

MLCC's are widely used in electronic circuit design for a multitude of applications. Their small package size, technical performance and suitability for automated assembly makes them the component of choice for the specifier.

However, despite the technical benefits, ceramic components are brittle and need careful handling on the production floor. In some circumstances they may be prone to mechanical stress damage if not used in an appropriate manner. Board flexing, depanelisation, mounting through hole components, poor storage and automatic testing may all result in cracking.

Careful process control is important at all stages of circuit board assembly and transportation - from component placement to test and packaging. Any significant board flexing may result in stress fractures in ceramic devices that may not always be evident during the board assembly process. Sometimes it may be the end customer who finds out - when equipment fails!

Syfer has the solution - FlexiCap™

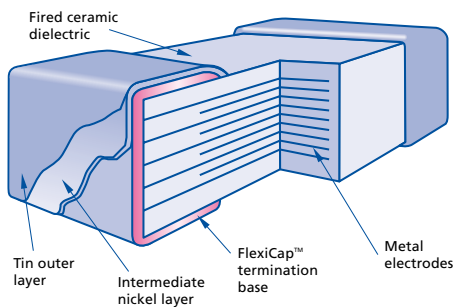
FlexiCap™ has been developed as a result of listening to customers' experiences of stress damage to MLCC's from many manufacturers, often caused by variations in production processes.

Our answer is a proprietary flexible epoxy polymer termination material, that is applied to the device under the usual nickel barrier finish. FlexiCap™ will accommodate a greater degree of board bending than conventional capacitors.

Syfer FlexiCap™ termination

All ranges are available with FlexiCap™ termination material offering increased reliability and superior mechanical performance (board flex and temperature cycling) when compared with standard termination materials. Refer to Syfer application note reference AN0001. As can be seen from the table below (Summary of Bend Test Results), FlexiCap™ capacitors enable the board to be bent almost twice as much before mechanical cracking occurs.

An additional benefit of FlexiCap™ is that MLCCs can withstand temperature cycling -55°C to 125°C in excess of 1,000 times without cracking.



FlexiCap™ MLCC cross section

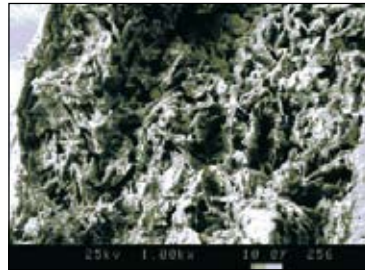
FlexiCap™ benefits

The benefit to the user is to facilitate a wider process window - giving a greater safety margin and substantially reducing the typical root causes of mechanical stress cracking.

FlexiCap™ may be soldered using your traditional wave or reflow solder techniques and needs no adjustment to equipment or current processes.

Syfer has delivered millions of FlexiCap™ components and during that time has collected substantial test and reliability data, working in partnership with customers world wide, to eliminate mechanical cracking.

With traditional termination materials and assembly, the chain of materials from bare PCB to soldered termination, provides no flexibility. In circumstances where excessive stress is applied - the weakest link fails. This means the ceramic itself, which may fail short circuit.



● Picture taken at 1,000x magnification using a SEM to demonstrate the fibrous nature of the FlexiCap™ termination that absorbs increased levels of mechanical stress.

Available on the following ranges:

- Standard and High Voltage chips
- Surge Protection and Safety capacitor chips
- 3 terminal EMI chips
- X2Y Integrated Passive Components
- X8R High Temperature capacitors

Summary of PCB bend test results

The bend tests conducted on X7R have proven that the FlexiCap™ termination withstands a greater level of mechanical stress before mechanical cracking occurs.

The AEC-Q200 test for X7R requires a bend level of 2mm minimum and a cap change of less than 10%.

Product X7R	Typical bend performance under AEC-Q200 test conditions	Pass/Fail
Standard termination	1.5mm to 3mm	Fail
FlexiCap™	Typically 8mm to 10mm	Pass

Application notes

FlexiCap™ may be handled, stored and transported in the same manner as standard terminated capacitors. The requirements for mounting and soldering FlexiCap™ are the same as for standard SMD capacitors.

For customers currently using standard terminated capacitors there should be no requirement to change the assembly process when converting to FlexiCap™.

Based upon board bend tests in accordance with IEC 60384-1 the amount of board bending required to mechanically crack a polymer terminated capacitor is significantly increased compared with standard terminated capacitors.

It must be stressed however, that capacitor users must not assume that the use of FlexiCap™ terminated capacitors will totally eliminate mechanical cracking. Good process controls are still required for this objective to be achieved.

