

## STORAX SP80'S UNIQUE CLAIM FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH ORIGINAL DEXION SPEEDLOCK MK3®

Not all 'compatible' products are the same.  
And not all Speedlock Mk3® is original Speedlock Mk3®

We are occasionally contacted by people who have been warned against using Storax SP80 in original Dexion Speedlock Mk3® installations by racking inspectors or competing suppliers. The 3 most common claims are:

**Statement:** Storax SP80 has been certified as compatible with original Speedlock Mk3® by Ramada, who manufacture it. As such it is not an independent, unbiased assessment.

**Inference:** Anybody can say that their product is 'compatible' – just because there is a physical fit, it doesn't mean that it is structurally or technically 'fit for purpose'.

**Statement:** Dexion Ltd didn't recommend combining other manufacturers' compatible products with original Speedlock Mk3®.

**Inference:** The integrity of the system – and therefore its safety - may be compromised if a different manufacturer's product is used.

**Statement:** If you mix Speedlock Mk3® with other compatible products your warranty will be jeopardised.

**Inference:** If you don't use genuine parts, you will no longer be indemnified against faulty materials.

We understand why people are concerned by such statements. Anybody who has witnessed a rack collapse knows that the consequences can be serious and sometimes even fatal. So, not surprisingly, such comments - especially when made by racking inspectors or a trusted supplier - can resonate, creating fears and doubts.

To understand the differences - and also the similarities - between Storax SP80 and the Speedlock Mk3® product now offered by Dexion-Comino Ltd, end users first need to know the history of the companies and their relationship to the original Dexion Ltd.

Storax Racking Supplies and Dexion-Comino Ltd were both founded in 2003 within 2 months of each other, following the demise of Dexion Ltd, who invented and manufactured original Speedlock Mk3® at its factory in Hemel Hempstead. When Dexion Ltd was put into receivership the factory was pulled down and much of the tooling and machinery was sold off, scrapped, moth-balled or destroyed.

Apart from second-hand materials, ALL Speedlock Mk3®-compatible products currently offered in the UK are made in different factories than where the original system was produced. In this respect, the Speedlock Mk3® being sold by Dexion-Comino Ltd bears the same relationship to original Speedlock Mk3® as Storax SP80 does. Dexion-Comino's use of the brand name could mislead anybody who is unaware of that history. Dexion Ltd and its factory no longer exist. Nothing being made today has the same provenance as original 'Dexion Speedlock Mk3®'. All warranties that Dexion Ltd gave died in 2003, along with the company – none of them are valid today, whether there are mixed products or not.



Original Dexion Speedlock® spliced with SP80

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Since starting up in 2003, Dexion-Comino Ltd have worked with a number of independent suppliers to produce their Speedlock Mk3® offering. They source disparate component parts from manufacturing outlets across the UK and Europe, and bring them together for sale to the UK market as one system. Because they registered the Speedlock Mk3® brand name when Dexion Ltd ceased trading, Dexion Comino Ltd have the right to brand their current version of the original product with the original name.

So much for the product currently marketed in the UK as Speedlock Mk3® by Dexion-Comino Ltd. What about Storax SP80?

Storax SP80 racking is made by F Ramada in Portugal, an engineering company established in the 1930's. Ramada came to the notice of Dexion Ltd in 1958, who approached them to become a licenced manufacturer, adding original Speedlock Mk3® to the product portfolio in the early 1970's. Dexion Ltd supplied the machinery, plant and technical data, and Ramada paid Dexion Ltd an annual commission. The product was marketed and sold by Ramada under the Speedlock Mk3® name in Portugal and Spain and, in line with the requirements of the licence agreement, the uprights were stamped DEXION SPEEDLOCK - because that is what it was.

When Dexion Ltd allowed all licences to lapse in the 1990's, Ramada re-branded their product, because the Speedlock® name remained registered to the original Dexion Group of Companies. They opted for SP ("SPeedlock") and 80 (80mm upright face). The product has since under-gone some refinement and development – and some plant and machinery has been updated and modernised - but it is still effectively the product that was made under licence to Dexion Ltd for nearly 25 years. It is manufactured to FEM and SEMA standards in one modern production facility, with full quality control and metallurgical testing, and the ability to trace the entire production process of every part, from raw steel to finished item.



One of Ramada's upright rolling lines

Ramada's long - and unique - association with Dexion Ltd is the reason why they can so confidently self-certify Storax SP80 as Speedlock Mk3®-compatible. And, of course, like all reputable manufacturers, they have full product liability insurance – another reason to buy Storax SP80 with total confidence.



[www.ramada.pt](http://www.ramada.pt)

It is true that Dexion Ltd didn't recommend using other compatible products with original Speedlock Mk3® – but not for any technical or structural reason. It was purely on commercial grounds. The after-sales market is important to any industry and Dexion Ltd was no different. (In 2003 Dexion Ltd valued the spares and repairs market at £3 Million). All manufacturers and their agents will warn against using 'look-alike' products. But, like buying generic dustbags for our vacuum cleaner or filters for our car, we all know that these compatible products legally have to be fit for the purpose for which they are sold.

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It was this lucrative market that Dexion Ltd was trying to ring-fence for itself and for its dealers, when advising against mixing compatible products with their system. Dexion Ltd never brought a successful prosecution on technical or structural grounds. (They tried once or twice, but not against Ramada's product). However, it's easy now for their position to be innocently taken out of context and genuinely misunderstood – or deliberately misrepresented to suit other agendas.

For instance, we have seen a report that was produced in September 2008 by a well-known and extremely reputable racking inspection company. Overall – as expected - the report was balanced in its section about the use of Storax SP80 in the inspected Speedlock Mk3® installation. But the opening statement reads:

*"[Storax Racking Supplies] is part of Storax Racking Systems Ltd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ramada in Portugal) who market the product as a compatible system with Dexion Speedlock®. Dexion always insisted that these components should not be mixed with their product."* (italics added)

This assertion is false – you will not find anything published by Dexion Ltd that says it. Indeed, Dexion Ltd bought materials from Ramada in the latter years. The truth is that Ramada didn't even market SP80 in the UK while Dexion Ltd was still trading. You will not find any SP80 being used for Speedlock®-compatible applications prior to Dexion Ltd's demise in May 2003, at which time Storax Racking Supplies was established to bring it to the UK market.

Knowing who compiled this report, we do not believe that there was an intention to mislead, but rather that Dexion Ltd's historic attempts to protect their after-sales market resulted in this inaccuracy. Indeed, the remainder of the report states (correctly) that there is no documented evidence that SP80 is not compatible with original Speedlock Mk3®, and confirms that the onus rests with manufacturers to supply goods that are 'fit for purpose'. Ultimately, the report concludes, the decision must be the customer's.

In May 2009 we learned of another independent report, which was commissioned by a well known logistics and distribution company, on suspicion

that they were being falsely warned against using Storax SP80 for repairs in their original Speedlock Mk3® sites around the UK. We are delighted to say that this comprehensive, detailed report concluded that, while we at Storax have been consistent, open and honest about everything we have claimed for SP80 racking, in terms of its pedigree and its suitability for use with original Dexion Speedlock Mk3®, the same could not be said for the company that was promoting the product being offered now by Dexion-Comino Ltd under the Speedlock Mk3® name.

In summary, Storax SP80 is absolutely compatible, both physically and structurally, for repairs and add-ons to the original Speedlock Mk3® product manufactured by Dexion Ltd until 2003. While we do not know the provenance of the Speedlock Mk3® offered by Dexion Comino Ltd, other than that the component parts are made in various facilities, the legal onus is on them to ensure that their product is fit for purpose and we have no evidence to the contrary. This being so, the product warranty covering Storax SP80 is not invalidated by combining it with either the original Speedlock Mk3® that was made until 2003, or the product of that name subsequently offered by Dexion-Comino Ltd, or a combination of both. The only caveat to this is that the relevant published load tables for each system must be consulted, to ensure that 'worst-case' load information is provided to the end users.

If anybody would like to discuss the compatibility issue further, we are always happy to do so. Ken Powley, Storax Racking Supplies' General Manager, was employed by Dexion Ltd for 27 years. For 5 of these years Ken was their European Group Product Manager for Racking Systems, and their authority on the way original Speedlock Mk3® was promoted and manufactured. He represented Dexion Ltd at seminars in 4 continents - so he knows a thing or two about it!

Speedlock® upright with SP80 beam

