. They may place complete assemblies or components to the market. In the case of supplying individual master links to a customer, where possible, the distributor should enquire how the link is to be used to assess what is required for marking and user instructions and documentation.
Note: The Assembler may also be a Distributer and vice versa.
- **The Duty holder/End User** has the responsibility of fully assessing and using the item according to the to the manufacturer's instruction for use.

LEEA's advice on master links is:

- Manufacturers of master links can choose to conformity mark the links, or not, dependent on the intended use. In either case the instructions are to be clear as to their specific use i.e. as a complete lifting accessory, as a component, or both, as certification and marking is different in each case.
- Master links should be marked with a traceability code as per EN 1677-1 or other relevant standard.
- If assembling a sling, the assembler can use master links that are either conformity marked or not. The assembler of the sling should affix a metal tag to the master link/assembly, which must, as a minimum show the conformity mark, the individual serial number of the assembly and the WLL of assembly at 0° degrees, or in the case of a multi leg sling, at 0-45° and 45° to 60° degrees. In the case of chain slings, the diameter of the chain being used should also be shown.
- The Duty holder/End User must have a fully documented risk assessment and lifting plan. They also have the responsibility of ensuring not only that the equipment is well maintained, inspected before use and complies with current legislation, but also that the person(s) using the equipment are suitably trained to do so.

Lifting Equipment Engineers Association

3 Osprey Court
Hinchbrooke Business Park
Huntingdon PE29 6FN
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1480 432801 • Email: mail@leeaint.com



- If using master links in their own right as a completed lifting accessory, the user should select master links that have been conformity marked as the foreseeable risks associated with the expected use have been addressed by the manufacturer. The limitations of use would be specified in the instructions for use which should be followed by the user.
- If using CE marked master links that have a WLL marked on them, the WLL of the assembly must be made clear by affixing a metal tag or other approved marking method as per the applicable standard for the type of sling (Chain, SWR, Textile). The WLL marked on the master link must never be less than the WLL of the final assembly and this information must be supported in the instructions for Use.
- If using non- CE marked master links as a lifting accessory, the duty holder/user is to be aware that they would take on the responsibility and risk of the manufacturer for use in this manner.
- Equipment should be examined for each lift according to the lift plan.
- Master links in storage are treated as components
- As with all lifting equipment, master links that are conformity marked and/or used as an accessory should be subject to a thorough examination at least 6/12 monthly depending on location. If in any doubt it is advisable to contact a competent person for advice and clarification.

Please note: The content of the guidance in these frequently asked questions is provided for general information only. Whilst they are intended to represent a standard of good practice, they have no legal status and compliance with them does not exempt you from compliance with any legal requirements. Although we make reasonable efforts to provide accurate guidance, we make no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that the content of the guidance given in these frequently asked questions and our interpretation of the requirements given is accurate, complete or up-to-date. It is therefore responsibility of those with specific duties under the legislation to ensure that they fulfil the obligations imposed on them.

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