IECEX VS. ATEX: A REGULATORY COMPARISON

While both ATEX and IECEx aim to regulate the safety of equipment used in explosive atmospheres, their approaches differ significantly. Understanding these differences is crucial for industries looking to minimise risk and ensure compliance with the highest safety standards.

1. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

ATEX: Allows self-certification for Category 2 and 3 nonelectrical equipment, meaning manufacturers can approve their own products without external verification. Only Category 1 equipment requires third-party involvement.

IECEx: Requires independent certification for all equipment, ensuring that every product undergoes rigorous testing and compliance checks before it enters the market.

2. TESTING AND COMPLIANCE VERIFICATION

ATEX: Compliance is based on a manufacturer's declaration, with little oversight unless an issue arises.

IECEx: Equipment is tested by an accredited IECEx certification body (ExCB), which issues a Certificate of Conformity after verifying compliance with stringent international safety standards.

3. TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

ATEX: Under the ATEX system, there is no centralised public database for verifying self-certified equipment. This lack of accessible information makes it difficult - if not impossible - for end-users, specifiers, and inspectors to independently confirm compliance claims or review technical documentation. As a result, transparency is limited, and traceability of safety claims is often reliant on the manufacturer's own declarations.

IECEx: In contrast, the IECEx scheme prioritises full transparency and traceability. It maintains a publicly accessible online database of certified equipment, components certificates, manufacturers names, test & assessment reports. This not only helps end-users make informed decisions but also supports accountability across the supply chain. Click the link to access the online database <u>www.iecex-certs.com</u>

4. INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

ATEX: Primarily recognised within the EU but not always accepted in other markets without additional certification.

IECEx: Recognised internationally, including in Australia, the U.S., and parts of Asia and the Middle East, simplifying compliance for global operations.

These differences highlight why IECEx is considered a more robust and reliable certification scheme. While ATEX provides a legal framework for equipment sold in the EU, it falls short in ensuring consistent safety standards due to its allowance for self-certification.







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COMPARISON OF FAN HAZARDOUS AREA PROTECTIONS ANCA vs. ATEX vs. UKEX vs. IECEX

CAT 2GD, CAT 3GD, ZONE 1, ZONE 21, ZONE 2, ZONE 22, DIV 1, DIV 2A WOODCOCK & WILSON SAFETY PROTECTION RANKING

HIGH						
_					•••	•••
MEDIUN			•••		•••	•••
			•••		•••	•••
LOW						
RISK / CONSIDERATION		AMCA	ATEX	UKEX	IECEx	•••
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PROTECTION		YES	YES	YES	YES	
RESPONSIBILITIES IDENTIFIED		LOW	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	
CONTRUCTION MATL CONTROLS		LOW	YES	HIGH	HIGH	
MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS		LOW	YES	HIGH	HIGH	
EXTERNAL TO AIRSTREAM CONTROLS		NO	YES	YES	YES	
CONSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN LIMITS		NO	YES	YES	YES	
OPERATIONAL LIMITS		NO	YES	YES	YES	
ZONE / DIV SPECIFIC HAZARD CONTROLS		NO	YES	YES	YES	
UP-TO-DATE STANDARDS ONLY		NO	NO	YES	YES	
MANUFACTURING ASSURANCE (QAR)		NO	NO	NO	YES	
MANDATORY THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION		NO	NO	NO	YES	
GUARANTEED COMPLIANCE TO SAFETY STD'S		NO	NO	NO	YES	
ON-LINE CERTIFICATE VERIFICATION		NO	NO	NO	YES	

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