

The value of IECx certifications

RGS Electro-Pneumatics Ltd has been building Ex solenoid valves for almost 50 years at its factory in Lancashire, England. But as **Mike Amphlett**, the company's sales and marketing manager explains, Ex certification can be a blessing or a curse

One of the great benefits to buyers and users of technical equipment in recent years has been the increasing use of standards; a common yardstick by which to judge the 'suitability for purpose' of such products is a useful tool. For hazardous area operation, the standards of design, manufacture and use of electrical apparatus are of paramount importance to ensure the safety and security of plant and employees. Testing of Ex products is more complex and time consuming than for 'safe area' products, and thus more costly, while the typical approval turn-around will be 12 months or more

From RGS's viewpoint as a builder of solenoid valves for the process industries, certification presents a challenge. Plainly, it would not be sustainable for the company to make product solely for its home market to the exclusion of other regions; yet for hazardous area operation, it is of course

essential to carry appropriate certification for all the target markets. Until recently, the choice and prioritising of market and certification submission has been a difficult commercial balancing act, almost always resulting in incomplete international coverage.

At best, the complication simply builds in some additional cost and delay; at worst, it reduces customer choice and inhibits the development of new markets.

Enter the IECEX. This is a multilateral certification scheme based on the International Electrotechnical Commission's international standards. It caters for differing countries whose national standards are either identical to, or very close to IEC standards. In these cases, the IEC national committee in each country accredits the appropriate certification body to participate in the IECEX. Once accepted the national bodies may test Ex product to IEC standards,

with the certifications being "transferable" between countries at low cost and with little or no further product testing.

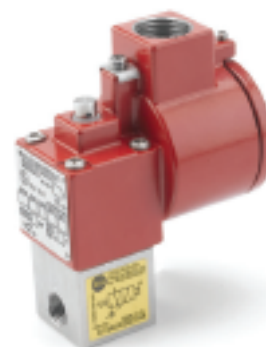
While not all member countries have yet fully harmonised their standards, some national differences still exist. These are generally catered for by the IECEX ATR, which covers the differences in an annex. Where they are not covered, some local 'top-up' testing may be needed.,

RGS sees that this truly global concept and practice will reduce trade barriers caused by different conformity assessment criteria in various countries, and will help the development of new markets. Our international customers are better served by the improved availability of certified Ex solenoids – wherever they choose to build a new plant. Our distributors and agents can have greater confidence that RGS will be able to support them in emerging opportunities increasingly worldwide. ●



Solenoid Valves

- RGS** has 45 years of experience in the design and manufacture of electro-pneumatic devices for power and process industry applications.
- RGS** solenoid valves are well trusted and widely specified for use in Oil, Gas and Energy Process Applications.
- RGS** is number one for;
 - **Approvals** – Hazardous area EExd, EExm, EExme, EExNa, EExia and safe area, variously with ATEX, FM, CSA, and SAA approvals
 - **Choice** – over 200,000 possible variants of interchangeable valve bodies, operators and other options
 - **Range** - 'Namur', remote, banjo, gang mount and manifold mount options, In Stainless Steel, Brass or Aluminium construction
 - **Control** – All product design and manufacturing is RGS 'end-to-end'
 - **Support** – Distributors and agents across the world



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