

Men of Ex-perience

Improving safety of hazardous areas through certified personnel competence



Ralph Wigg was the driving force behind the IECEx Certificate of Personnel Competence

Testing and certification of Ex (explosive) equipment and its servicing is essential, as is the assessment and certification of competence of those individuals that install, repair and handle equipment in hazardous areas. Safety depends on it.

Certifying skills and competence

Early in 2010, IECEx launched the new CoPC (IECEX Certificate of Personnel Competence) Scheme. This provides companies with independent proof that a person has the required competence and capability (based on qualifications, experience and demonstrated ability) to implement the International Ex Standards and to work on, or repair, equipment located in hazardous areas. This can be especially important for consultants and contracted staff.

The international IECEx certificate is personal, non-transferable and valid across international borders. As well as the certificate itself, IECEx also consists of a wallet-sized identification card with photo, providing instant proof of certification.

Driving force behind CoPC

Ralph Wigg, who has his own consulting firm specializing in the field of explosion protection, is one of the founding member experts of IECEx, the IEC System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmospheres.

Most importantly, Wigg has been the driving force behind the establishment of the IECEx CoPC Scheme. His life-long involvement in the Ex field convinced him that it is essential to assess and certify the skills and competences of persons working in hazardous areas.

Today, Wigg is a Member of the IECEx Executive and Chairman of the newly established ExPCC (IECEX Certificate of Personal Competence Committee), one of the IECEx Committees responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the IECEx CoPC Scheme.

Wigg, together with Kerry McManama, IECEx Chairman, and Chris Agius, IECEx Executive Secretary, were present when two Ex experts received their IECEx CoPC Certificates during the IEC General Meeting in Melbourne.

First Australian CoPC

Sean Segond von Banchet, Managing Director of SvB ExTech, the company he founded in Toowoomba, Queensland, was the first Australian expert to be granted an international IECEx CoPC. He received his Certificate from Ron Sinclair, Managing Director of Baseefa, one of the foundation EXCBs (Certification Bodies) of the IECEx, and one of the first approved EXCBs for the IECEx CoPC Scheme. Baseefa is a leading and internationally-recognized certification body for explosion-protected equipment. Allan Ogden, DSEAR (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Assessments) & Service Facilities Manager, Baseefa, also attended the ceremony.

CoPC for Swedish TC 31 expert

The second person to receive his CoPC in Melbourne was Kent Ruuth, the founder and Managing Director of Kent Ruuth Konsult AB in Kungälv, Sweden. Ruuth is an expert in IEC TC (Technical Committee) 31: Equipment for explosive atmospheres.

Ruuth received his Certificate from Thierry Houeix, Certification Officer at INERIS, the French National Institute for Industrial Environment and Risks. Houeix is also



Kent Ruuth (left) received his CopC from Thierry Houeix, Certification Officer at INERIS



Baseefa Managing Director Ron Sinclair (left) with Sean Segond von Banchet

an expert in IEC TC 31. Houeix, an IECEx Lead Assessor, is also one of the foundation member experts behind the IECEx CoPC Scheme.

Wide Ex area experience

To obtain an IECEx CoPC, applicants have to undergo a series of knowledge tests and an assessment of

qualifications, experience and capability. The IECEx Personnel Competence Scheme uses several criteria to establish a person's level of competence when working in Ex industries. The person under assessment must be able to perform a number of tasks in or near explosive areas, depending upon the Units of Competence being sought.

The candidate might be asked to:

- apply basic principles of protection
- perform classification of hazardous areas
- design electrical installations
- install explosion-protected equipment and wiring systems
- test, maintain, overhaul and repair explosion-protected equipment
- perform visual, close or detailed inspection of electrical installations
- perform audit inspection of electrical installations

Appointments

Also at its meeting in Melbourne, the IEC CAB (Conformity Assessment Board) reappointed Kerry McManama from UL (Underwriters Laboratories), USA, as IECEx Chairman for a second term (2012-2014) and Chris Agius as IECEx Executive Secretary for a further term (2012-2016).