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Fourth edition
2002-06

Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres –

Part 10: Classification of hazardous areas

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INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

ELECTRICAL APPARATUS FOR EXPLOSIVE GAS ATMOSPHERES –

Part 10: Classification of hazardous areas

FOREWORD

1) The IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) is a worldwide organization for standardization comprising all national electrotechnical committees (IEC National Committees). The object of the IEC is to promote international co-operation on all questions concerning standardization in the electrical and electronic fields. To this end and in addition to other activities, the IEC publishes International Standards. Their preparation is entrusted to technical committees; any IEC National Committee interested in the subject dealt with may participate in this preparatory work. International, governmental and non-governmental organizations liaising with the IEC also participate in this preparation. The IEC collaborates closely with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in accordance with conditions determined by agreement between the two organizations.
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3) The documents produced have the form of recommendations for international use and are published in the form of standards, technical specifications, technical reports or guides and they are accepted by the National Committees in that sense.
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6) Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this International Standard may be the subject of patent rights. The IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

International Standard IEC 60079-10 has been prepared by subcommittee 31J: Classification of hazardous areas and installation requirements, of IEC technical committee 31: Electrical apparatus for explosive atmospheres.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition published in 1995, and constitutes a technical revision.

The text of this standard is based on the following documents:

FDIS	Report on voting
31J/82/FDIS	31J/84/RVD

Full information on the voting for the approval of this standard can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This publication has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 3.

Annexes A, B and C are for information only.

The committee has decided that the contents of this publication will remain unchanged until 2007. At this date, the publication will be

- reconfirmed;
- withdrawn;
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

INTRODUCTION

In areas where dangerous quantities and concentrations of flammable gas or vapour may arise, protective measures are to be applied in order to reduce the risk of explosions. This part of IEC 60079 sets out the essential criteria against which the risk of ignition can be assessed, and gives guidance on the design and control parameters which can be used in order to reduce such a risk.

This standard can be used as a basis for the proper selection and installation of apparatus for use in a hazardous area.

ELECTRICAL APPARATUS FOR EXPLOSIVE GAS ATMOSPHERES –

Part 10: Classification of hazardous areas

1 General

1.1 Scope

This part of IEC 60079 is concerned with the classification of hazardous areas where flammable gas or vapour risks may arise, in order to permit the proper selection and installation of apparatus for use in such hazardous areas.

It is intended to be applied where there may be a risk of ignition due to the presence of flammable gas or vapour, mixed with air under normal atmospheric conditions (see note 2), but it does not apply to

a) mines susceptible to firedamp;

b) the processing and manufacture of explosives;

c) areas where a risk may arise due to the presence of ignitable dusts or fibres;

d) catastrophic failures which are beyond the concept of abnormality dealt with in this standard (see note 3);

e) rooms used for medical purposes;

f) areas where the presence of flammable mist may give rise to an unpredictable risk and which require special consideration (see note 5);

g) domestic premises.

This standard does not take into account the effects of consequential damage.

Definitions and explanations of terms are given together with the main principles and procedures relating to hazardous area classification.

For detailed recommendations regarding the extent of the hazardous areas in specific industries or applications, reference may be made to the codes relating to those industries or applications.

NOTE 1 For the purpose of this standard, an area is a three-dimensional region or space.

NOTE 2 Atmospheric conditions include variations above and below reference levels of 101,3 kPa (1 013 mbar) and 20 °C (293 K), provided that the variations have a negligible effect on the explosion properties of the flammable materials.

NOTE 3 Catastrophic failure in this context is applied, for example, to the rupture of a process vessel or pipeline and events that are not predictable.

NOTE 4 In any process plant, irrespective of size, there may be numerous sources of ignition apart from those associated with electrical apparatus. Appropriate precautions will be necessary to ensure safety in this context. This standard may be used with judgement for other ignition sources.

NOTE 5 Mists may form or be present at the same time as flammable vapours. This may affect the way flammable material disperses and the extent of any hazardous areas. The strict application of area classification for gases and vapours may not be appropriate because the flammability characteristics of mists are not always predictable. Whilst it can be difficult to decide upon the type and extent of zones, the criteria applicable to gases and vapours will, in most cases, give a safe result. However, special consideration should always be given to the danger of ignition of flammable mists.

1.2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60050(426):1990, *International Electrotechnical Vocabulary (IEV) – Chapter 426: Electrical apparatus for explosive atmospheres*

IEC 60079-4:1975, *Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 4: Method of test for ignition temperature*

IEC 60079-4A:1970, *First supplement to IEC 60079-4 (1966), Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 4: Method of test for ignition temperature*

IEC 60079-20:1996, *Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 20: Data for flammable gases and vapours, relating to the use of electrical apparatus*

2 Definitions and terms

For the purpose of this part of IEC 60079, the following definitions and terms apply.

NOTE Where a definition appears in this clause and in IEC 60050(426), the definition given in this clause is applicable.

2.1
explosive atmosphere
mixture with air, under atmospheric conditions, of flammable substances in the form of gas, vapour, mist or dust, in which after ignition, combustion spreads throughout the unconsumed mixture

[IEV 426-02-02, modified]

2.2
explosive gas atmosphere
mixture with air, under atmospheric conditions, of flammable substances in the form of gas or vapour in which, after ignition, combustion spreads throughout the unconsumed mixture

[IEV 426-02-03, modified]

NOTE Although a mixture which has a concentration above the upper explosive limit (UEL) is not an explosive gas atmosphere, it can readily become so and, in certain cases for area classification purposes, it is advisable to consider it as an explosive gas atmosphere.

2.3
hazardous area
area in which an explosive gas atmosphere is present, or may be expected to be present, in quantities such as to require special precautions for the construction, installation and use of apparatus

[IEV 426-03-01, modified]

2.4
non-hazardous area
area in which an explosive gas atmosphere is not expected to be present in quantities such as to require special precautions for the construction, installation and use of apparatus

[IEV 426-03-02, modified]

2.5
zones
hazardous areas are classified into zones based upon the frequency of the occurrence and duration of an explosive gas atmosphere, as follows:

2.5.1
zone 0
place in which an explosive atmosphere consisting of a mixture with air of flammable substances in the form of gas, vapour or mist is present continuously or for long periods or frequently

[IEV 426-03-03, modified]

2.5.2
zone 1
place in which an explosive atmosphere consisting of a mixture with air of flammable substances in the form of gas, vapour or mist is likely to occur in normal operation occasionally

[IEV 426-03-04, modified]

2.5.3
zone 2
place in which an explosive atmosphere consisting of a mixture with air of flammable substances in the form of gas, vapour or mist is not likely to occur in normal operation but, if it does occur, will persist for a short period only

[IEV 426-03-05, modified]

NOTE 1 In this definition, the word "persist" means the total time for which the flammable atmosphere will exist. This will normally comprise the total of the duration of the release, plus the time taken for the flammable atmosphere to disperse after the release has stopped. (The term "persistence time" as used in annex B refers specifically to only one part of the total time for which the flammable atmosphere will exist.)

NOTE 2 Indications of the frequency of the occurrence and duration may be taken from codes relating to specific industries or applications.

2.6
source of release
point or location from which a flammable gas, vapour, or liquid may be released into the atmosphere in such a way that an explosive gas atmosphere could be formed

[IEV 426-03-06, modified]

2.7
grades of release
there are three basic grades of release, as listed below in order of decreasing frequency and likelihood of the explosive gas atmosphere being present:

a) continuous grade;

b) primary grade;

c) secondary grade.

A source of release may give rise to any one of these grades of release, or to a combination of more than one

2.7.1
continuous grade of release
release which is continuous or is expected to occur frequently or for long periods

2.7.2
primary grade of release
release which can be expected to occur periodically or occasionally during normal operation

2.7.3
secondary grade of release
release which is not expected to occur in normal operation and, if it does occur, is likely to do so only infrequently and for short periods

2.8
release rate
quantity of flammable gas or vapour emitted per unit time from the source of release

2.9
normal operation
situation when the equipment is operating within its design parameters

NOTE 1 Minor releases of flammable material may be part of normal operation. For example, releases from seals which rely on wetting by the fluid which is being pumped are considered to be minor releases.

NOTE 2 Failures (such as the breakdown of pump seals, flange gaskets or spillages caused by accidents) which involve urgent repair or shut-down are not considered to be part of normal operation nor are they considered to be catastrophic.

NOTE 3 Normal operation includes start-up and shut-down conditions.

2.10
ventilation
movement of air and its replacement with fresh air due to the effects of wind, temperature gradients, or artificial means (for example, fans or extractors)

2.11
explosive limits

NOTE The terms "explosive limit" and "flammable limit" are equivalent. IEC 60079-20 and IEC 61779-1 use the term "flammable limit" whilst all the other standards use the more widely accepted term "explosive limit".

2.11.1
lower explosive limit (LEL)
concentration of flammable gas or vapour in air, below which the gas atmosphere is not explosive

[IEV 426-02-09, modified]

2.11.2
upper explosive limit (UEL)
concentration of flammable gas or vapour in air, above which the gas atmosphere is not explosive

[IEV 426-02-10, modified]

2.12
relative density of a gas or a vapour
density of a gas or a vapour relative to the density of air at the same pressure and at the same temperature (air is equal to 1,0)

2.13
flammable material (flammable substance)
material which is flammable of itself, or is capable of producing a flammable gas, vapour or mist

2.14
flammable liquid
liquid capable of producing a flammable vapour under any foreseeable operating conditions

2.15
flammable gas or vapour
gas or vapour which, when mixed with air in certain proportions, will form an explosive gas atmosphere

2.16
flammable mist
droplets of flammable liquid, dispersed in air so as to form an explosive atmosphere

2.17
flashpoint
lowest liquid temperature at which, under certain standardized conditions, a liquid gives off vapours in a quantity such as to be capable of forming an ignitable vapour/air mixture

[IEV 426-02-14]

2.18
boiling point
temperature of a liquid boiling at an ambient pressure of 101,3 kPa (1 013 mbar)

NOTE The initial boiling point that should be used for liquid mixtures is to indicate the lowest value of the boiling point for the range of liquids present, as determined in a standard laboratory distillation without fractionation.

2.19
vapour pressure
pressure exerted when a solid or liquid is in equilibrium with its own vapour. It is a function of the substance and of the temperature

2.20
ignition temperature of an explosive gas atmosphere
lowest temperature of a heated surface at which, under specified conditions, the ignition of a flammable substance in the form of a gas or vapour mixture with air will occur

[IEV 426-02-01, modified]

NOTE IEC 60079-4 and IEC 60079-4A standardize a method for the determination of this temperature.

2.21
extent of zone
distance in any direction from the source of release to the point where the gas/air mixture has been diluted by air to a value below the lower explosive limit

2.22
liquefied flammable gas
flammable material which is stored or handled as a liquid and which at ambient temperature and atmospheric pressure is a flammable gas

3 Safety and area classification

3.1 Safety principles

Installations in which flammable materials are handled or stored should be designed, operated and maintained so that any releases of flammable material, and consequently the extent of hazardous areas, are kept to a minimum, whether in normal operation or otherwise, with regard to frequency, duration and quantity.

It is important to examine those parts of process equipment and systems from which release of flammable material may arise and to consider modifying the design to minimize the likelihood and frequency of such releases and the quantity and rate of release of material.

These fundamental considerations should be examined at an early stage of the design development of any process plant and should also receive prime attention in carrying out the area classification study.

In the case of maintenance activities other than those of normal operation, the extent of the zone may be affected but it is expected that this would be dealt with by a permit-to-work system.

In a situation in which there may be an explosive gas atmosphere, the following steps should be taken:

a) eliminate the likelihood of an explosive gas atmosphere occurring around the source of ignition, or

b) eliminate the source of ignition.

Where this is not possible, protective measures, process equipment, systems and procedures should be selected and prepared so the likelihood of the coincidence of a) and b) is so small as to be acceptable. Such measures may be used singly, if they are recognized as being highly reliable, or in combination to achieve an equivalent level of safety.

3.2 Area classification objectives

Area classification is a method of analysing and classifying the environment where explosive gas atmospheres may occur so as to facilitate the proper selection and installation of apparatus to be used safely in that environment, taking into account gas groups and temperature classes.

In most practical situations where flammable materials are used, it is difficult to ensure that an explosive gas atmosphere will never occur. It may also be difficult to ensure that apparatus will never give rise to a source of ignition. Therefore, in situations where an explosive gas atmosphere has a high likelihood of occurring, reliance is placed on using apparatus which has a low likelihood of creating a source of ignition. Conversely, where the likelihood of an explosive gas atmosphere occurring is reduced, apparatus constructed to a less rigorous standard may be used.

It is rarely possible by a simple examination of a plant or plant design to decide which parts of the plant can be equated to the three zonal definitions (zones 0, 1 and 2). A more detailed approach is therefore necessary and this involves the analysis of the basic possibility of an explosive gas atmosphere occurring.

The first step is to assess the likelihood of this, in accordance with the definitions of zone 0, zone 1 and zone 2. Once the likely frequency and duration of release (and hence the grade of release), the release rate, concentration, velocity, ventilation and other factors which affect the type and/or extent of the zone have been determined, there is then a firm basis on which to determine the likely presence of an explosive gas atmosphere in the surrounding areas.

This approach therefore requires detailed consideration to be given to each item of process equipment which contains a flammable material, and which could therefore be a source of release.

In particular, zone 0 or zone 1 areas should be minimized in number and extent by design or suitable operating procedures. In other words, plants and installations should be mainly zone 2 or non-hazardous. Where release of flammable material is unavoidable, process equipment items should be limited to those which give secondary grade releases or, failing this (that is where primary or continuous grade releases are unavoidable), the releases should be of very limited quantity and rate. In carrying out area classification, these principles should receive prime consideration. Where necessary, the design, operation and location of process equipment should ensure that, even when it is operating abnormally, the amount of flammable material released into the atmosphere is minimized, so as to reduce the extent of the hazardous area.

Once a plant has been classified and all necessary records made, it is important that no modification to equipment or operating procedures is made without discussion with those responsible for the area classification. Unauthorized action may invalidate the area classification. It is necessary to ensure that all equipment affecting the area classification which has been subjected to maintenance is carefully checked during and after re-assembly to ensure that the integrity of the original design, as it affects safety, has been maintained before it is returned to service.

4 Area classification procedure

4.1 General

The area classification should be carried out by those who have knowledge of the properties of flammable materials, the process and the equipment, in consultation, as appropriate, with safety, electrical, mechanical and other engineering personnel.

The following subclauses give guidance on the procedure for classifying areas in which there may be an explosive gas atmosphere and on the extent of zones 0, 1 and 2. An example of a schematic approach to the classification of hazardous areas is given in figure C.1.

The area classification should be carried out when the initial process and instrumentation line diagrams and initial layout plans are available and confirmed before plant start-up. Reviews should be carried out during the life of the plant.

4.2 Sources of release

The basic elements for establishing the hazardous zone types are the identification of the source of release and the determination of the grade of release.

Since an explosive gas atmosphere can exist only if a flammable gas or vapour is present with air, it is necessary to decide if any of these flammable materials can exist in the area concerned. Generally speaking, such gases and vapours (and flammable liquids and solids which may give rise to them) are contained within process equipment which may or may not be totally enclosed. It is necessary to identify where a flammable atmosphere can exist inside a process plant, or where a release of flammable materials can create a flammable atmosphere outside a process plant.

Each item of process equipment (for example, tank, pump, pipeline, vessel, etc.) should be considered as a potential source of release of flammable material. If the item cannot contain

flammable material, it will clearly not give rise to a hazardous area around it. The same will apply if the item contains a flammable material but cannot release it into the atmosphere (for example, an all-welded pipeline is not considered to be a source of release).

If it is established that the item may release flammable material into the atmosphere, it is necessary, first of all, to determine the grade of release in accordance with the definitions, by establishing the likely frequency and duration of the release. It should be recognized that the opening-up of parts of enclosed process systems (for example, during filter changing or batch filling) should also be considered as sources of release when developing the area classification. By means of this procedure, each release will be graded either "continuous", "primary" or "secondary".

Having established the grade of the release, it is necessary to determine the release rate and other factors which may influence the type and extent of the zone.

If the total quantity of flammable material available for release is "small", for example, laboratory use, whilst a potential hazard may exist, it may not be appropriate to use this area classification procedure. In such cases, account shall be taken of the particular risks involved.

The area classification of process equipment in which flammable material is burned, for example, fired heaters, furnaces, boilers, gas turbines etc., should take into account purge cycle, start-up and shut-down conditions.

4.3 Type of zone

The likelihood of the presence of an explosive gas atmosphere and hence the type of zone depends mainly on the grade of release and the ventilation.

NOTE 1 A continuous grade of release normally leads to a zone 0, a primary grade to zone 1 and a secondary grade to zone 2 (see annex B).

NOTE 2 Where zones created by adjacent sources of release overlap and are of different zonal classification, the higher risk classification will apply in the area of overlap. Where overlapping zones are of the same classification, this common classification will normally apply.

However, care needs to be taken where the overlapping zones relate to flammable materials which have different apparatus groups and/or temperature class. So, for example, if a zone 1 IIA T3 area overlapped a zone 2 IIC T1 area, then classifying the overlap as zone 1 IIC T3 may be over-restrictive but classifying it as zone 1 IIA T3 or zone 1 IIC T1 would not be acceptable. In this situation, the area classification should be recorded as zone 1 IIA T3 and zone 2 IIC T1.