



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

Some updates

of conformity with the Essential Health and Safety Requirements of the relevant directive. It does not prevent the use of such a standard before harmonisation, but the use of a non-harmonised standard has to be justified in the manufacturer's Declaration of Conformity.

As the Commission has also decreed that a standard cannot be considered for harmonisation after publication, both CEN and Cenelec have been forced to delay publication of several standards this year. However, I have been advised that the situation should be resolved towards the end of September; so, look out for a number of standards to be published before the end of this year.

An unfortunate side effect of this is that some standards that were published some time ago, but were delayed in harmonisation, must have a new edition created, just for the harmonisation process! This presumably includes the latest versions of EN ISO/IEC 80079-34 and EN IEC 60079-15.

As we thought the harmonisation delays were a pain, we had hoped to get some relief by getting these independently through the designation process in the UK, so that they gave UK presumption of conformity with the EHSRs. This has also proven difficult, and we have not reaped the assumed benefits of Brexit independence from the EU at all. Our government department prefer to piggyback on the harmonisation process of the EU Commission but have eventually found a way of working directly with BSI, independent of Europe. We are just reaching the end of this process for EN ISO/IEC 80079-34, which was started over a year ago, and designation is expected in October 2022. Since the previous edition was unusable, all certification bodies had been using the latest version anyway, but they continued to get queries from those that believe we should use only Harmonised/Designated Standards.

The first week in September was the (last?) virtual meeting of the main IECEx committees. Next year's meeting is scheduled to be face-to-face in Edinburgh. One of the topics that was discussed in both the ExtAG (the meeting primarily of IECEx certification bodies) and the

ExMC (the formal Management Committee of IECEx) was related to the IECEx role in furthering the hydrogen economy.

Initially focusing on hydrogen dispensers for automotive purposes, and similar applications, IECEx is filling the gaps in standardisation with an Operational Document, to allow certification to start sometime in the near future. Several IECEx certification bodies have already shown a keen interest and are ready to start as soon as possible.

During the pandemic, IECEx had operated in emergency mode, in accordance with Operational Document OD 060. This has allowed most surveillance visits with manufacturers, and inspections of manufactured equipment, to take place remotely, taking advantage of the technology that has become so familiar over the last couple of years.

However, now that we are nearing normality in most parts of the world, the IECEx Management Committee has expressed concern that, although video conferencing works well, the options for an auditor to spot something odd out of the corner of their eye, and ask relevant questions, does not exist. Therefore, starting with surveillance visits to manufacturers that get organised after 1 January 2023, most visits will be face-to-face. This will not rule out virtual visits absolutely, but each case will have to be put to the IECEx secretariat for acceptance of the justification. ■

One update from my last article is that the UK government has now published a revision to the guidance document for 'Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2016: Great Britain'.

This revision, published just after I had written my previous article, now incorporates the latest information related to the application of the UKCA marking, and the various derogations. I recommend that all manufacturers read this document and decide how to mark their equipment accordingly.

It also contains a correction to the legislation, relating to the deposit of Technical Documentation for Category 2 and M2 equipment, pending the issue of formal revision to the legislation.

Visit <https://www.ukex-abg.org.uk/home#about> and select the first document from the list of UK Government Guidance under "Useful Links".

Another update relates to the absence of some EN versions of standards already published in the IEC version, particularly 60079-31 for protection against explosive dusts. It seems that there has been a hiatus between the European Commission and the company responsible for contracting the "HAS" consultants. This is the group of individual experts who are required to "approve" a standard for listing as "harmonised" in the Official Journal of the European Union. Until a standard is listed as harmonised, it cannot automatically be assumed to give presumption

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, as well as attending the equivalent UK Approved Bodies Group in the UK. He has recently retired as Chair of the IECEx Service Facility Certification Committee and as 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.