

Lubrication

Guidelines

Ball screws must be lubricated to operate properly and achieve the rated life. We recommend using TriGEL-450R or TriGEL-1800RC for lubricating ball screws. Other oils and greases may be applicable but have not been evaluated.

The TriGEL® grease can be applied directly to the screw threads near the root of the ball track. Some ball nut sizes are available with threaded lube holes for mounting lubrication fittings. For these ball nuts, the TriGEL grease can be pumped directly into the nut. Please refer to the catalog detail views to verify which ball nuts have the threaded lube holes. It is recommended to use these nuts in conjunction with a wiper kit to contain the lubricant in the body of the nut.

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Inspection Prior to Lubrication: All ball screw assemblies should run smoothly throughout the entire stroke. If the torque is not uniform over the entire stroke:

- Visually inspect the screw shaft for accumulations of foreign matter.
- Using cleaning fluid or solvent, remove dirt from the ball grooves. Be sure to flush the ball nut assembly thoroughly.
- Cycle the ball nut along the screw shaft several times. Wipe with a dry, lintless cloth and lubricate immediately.
- If the assembly continues to operate erratically after cleaning, contact Thomson for further instructions.

Lubrication: The operating environment primarily determines the frequency and type of lubrication required by ball screws. The screw shaft should be inspected frequently and lubricated as required by the environmental conditions present. Lubricants can vary from instrument grade oil for dirty and heavy-dust environments to a good grade ball bearing grease for protected or clean environments. For most



applications, a good 10W30 oil periodically wiped on the screw shaft with a damp cloth or applied by a drip or mist lubricator will suffice.

CAUTION: Where the screw is unprotected from airborne dirt, dust, etc., do not leave a heavy film of lubricant on the screw. Keep the screw shaft barely damp with lubricant. Inspect at regular intervals to be certain lubricating film is present. Where the application requires operation at temperatures below 0° F, an instrument grade oil is recommended. Operating environments from 0° F to 180° F will require a good grade 10W30 oil. For assemblies with balls larger than 3/8 in. diameter, MIL G 3278 grease is recommended. Bearing grease is recommended for operating environments at nominally higher temperatures. Again, in unprotected conditions, the lubricant is best applied with a lubricant-dampened cloth, taking care not to leave an excessive film thickness on the screw. Ball screws should never be run dry.

Lubrication Selection Chart for Ball & Lead Screw Assemblies

Thomson Gel Type	TriGel-300S	TriGel-450R	TriGel-600SM	TriGel-1200SC	TriGel-1800RC
Application	Acme Screws Supernuts, Plastic Nuts	Ball Screws, Linear Bearings	Bronze Nuts	Acme Plastic Nuts, Clean Room, High Vacuum	Ball Screws, Linear Bearings, Bronze Nuts, Clean Room, Vacuum
Maximum Temperature*	200°C (392°F)	125°C (257°F)	125°C (257°F)	250°C (482°F)	125°C (257°F)
Mechanism Materials	Plastic on Plastic or Metal	Metal on Metal	Metal on Metal Bronze on Steel	Plastic or Metals, Combination	Metal on Metal
Mechanical Load	Light	Moderate	Moderate to Heavy	Light to Moderate	Moderate
Very Low Torque Variation over Temperature	Yes	—	—	Yes	—
Very Low Starting Torque	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	Yes
Compatibility with Reactive Chemicals	Not recommended w/o OEM testing	Not recommended w/o OEM testing	Not recommended w/o OEM testing	Usually OK	Not recommended w/o OEM testing
Compatibility with Plastics and Elastomers	May cause silicon rubber seals to swell	May cause EPDM seals to swell	May cause EPDM seals to swell	Usually OK	May cause EPDM seals to swell
Clean Room Use	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Usually OK	Usually OK
High Vacuum Use	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Usually OK	Usually OK
Vapor Pressure (25°C)	Varies with lot	Varies with lot	Varies with lot	8x10 ⁻⁹ torr	4x10 ⁻⁹ torr
Order Number 10cc Syringe 1 Pound Tube 4oz Tube	TriGel-300S TriGel-300S-1 NA	TriGel-450R TriGel-450R-1 NA	NA NA TriGel-600SM	TriGel-1200SC NA NA	TriGel-1800RC NA NA

* Maximum temperature for continuous exposure. Higher surge temperatures may be permissible but should be validated in the actual end use by the OEM. Low temperature limits are -15°C or lower. Consult Thomson for specifics.