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What are the main differences between lead screws and ACME screws?

"Lead screw" is a generic term that refers to any threaded drive screw using sliding surfaces to transmit the load. Lead screws are typically used for dynamic applications. Static applications are generally referred to as "fastener screws" and utilize inefficient thread forms not well suited for regular motion.

"ACME" is a term that refers to a particular thread form. An ACME screw is also a lead screw but not the reverse. The ACME thread standard was designed for part



interchangeability and is accompanied by specific class such as 2G, 3G, 2C etc. that have slightly different tolerances.



ACME thread forms can be easily checked using readily available thread gauges. However, ACME thread is designed for interchangeability and manufacturability. Other proprietary lead screw thread forms may perform better depending on the application but are more difficult to characterise.

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