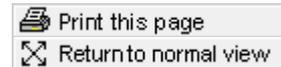


**NEWS RELEASE****United Nations endorsement will reduce risk in hazardous areas**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 2009-12-07** – The [United Nations](#) through its [UNECE](#) (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) has formally endorsed the use of an internationally recognized certification system, IECEx, that promotes safety of equipment in explosive areas.

IECEX is the international system that verifies compliance with international IEC International Safety Standards in Ex (explosive) areas. It covers equipment, systems, services and competency of personnel in the highly specialized industries where the risk of fire and/or explosions exist (Ex industries).

**UNECE endorses IECEx**

During its annual session from 24 to 26 November 2009, the UNECE formally approved the new UN *Common Regulatory Objectives* associated with the Sectoral Initiative on Equipment for Explosive Environments (SIEEE). This publication endorses the use of an internationally recognized certification system to promote safety of equipment, services and personnel associated with explosive areas.

IECEX, the IEC System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmospheres, is the internationally accepted certification system in the Ex field.

The use of an internationally recognized certification system such as IECEx is essential to reduce unnecessary costs associated with duplication of testing and assessment. It also forms a clear basis for sound risk management.

The IECEx System comprises the following three core certification schemes

- IECEx Certified Equipment Scheme
- IECEx Certified Service Facilities Scheme
- IECEx Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme

These schemes provide independent assurance that equipment and services comply with IEC International Safety Standards and that persons holding an IECEx Certificate of Personnel Competency are competent to work in areas where a concentration of dust, vapour, or flammable liquids has the potential to cause explosions.

**High-risk sector**

Modern-day industrial automation has increased the need for equipment, especially electrical, in hazardous areas. Explosion protection is an essential part of the overall risk management to be conducted for industrial plant and equipment. Given the high-risk nature of explosion protection, Ex areas are subject to heavy regulations in many countries.

**UNECE Initiative**

Through the UNECE's Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies, the Sectoral Initiative on Equipment for Explosive Environments (SIEEE) has been established.

The objective of the UNECE Initiative is to promote the convergence of national technical regulations currently in place toward a shared framework.

This will eliminate existing barriers to trade in Ex equipment and drastically reduce its costs.

At the same time, this will increase the safety of installations and the personnel working in this sector. In turn, communities living in the proximity of hazardous locations will also be better protected.

**Best practice assessment of conformity entrusted to IECEx**

To achieve this, the UNECE has developed a series of Common Regulatory Objectives.

They can be used as a model to align existing national regulations on explosive environments with an internationally harmonized best practice. In countries where such legislation doesn't exist, they can help draw up specific regulations.

The Common Regulatory Objectives are drawn up with reference to ISO and IEC International Standards. Best practice in the assessment of conformity to such standards is entrusted to IECEx.

#### **About IECEx**

IECEx is dedicated to covering the highly specialized field of explosion protection associated with the use of equipment in areas where flammable gases, liquids and combustible dusts may be present.

This system provides the assurance that equipment is manufactured to meet dedicated IEC International Safety Standards, and that services such as installation, repair and overhaul also comply.

IECEx has recently launched its new Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme to ensure persons working in these areas are competent .

IECEx membership includes a large number of Certification Bodies and Testing Laboratories around the world that assess and certify Ex equipment, services and personnel.

IECEx Certificates of Conformity are both standardized and publicly available on the IECEx On-Line System, and immediately verifiable, regardless of the issuing Certification Body.

The IECEx System includes:

- **IECEx Certified Equipment Scheme**  
Provides the assurance that products listed on an IECEx Certificate of Conformity (CoC) conform to the International Standards, eg IEC also listed on the same IECEx Certificate.
- **IECEx Certified Service Facilities Scheme**  
Assesses and certifies that organizations and workshops that provide repair and overhaul services to the Ex industry do so respecting the requirements of IEC International Standard, IEC 60079-19, *Explosive atmospheres - Part 19: Equipment repair, overhaul and reclamation*.
- **IECEx Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme**  
Provides companies with independent proof that a person holding an IECEx Certificate of Personnel Competency (CoPC) has the qualifications, experience and competency necessary to implement the international Ex standards.
- **IECEx Conformity Mark Licensing System**  
Provides immediate evidence that products bearing this Conformity Mark are covered by an IECEx Certificate of Conformity.

You can find more information about IECEx on: [www.iecex.com](http://www.iecex.com)

#### **About the IEC**

The IEC produces International Standards and handles Conformity Assessment Systems for the millions of objects, systems or machines that contain electronics or use/produce electricity in any form.

Founded in 1906 in London, first president Lord Kelvin  
159 member countries and affiliates  
Head office: Geneva  
Regional offices: Boston, São Paulo, Singapore  
Conformity Assessment Systems: Geneva, Sydney

Over 10 000 experts from industry, commerce, government, test and research laboratories, academia and consumer groups  
Over 1 000 Working Groups in 174 Technical Committees  
Over 13 000 International Standards published since inception  
Over 6 000 International Standards on catalogue today  
Over 300 000 Conformity Assessment Certificates established

#### **Examples of technologies covered by IEC International Standards and Conformity Assessment Systems:**

Power generation, transmission, distribution, including all renewable energy sources; batteries, fuel cells, home appliances, office and medical equipments, all public and private transportation, semiconductor devices, fibre optics, nanotechnology, multimedia, information technology, and more.

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## **RELATED INFORMATION**

**IEC links**

**External links**

IECEX  
IEC System for Certification to Standards relating to  
Equipment for use in Explosive Atmospheres

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United Nations

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UNECE:  
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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