



ExMC/1047/CD  
August 2015

**INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION SYSTEM FOR  
CERTIFICATION TO STANDARDS RELATING TO EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN  
EXPLOSIVE ATMOSPHERES (IECEx SYSTEM)**

**Circulation: IECEx Management Committee (ExMC)**

**Title: Proposal from US – Peer Assessors vs. Contract Assessors**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The attached proposal from the USNC/IECEx is presented for discussion and consideration during the 2015 ExMC Christchurch meeting.

Members are requested to consider the proposal ahead of the ExMC meeting.

***Chris Agius***  
***IECEx Secretariat***

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**VIA E-MAIL TRANSMISSION**

Mr. Chris Agius  
Secretary IECEx  
Level 33 Australia Square  
264 George Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
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**Subject:** USNC/IECEX Proposal for Christchurch ExMC Agenda – *Peer Assessors vs. Contract Assessors*

Dear Mr. Agius:

**Background:** Peer assessment is identified as a key concept of IEC Conformity Assessment Systems. While within IECEx, our Rules documents do not currently use the term “peer assessment”, many other IECEx documents do. A brief sampling follows:

- From IECEx Business Plan 2013 - 2016: “Establish a formal process for the qualification of assessors used in the IECEx System to conduct peer assessment...”.
- From Latest IECEx Presentation - 12 October 2014: “ALL TLs and CBs undergo the same qualification process to join, use of peer assessment”.
- From IECEx 04A: “Applications for an IECEx Conformity Mark License ... are lodged directly with IECEx Certification Bodies (ExCBs) whom themselves have successfully undertaken the IECEx Peer Assessment program...”.
- From OD 024: All documentation related to assessment/reassessment activities shall be made available ... for review during any subsequent peer reassessments ...”.
- IECEX Annual Report Card - 2014: “The following factors are seen as facilitating this growth ... The credibility of the IECEx System, compliance to IEC Standards, single Peer Assessment system for all ExCBs and ExTLs + surveillance...”.

While IECEx Basic Rules does not define “*peer assessment*”, there is the following definition in ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*, Clause 4.5:

“

**“peer assessment**

assessment of a body against specified requirements (3.1) by representatives of other bodies in, or candidates for, an agreement group (7.10)”.

Further, ISO/IEC 17040:2005, *General requirements for peer assessment of conformity assessment bodies and accreditation bodies*, Clause 5.1.2, makes the statement:

“The qualification criteria of the people carrying out the peer assessment process shall match the personal attributes and competence that would be required of a person performing the activity that is the object of the peer assessment.”

It should be noted that the IEC and ISO Secretary Generals have given a commitment to reference the ISO/CASCO toolbox going forward, given that most CASCO documents are jointly published as ISO and IEC documents.

**Question:** Should IECEX Policy addressing Peer Assessment of ExCBs and ExTLs be clarified in the applicable Rules and ODs to only permit these assessments to be performed by Assessors from ExCBs/ExTLs qualifying as Peer Assessors as defined by ISO/IEC 17040)?

**Answer:** The USNC/IECEX considers the initial assessment and reassessment of ExCBs and ExTLs to only be able to be performed by Assessors from ExCBs/ExTLs qualifying as Peer Assessors as defined by ISO/IEC 17040).

Competent, impartial Contract Assessors from other than ExCBs/ExTLs could be suitable for mid-term assessments only.

To help facilitate this, it is further recommended that each existing and candidate ExCB, ExTL, or combined ExCB/ExTL be required to commit at least one auditor for at least one assessment or reassessment per year as part of the minimum participation requirements to be an ExCB and/or ExTL.

Further, the USNC/IECEX offers its assistance to the IECEX Secretariat to draft the necessary Rules and OD revisions under the Certified Equipment Scheme in support of this position for ExMC review.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Joel Solis, Secretary  
USNC/IECEX