

Guidance for inspection of lifting accessories under LOLER

All lifting loops and shackles fall under the category of a **Lifting Accessory** in that they are a means of connecting the load to the lifting equipment. Items such as sling sets, D shackles, bow shackles, round slings and webbing slings to name but a few are other examples that fall under this general category, so they too are subject to the same rules and regulations.

The production and use of lifting accessories is legislated in accordance with the European Machinery directive, the implementation of this in the UK is governed by the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations.

Regulations are not acts of parliament but have the full support of UK law and must be complied with. The subordinate legislation dealing with lifting accessories is the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations often referred to as LOLER.

There are responsibilities placed on the manufacturer of lifting accessories to ensure that they manufacture and supply goods that are tested and safe to use for their intended purpose.

The manufacturer is obliged to issue a Declaration of Conformity (DoC) with the goods and this document should be **no more than twelve months old** when it is supplied with the goods. To be clear this document is **not** a test certificate, it is merely a document that confirms that the manufacturer has conformed with the requirements of the relevant regulations, it allows the user to put the item to work without the need for a thorough examination by a competent person.

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The **Test Certificate** that is so often referred to is no longer a document that plays a legal role in the safe use and inspection of a lifting accessory, and is a hangover term from older legislation, LOLER were established in 1998 and as such the test certificate term has been irrelevant for over 24 years.

The person who receives a new lifting accessory should only put the lifting accessory into service if it comes with a Declaration of Conformity that is less than twelve months old, as an aside if the lifting accessory doesn't have a DoC, then a report of thorough examination from a competent person confirming the item is safe to use, can allow the item to be used.

It is the legal duty of the person receiving and using the goods to retain the DoC for as long as they own the equipment.

The person using the equipment should, as a minimum legal requirement, set a scheduled date as part of a lifting equipment plan to carry out a Report of Thorough Examination of this equipment (RoTE) on or before a maximum of six month period has elapsed. The six month period should be shortened if the competent person responsible for the lifting equipment feels that the lifting procedures undertaken are likely to accelerate wear on the lifting accessory.

The person/ company owning the lifting accessory is required to keep copies of all RoTEs for a minimum of two years or until they sell the lifting accessory.

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See examples below for clarity

The customer receives a shackle with a dated DoC less than twelve months old (ie the document can be dated up to 12 months prior to delivery), they can then put this lifting accessory straight into use having set the obligatory six month period before a RoTE is required.

After zero to 6 months:

The customer should have retained and kept on file the DoC and have a date in mind for the first RoTE.

After 6 months:

The customer should have retained the DoC and have a copy of at least one RoTE.

After 12 months:

The customer should have retained the DoC and have at least two previous RoTEs.

After 18 months:

The customer should have retained the DoC and have at least three previous RoTEs.

After 24 months:

The customer should have retained the DoC and have at least four previous RoTEs.

Beyond two years the customer should have the original DoC and always have at least four RoTEs on file all of which must be less than two years old, it is advisable to keep all RoTEs as best practice, as these provide an accurate account of inspections and repairs carried out on the lifting accessory along with a record of any testing if it is deemed necessary.

Any lifting accessory user who wishes to extend the six month inspection period must have a written plan in place to warrant extending the period.