

Motors potentially explosive atmospheres

What do you need to know



Overview

A potentially explosive atmosphere is defined as a location in which gases, vapors, mist or dust mixed with air can form a flammable mixture. Electrical and mechanical equipment installed in such locations must be designed and tested in such way that it does not cause arcing, sparking nor such high temperatures that could provide a source of ignition for such a mix.

The purpose of this brochure is to provide the reader with basic information on the regulations, standards, definitions and equipment requirements for motors and drives in potentially explosive areas.



What is a potentially explosive atmosphere?

Explosive atmosphere occurs when a suitable mixture of flammable gas, mist, vapor or dust together with air is formed. This creates the risk of an explosion.

The area where this possibility exists is defined as a **potentially explosive atmosphere**. These atmospheres can be found in many industries, from chemical, pharmaceutical and food, to power generation and wood processing. The areas may also be known as “hazardous areas” or “hazardous locations.”

The number of substances that are flammable when mixed with air is very large. This means there are many industrial sectors that can have a potentially explosive atmosphere somewhere in their process. Some of these are not so obvious. For example, sawmills by default are not a potentially explosive atmosphere, but if sawdust is allowed to collect in large amounts in one area, that area can become one.



Understanding the standards for explosive atmospheres

Globally, there are many national regulations and certification systems with different requirements. The technical requirements in these regulations are increasingly harmonized with the global IEC standards.

IECEX

The IECEx system (www.iecex.com) – from the International Electrotechnical Commission, is a voluntary certification system that verifies compliance with IEC standards related to safety in explosive atmospheres. IECEx covers four main areas:

- Certification of service facilities
- Equipment certification
- Ex marking conformity
- Certification of Personnel Competencies

European Directives

Commonly referred to as ATEX, from the French “ATmosphères EXplosibles”, the European regulations combine two EU directives: the Worker Protection Directive (1999/92/EC) and the Product Directive (2014/34/ EU). The EU Directives have some difference from IECEx, and they do not include certification of service facilities or certification of personnel competencies. Compliance with the “Essential Health and Safety Requirements” described in the directives is mandatory within EU countries. The easiest way to show compliance is to follow harmonized standards.

UKCA marking (UKEX) is the UK product marking requirement that will be needed for all Ex products being placed on the market in Great Britain, substituting the EU requirements for CE Marking.

Protective devices

Protective devices are often required by IEC 60079 series of standards for safe operation of Ex equipment. Protective devices can be located inside or outside explosive atmospheres. A typical example of a protective device is surface temperature protection for motors controlled by a variable-speed drive (VSD). This type of protective device is an alternative to a certified and tested combination of motor and VSD.

Protective devices for Ex equipment and products fall within the scope of the ATEX (and UKEX in United Kingdom) regulations: harmonized (designated) standard EN 50495:2010. IEC does not have an applicable standard for electrical safety devices for Ex equipment, and therefore certification can only be done according to ATEX (and UKEX). However, IEC publication (IEC TS 60079-42) gives guidance on protective devices under IECEx. Also remember to always check the local regulations as well.

Main standards for explosive atmospheres

IEC and EN standards

- IEC 60050-426 Equipment for explosive atmospheres
- IEC/EN 60079-0: Equipment – General requirements
- IEC/EN 60079-1: Equipment protection by flameproof enclosures “d”
- IEC 60079-2: Equipment protection by pressurized enclosure “p”
- IEC/EN 60079-7: Equipment protection by increased safety “e”
- IEC/EN 60079-10: Classification of hazardous areas (gas areas)
- IEC 60079-10-1: Classification of areas – Explosive gas atmospheres
- IEC 60079-10-2: Classification of areas – Combustible dust atmospheres
- IEC/EN 60079-14: Electrical installations design, selection and erection
- IEC/EN 60079-15: Equipment protection by type of protection “n” (no longer applicable to rotating machines)
- IEC/EN 60079-17: Electrical installations inspections and maintenance
- IEC/EN 60079-19: Equipment repair, overhaul and reclamation
- IEC/EN 60079-31: Equipment dust ignition protection by enclosure “t”

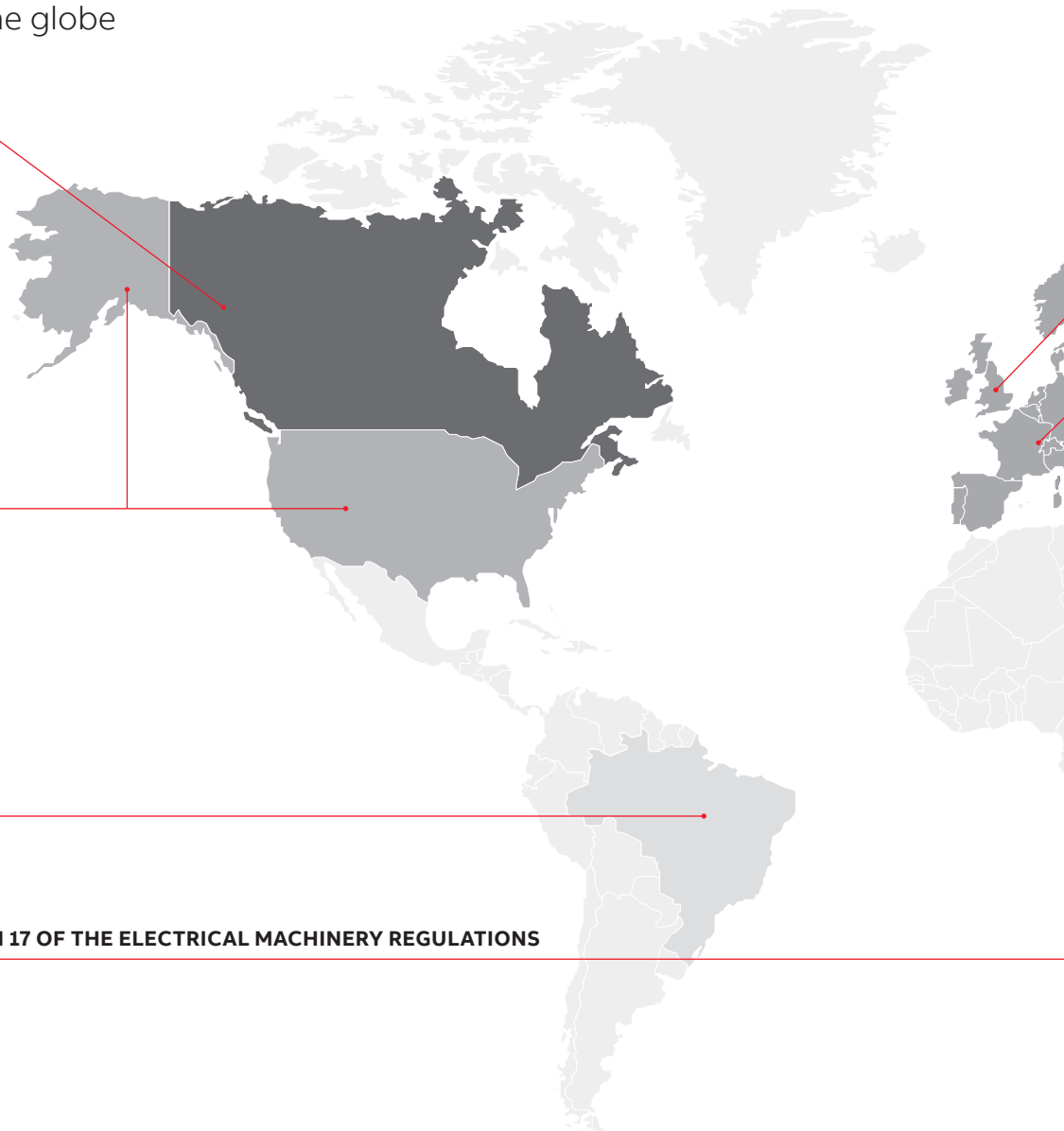
Regulations around the globe

CEC

NEC

INMETRO

OHSA ACT 85 AND REGULATION 17 OF THE ELECTRICAL MACHINERY REGULATIONS



ATEX directives

The Worker Protection Directive (1999/92/EC) specifies the minimum health and safety requirements for workers performing duties in potentially explosive atmospheres.

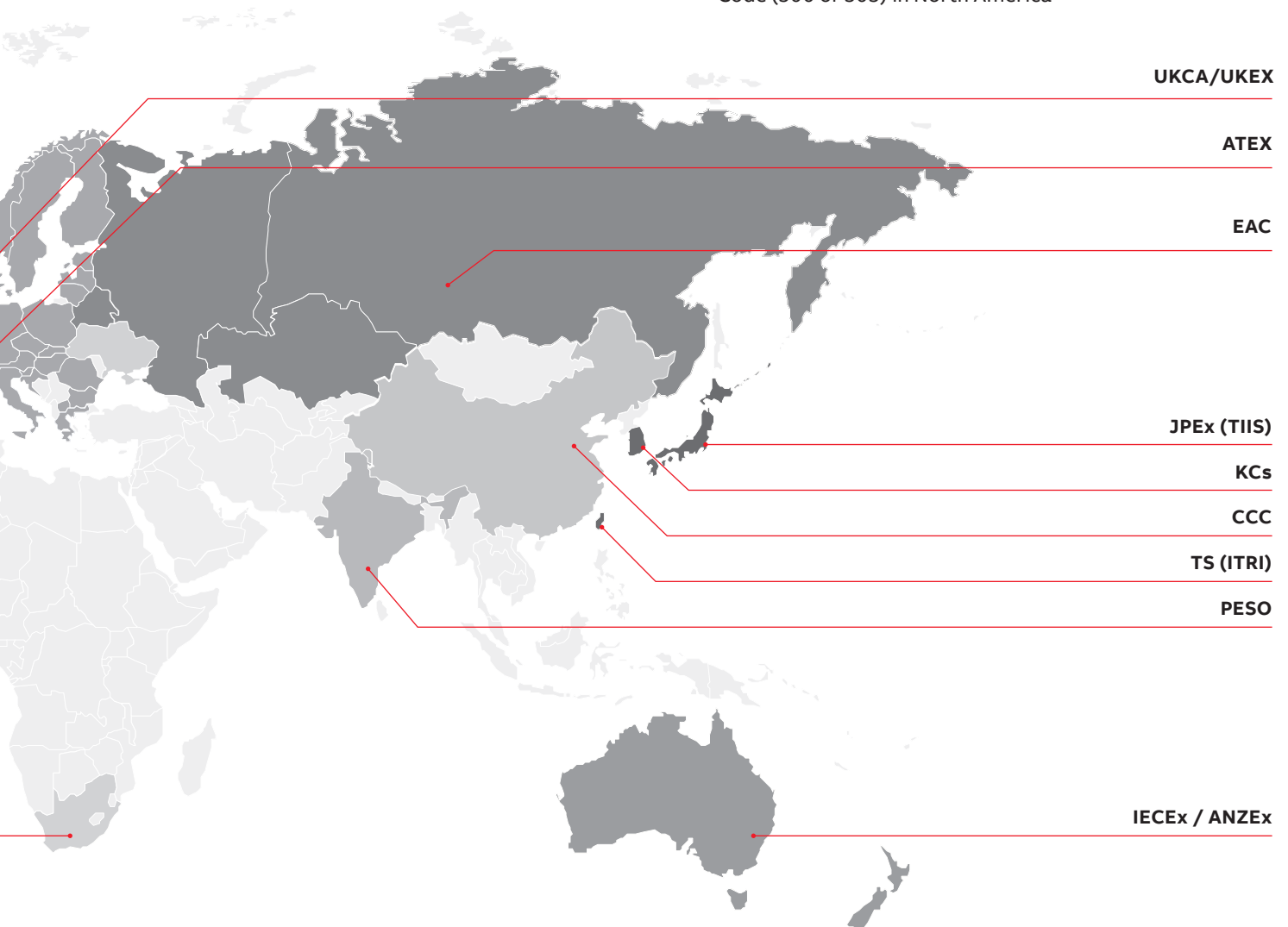
The Product Directive (2014/34/EU) specifies requirements for equipment that is used in potentially explosive atmospheres. It also specifies the requirements for protective systems that are needed for equipment protection.

In addition to IECEx and ATEX there are several local standards that may be in effect in certain countries.

Other standards

Many countries have regulations concerning both the design and use of electrical devices in potentially explosive atmospheres, and these may differ. These regulations are recognizing IECEx Test Reports widely but may require some additional documentation, testing and local product certification is mandatory. National requirements may still need to be met for final approval of installation (e.g. in Russia, Brazil, Australia or Japan), but they generally relate to one of the main standards below. In such countries having not implemented their own Ex safety regulations either IECEx or ATEX certificate may be recognized.

- IEC: International Electrotechnical Commission
- EN: European standard
- NEC/CEC: National Electrical Code / Canadian Electric Code (500 or 505) in North America



Groups

Groups

Internationally, IEC 60079-0 and EN 60079-0 in Europe define three groups for potentially explosive atmospheres: Group I covers underground mines or mines susceptible to firedamp. Group II relates to surface environments with gas, and Group III to surface environments with dust. The Product Directive defines only two groups: Group I for underground mines or mines endangered by firedamp and/or combustible dust, and Group II for all surface installations.

The group designation is essentially based on where equipment can be used (equipment classification).

Subgroups and temperature classes

Explosive gases, vapors and dusts have different chemical properties that affect the likelihood and severity of an explosion. Such properties include flame temperature, minimum ignition energy, upper and lower explosive limits, and molecular weight. Based on the nature of the explosive gas/dust, gases are grouped into IIA, IIB and IIC and dusts into IIIA, IIIB and IIIC.

Temperature classes are defined for equipment based on its maximum surface temperature. When selecting a piece of equipment for a potentially explosive atmosphere, the maximum surface temperature of the equipment must be lower than the ignition temperature of the potential gas or dust mixture.

Gas classification

Temp. class	Ignition temp. of gas/vapor (°C)	Max. permitted temp. of equipment (°C)	Gas examples
T1	> 450	450	Hydrogen
T2	> 300 but < 450	300	Ethanol
T3	> 200 but < 300	200	Hydrogen sulfide
T4	> 135 but < 200	135	Diethyl ether
T5	> 100 but < 135	100	–
T6	> 85 but < 100	85	Carbon disulfide

Gas subdivision

IIA	Approx. 120 gases and vapors, e.g. butane/petroleum/propane
IIB	Approx. 30 gases and vapors, e.g. ethylene/dimethyl ether/coke oven gas
IIC	Three gases: hydrogen (H ₂)/acetylene (C ₂ H ₂) / carbon disulfide (CS ₂)

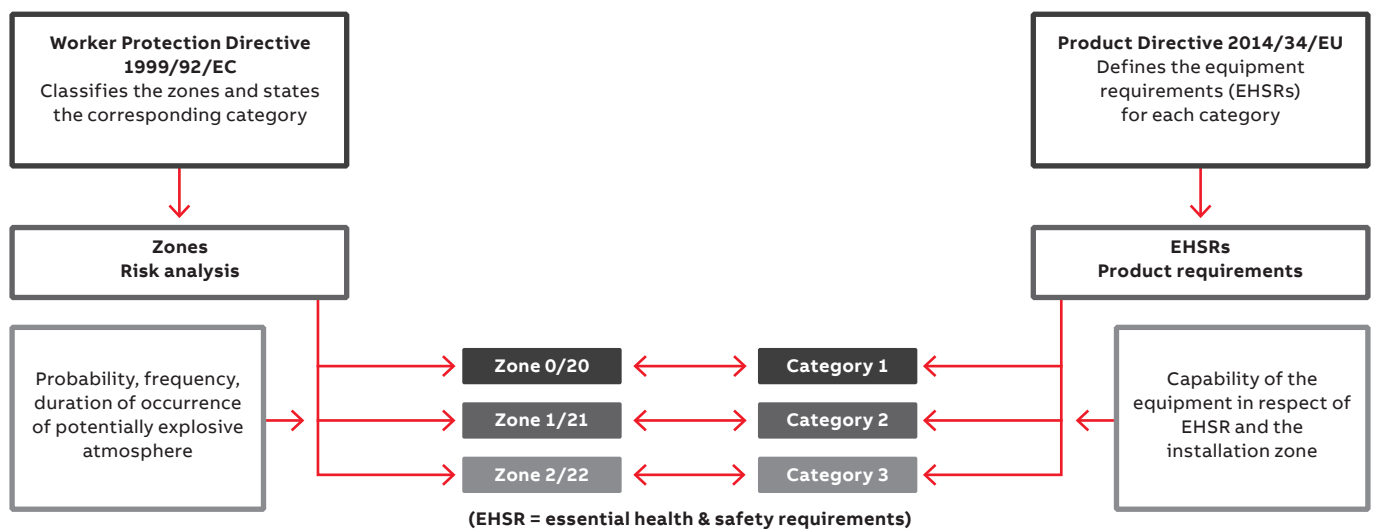
Dust classification

		TCL (cloud) (°C)	T5mm (layer) (°C)	Surface temp. provided that dust layer below 5 mm
Food/feed industry	Wheat	350	270	195
	Barley, corn	380	280	205
	Sugar	350	430	233
Natural materials	Wood	330	280	205
	Charcoal	520	230	195
	Hard coal	460	240	165
Chemicals	PVC	450	330	255
	Synth. rubber	470	220	145
	Sulfur	240	250	160

Dust subdivision

IIIA	Combustible flyings
IIIB	Non-conductive dust
IIIC	Conductive dust

Relationships between ATEX directives



The manufacturer is responsible for product safety and for delivering installation and maintenance instructions. The Product Directive guides the manufacturer to prepare the product classification and to certify the product and production.

The end user is responsible for ensuring that the product is installed, maintained and operated in a way that does not pose any risk of explosion. The Worker Protection Directive guides end users to use certified products and to prepare risk analysis, safety instructions, training and procedures for operation and maintenance.

Zones, categories and equipment

Zones

Within industries, all potentially explosive atmospheres are required to have an area classification called **zones**.

The zone system is used all over the world, and nowadays is also accepted as an alternative system in North America. The authorities normally determine the area, but that can also be performed by a third party; a notified body, or other experts. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that their site is classified before suitable products can be selected and installed at the location.

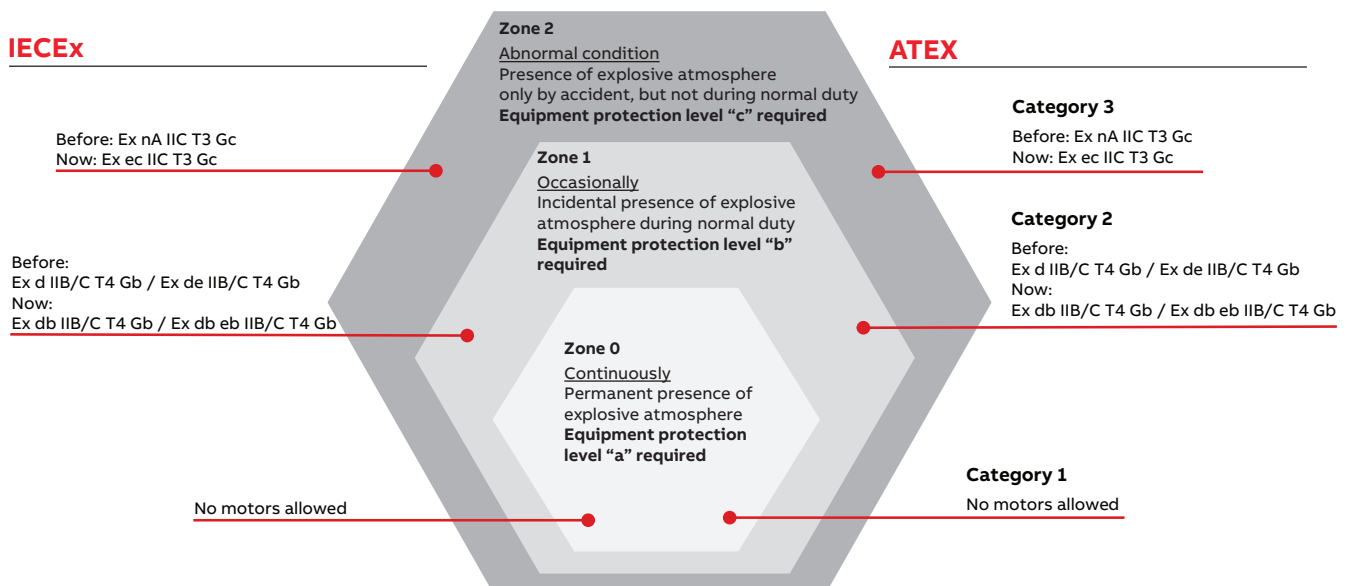
Globally, the zone system is used to classify potentially explosive areas. The Worker Protection Directive and the international standards IEC 60079-10-x and EN 60079-10-x

define these zones. In all cases, classifying the zone is the responsibility of the owner of the site where the potentially explosive atmosphere exists.

There are six zones:

- Zones 0 (for gas) and 20 (for dust), where there is a continuous presence of an explosive atmosphere.
- Zones 1 (for gas) and 21 (for dust), where there is an occasional occurrence of a potentially explosive atmosphere.
- Zones 2 (for gas) and 22 (for dust), where potentially explosive atmospheres can occur by accident, but not during normal operation.

Equipment groups and zones according to IECEx and ATEX



Equipment categories

Equipment categories are used in the ATEX directive. The category indicates which safety level must be used in each zone. In zone 0/20, category 1 devices must be used; in zone 1/21, category 2 devices; and in zone 2/22, category 3 devices.

Classification into categories is particularly important, because all the inspection, maintenance and repair duties of the end user will depend on the category of the product/equipment, not on the zone where it is installed.

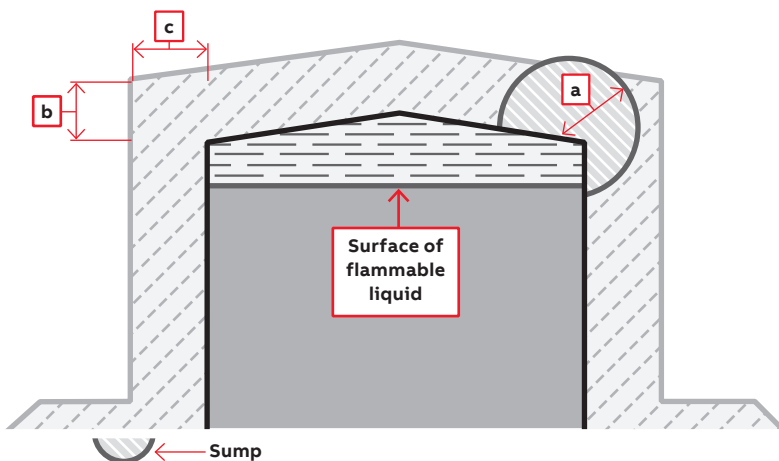
Equipment protection levels (EPL)

The latest revisions of the IEC and EN standards include the concept of “equipment protection levels” (EPLs), which identify products according to the ignition risk they might cause. EPL also considers the potential consequences of an explosion. For zone 0/20, the equipment protection level required would be “a”; for zone 1/21, it would be “b”; and for zone 2/22, the level would be “c”.

Select the motor type according to the zone and category/EPL

Standard IEC 60079-0 EN 60079-0	Zone according to IEC 60079-10-x EN 60079-10-x		ATEX Directive 2014/34/EU	Main motor protection types		
Group	EPL	Protection level	Zones	Equipment group	Equipment category	
I (Mines)	Ma	Very high	The zone classification is not used in mines.	I (Mines)	M1	Requirements according to EN 1127-2
	Mb	High			M2	
II (Gas)	Ga	Very high	0	II (Surface)	1G	No electric motors allowed
	Gb	High	1		2G	Ex d/Ex de Ex p, Ex db, Ex db eb, Ex p, Ex eb (Ex e)
	Gc	Enhanced	2		3G	Ex ec (Ex nA)
III (Dust)	Da	Very high	20		1D	No electric motors allowed
	Db	High	21		2D	Ex tb IP 65
	Dc	Enhanced	22		3D	Ex tc, IP 65/IP 55

An example of zone definitions: storage tank



- Zone 0
- Zone 1
- Zone 2

Zone distances are determined based on the risk assessment.

- a = Distance from vent opening
- b = Distance from the roof
- c = Horizontal distance from the tank

Motor protection types

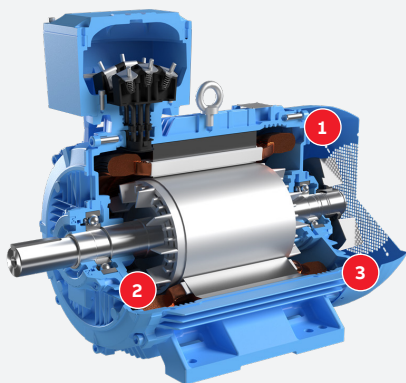
Motors are directly connected to the machines in the potentially explosive atmosphere. These atmospheres have a defined zone classification, and the zone defines the minimum safety level (category) the motors must comply with. The category defines the permitted motor protection types.

Flameproof

Protection type Ex d

Protection type Ex d requirement options for use with an AC drive

- The motor has been tested together with the drive for the duty intended and with the protective device provided.
- Or, use direct temperature protection with embedded temperature sensors and with a sufficient margin to protect the bearings or the rotor. The actions of the protective devices used must cause the motor to be disconnected.



- 1 Joints with long spigots preventing flames escaping to the outside
- 2 Flame paths between shaft and inner bearing covers
- 3 Motor housing developed to withstand an internal explosion

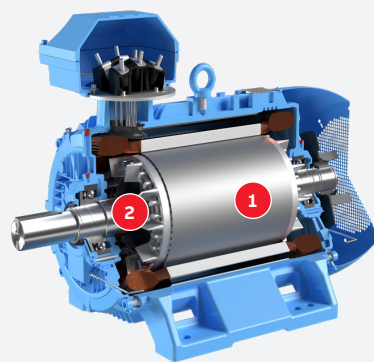
Only external surface temperature needs to be considered for the Ex temperature class.

Increased safety “ec”

Protection type Ex ec

Protection type Ex ec requirement options for use with an AC drive

- The motor is tested with the drive or a comparable drive.
- Or, the motor’s temperature class is determined by calculation.



- 1 No hot surfaces in rated conditions
- 2 No sparking during normal running or starting

Surface temperature of any part (inside or outside) must not exceed the Ex temperature class limit.

Motors can also be classified by equipment protection level (EPL) according to the IEC/EN standards. The EPL indicates the motor's inherent risk of ignition. The purpose of this classification is to make it easier to select motors for different zones easier.

For motors, the EPL marking is included in the Ex marking, and the equipment category is included in the CE marking.

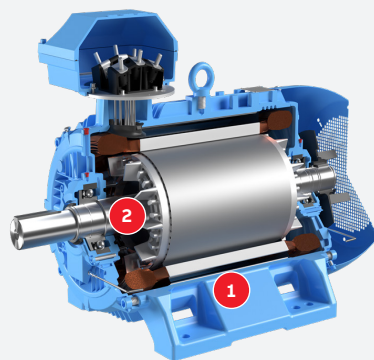
Classification into categories is particularly important, because all the inspection, maintenance and repair duties of the end user will depend on the category of the product/equipment, not on the zone where it is installed.

Below you can find examples of Ex motor protection types and methods given in the IEC/EN standard to ensure safe operation when a motor is fed from an AC drive.

Dust-ignition-proof Protection type Ex t

Protection type Ex t requirement options for use with an AC drive

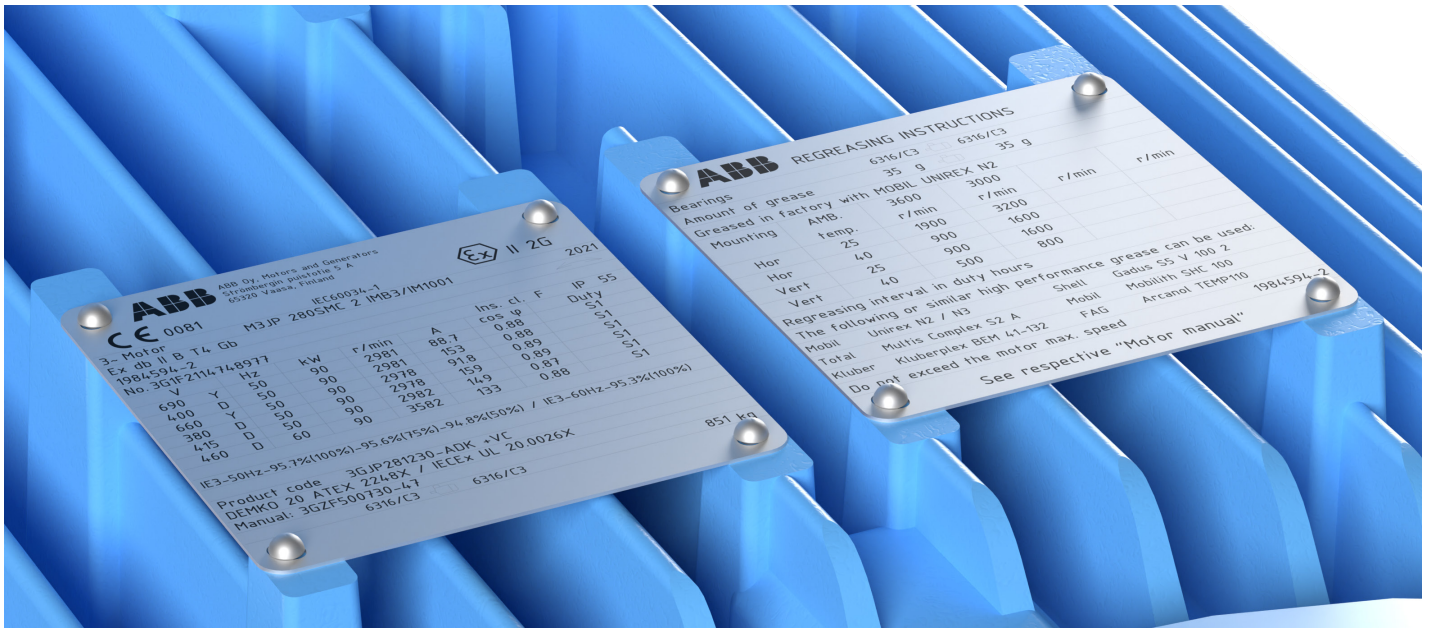
- The motor has been tested together with the drive for this duty and with the protective device provided
- Or, use direct temperature protection with embedded temperature sensors and with a sufficient margin to protect the bearings or rotor. The action of the protective device must cause the motor to be disconnected.



- 1** No hot surfaces outside the enclosure in both rated and fault conditions
- 2** Ingress protection class high enough to ensure no dust can enter the motor

Only external surface temperature needs to be considered for the Ex temperature class.

Certification markings



Example of a flameproof motor according to IECEx and ATEX

Equipment protection marking according to IEC and EN standards

Ex db IIC T4 Gb

Protection type Ex d (flameproof) with protection level b

Equipment group II (gas) and subdivision C (e.g. hydrogen)

Temperature Class T4 = max. permitted 135 °C

Equipment protection level = level b for gas

Complementary marking according to ATEX directive

CE 0081 Ex II 2G

CE marking

ID of the notified body responsible for the approval

European Commission mark for Ex products

Equipment group: II for surface industry

Equipment category: 2G for gas environment demanding a high level of protection