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Focus on safety in hazardous areas

IECEX personnel certification is essential

For Brunei Darussalam, safety of its citizens comes first. Brunei authorities have taken a number of steps to raise awareness both in industry circles and among the general public and to implement safety measures and regulations in the country.

A particular concern is on the safety of people working in hazardous environments. With an industrial sector dominated by petroleum, petroleum refining and liquefied natural gas – crude oil and natural gas production account for just over half of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and more than 90 % of exports – a good part of the country's workforce is exposed on a daily basis to the risks associated with hazardous areas.



For the safety of employees working in a refinery, personnel certification is essential

Seminar focuses on IECEX

To deal with this issue, the Brunei Ministry of Development held a seminar on 11 November, entitled "International Electrotechnical Commission System for certification to standards relating to equipment for use in explosive atmospheres", or IECEX. The objective was to underline the importance of having competent workers handle the various activities associated with equipment used in potentially explosive atmospheres and surroundings, in light of concerns on "technical integrity".

Participants in the seminar learned that in Brunei, while there is a lot of work done by contractors in explosive environments, it is often difficult to establish if the work complies with international standards. The need to have skilled workers carry out complex tasks is obvious as such work can lead to dangerous situations. At the present time, there is no legislation in the country to enforce such compliance. The seminar may be a step in the right direction.

Safety of skilled workers

The event was organized by IET (the Institution of Engineering and Technology) with presentations covering both IEC and IECEX. Dennis Chew, Officer in Charge of the [IEC-APRC](#) (Asia-Pacific Regional Centre) presented the IEC and its standardization activities while Wal Robson, from the IECEX Secretariat in Sydney, Australia, spoke about IECEX in general and the specific requirements of the new IECEX Certification of Personnel Competence Scheme (CoPC). The CoPC scheme aims to provide the benchmark for personnel development and the minimum required competent levels for those involved in activities associated with Ex installations, for example Area Classification, installation design, inspection, repair and so on.

[IET's](#) William Voon observed that tenders requiring the employment of people with proper certification, such as the IECEX certification for persons working in hazardous areas, would reduce risks associated with using potentially dangerous equipment in explosive environments.

Taking necessary measures

It is interesting to note that the IECEX Personnel Certification Scheme was one of the outcomes of the IECEX 2008

Industry Symposium organized in Brunei. (see [e-tech March 2008](#))

The seminar also noted that a Brunei Technical Committee for electrical issues – Teco (Electrical) – is pushing for the adoption and implementation of International Standards in that field. Earlier this year, Teco (Electrical) had adopted 15 IEC International Standards for home appliances with the aim of adopting more in the next two years (see [e-tech March 2010](#)).

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IEC links

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

IEC-APRC:

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IECEX event in Brunei:

Previous article in March 2008 *e-tech* about Brunei
event attracting wide interest and large audience

Brunei Darussalam puts safety first:

Previous in March 2010 *e-tech* article about adopting
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