Is There A Difference Between Gaskets & Seals?

Gaskets vs. Seals

The terms “gaskets” and “seals” are often used interchangeably. The fundamental difference is that a gasket is a physical piece that goes between two flanges to create a seal at a joining point between two components. A gasket is a seal.
“Seals” is a category that encompasses many types of seals.
In addition to gaskets, there are rotary seals, O-ring seals, liquid sealants, mechanical seals, shaft seals, valve stem seals, and packings, just to name a few.

Generally, seals require more machining for the sealing surfaces, and a controlled size or quantity of seal material to make it up. They are typically “engineered” as a solution and designed up front.

“Seals” are also terms noted for non-gasket applications, such as rotary shaft seals. These are a dynamic joint and not something that a flat flange gasket is able to seal.

Gaskets generally function with two flat flanges and the gasket material and construction can sometimes be chosen later in the design stages. Various material constructions are available and must be selected to correlate with the available flanges and parameters.

Now You Know -
A gasket is a seal, but a seal isn’t necessarily a gasket.