



Every two months, SGS Baseefa Technical Manager Ron Sinclair MBE gives his perspective on the latest developments in the world of standards.

We keep receiving questions that suggest the introduction of the new UK post-Brexit certification scheme for Ex Equipment causes confusion, primarily because many people are not yet familiar with the new terminology. For completeness I am including here most of the terminology related to all directives, regulations and Ex-related certification schemes.

ATEX, etc.

The European ATEX Directive has been around since its first publication in 1994. The current version is **2014/34/EU**. The directive is not, itself, law but requires adoption in each individual country within the European Economic Area (EEA). The UK adopted the 2014 ATEX Directive in 2016 as **The Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2016, UKSI 2016:1107**. For most people, the UK Regulations did not figure in any specific documentation.

UKEX

In preparation for Brexit, the UK Government issued a very large amending Statutory Instrument, applying to a whole raft of legislation: **UKSI 2019:696**. This included several pages converting the existing ATEX SI to be fit for purpose after Brexit. There have been several other amending SIs since then, so the correct reference for the UK law, as now applicable, is **UKSI 2016:1107 (as amended)**.

De-mystifying the new terminology

Because the full statutory instrument title is a mouthful, the UK based certification bodies agreed to use the term “**UKEX**” as the nearest parallel to the European term “**ATEX**”. Therefore, UKEX replaces ATEX as part of the certificate number, as well as being a generic reference in the UK as a substitute for ATEX.

All the UK bodies that had previously been **EU Notified Bodies** became **UK Approved Bodies**. However, because of the Northern Ireland Protocol, they also became Notified to the European Commission, solely for issuing certificates that would be valid in Northern Ireland. None of the UK Approved Bodies believe this will be of much use to manufacturers, as all such bodies in the Ex field are partnered with a continuing EU Notified Body who can issue ATEX certificates valid in the whole of the EEA as well as Northern Ireland.

Certification

Where the legislation requires the issue of a Notified Body **EU-Type Examination Certificate** for ATEX, the same requirements apply requiring the issue of an Approved Body **UK-Type Examination Certificate** for UKEX. For both schemes, the bodies can continue to offer voluntary **Type Examination Certificates** in their role as an **accredited Certification Body**, rather than as a Notified Body or an Approved Body. Such certificates, supplied to satisfy the demands of the final purchasers of equipment, have no legal status and normally only apply to non-electrical Category 2 equipment or any Category 3 equipment.

Everyone is familiar with the stylised Ex within a hexagon. This symbol is given in the standards that support both ATEX and UKEX, so does not change. The single coding on a label (familiar from ATEX) applies equally to ATEX and UKEX equipment.

Standards

All the standards that were on the EU Commission list of **Harmonised Standards** for ATEX were transposed and became **Designated Standards** for the UK

legislation. Use of such a standard gives a presumption of conformity with the Directive/Statutory Instrument for those requirements covered by the standards. The Designated Standards list continues to refer to standards by their EN number, rather than their BS number. The coverage of each standard, in respect of the directive/SI requirements, is given in a specific European Annex to the standard.

CE and UKCA marking

The required EU CE Marking is supported by ATEX documentation; UKCA marking is supported by UKEX documentation. The UKEX Certificate number and UKCA marking can be applied either additionally to the ATEX marking, or as an alternative. Most manufacturers seem to have elected to show both sets of marking at the same time. The relevant number of the Notified Body and Approved Body, responsible for supervision of manufacture, must be marked adjacent to the CE and UKCA marking. For components, where the CE and UKCA marking are not applied, both numbers should still be shown, if relevant.

IECEX

Alongside the legal certification schemes, IECEX is a voluntary certification system that can support both ATEX and UKEX, as well as providing a direct passport to many markets. The IECEX Report can form the technical basis of both ATEX and UKEX certification, and is transferrable between certification bodies in the system. ■

About the author

SGS Baseefa's Technical Manager Ron Sinclair MBE will continue to attend the European Notified Bodies Group for ATEX (ExNBG), although representing SGS Fimko, their partner EU Notified Body, now that the UK bodies are excluded. He is Chair of the IECEX Service Facility Certification Committee and a member of the IECEX Executive. He is chair of the UK Standards Committee operating in this area for electrical equipment, and recently retired as chair of the European committee.