IECEx RTP and IECEx CoPC Programs – Questions and Answers

I've heard about IECEx approved products but what is the RTP designation?

The IECEx RTP (Recognized Training Provider) Program was established for companies around the world to provide training services around the units identified under the IECEx Certificate of Personnel Competency Program (CoPC). These units were established to allow personnel to meet the requirements as identified in Annex A of IEC 60079-14:2013.

As an RTP, Source IEx has been reviewed by the IECEx and verified to have implemented processes to manage and provide training services related to the selection, design, inspection, installation, maintenance, repair, overhaul and reclamation of equipment intended to operate in explosive (Ex) atmospheres.

So what is the CoPC program and how does that fit with the training you provide?

The CoPC program was established by the IECEx as part of the overall certification scheme for products, services and now people. The CoPC program is an assessment program that determines whether or not a candidate is 'competent' in meeting the various requirements specified in the 60079 standards, specifically around responsible persons, designers, engineers, technicians, operators and inspectors.

What is the benefit of a CoPC and why is it important for me?

The CoPC certificate is proof that the candidate has been assessed around the specific tasks required on Ex projects and also provides assurances to both your employer and clients that you have the knowledge and skills to complete tasks in compliance with the relevant 60079 & 80079 standards.

Other benefits may include:
- More flexibility with regards to third party equipment inspections
- Time & money saved in project design, construction, and inspection
- Easier product certification process
- The ability to qualify a company as an approved IECEx Repair & Modification Facility
- The ability to qualify a company as an approved IECEx Panel Builder Facility

Can Source IEx issue a CoPC?

No. Under the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 the training and assessment functions required for a CoPC must be separate and handled separately.

If you are not an ExCB, who is responsible for assessments for the various Units you instruct on?

We have partnered up with QPS Evaluation Services, one of North Americas IECEx Test Labs/Certifying Bodies (ExTL & ExCB) who also have the ability to provide assessments against various Ex units for the CoPC program. Source IEx provides the training and proxy of the exam while QPS Evaluation Services reviews the exams and the assessment documents and in turn, issues the CoPC to the successful candidate who has passed the assessment requirements.

So do I have to go from one place to another to obtain my CoPC qualifications?

No. We can provide a one-stop process in which we can provide the training and instruction on each of the units as needed and in turn, QPS Evaluation Services will provide the assessment of the candidates either via written exams or practical exercises depending on the unit type. For most of the units, we can provide the training and the assessment at your location - or you can take it at our location here in Spring Texas.

Do I need to be trained or can I just be assessed?

While most people do wish to have formal training before being assessed, it is not a requirement. For personnel who have a strong foundation in Ex, it is possible to take just the assessment process without going through formalized training. We can organize that for any candidate through QPS Evaluation Services and again, it can be held at most locations depending on the unit requirements.

So what CoPC Units are there and what do you recommend?

The IECEx CoPC has 10 specific Units that are designed for people with different roles and functions within an organization. You do not need to take every unit, only the ones apply to your job function.

The list of Units offered along with a brief description is listed next to it:

Ex 001 - Apply basic principles of protection in explosive atmospheres
Ex 002 - Perform classification of hazardous atmospheres
Ex 003 - Install explosion-protected equipment and wiring systems
Ex 004 - Maintain equipment in explosive atmospheres
Ex 005 - Overhaul and repair of explosion-protected equipment
Ex 006 - Test electrical installations in or associated with explosive atmospheres
Ex 007 - Perform visual & close inspection of electrical installations in or associated with explosive
             atmospheres
Ex 008 - Perform detailed inspection of electrical installations in or associated with explosive
atmospheres
Ex 009 - Design electrical installations in or associated with explosive atmospheres
Ex 010 - Perform audit inspection of electrical installations in or associated with explosive atmospheres

Note: Ex 001 is a pre-requisite for all other units except Ex 002 and Ex 005. We can offer Ex 001 in conjunction with other units as a combined course.

For designers of Ex systems, we recommend Units Ex 001 & Ex 009. These two units will cover the basics of Ex protection concepts, equipment, markings and will also cover the design requirements under 60079-14 for designers as to the overall design of a full Ex system.

For installers of Ex systems, we recommend Units Ex 001 & Ex 003.

For those who are involved in inspections of Ex systems, we would recommend Ex 001, Ex 007, and Ex 008.

Would this apply to ATEX (European) requirements or only IECEx requirements?

The training program covers both. The European EN 60079 standards are based upon the IEC versions including the requirements for Competency. The course program reviews both IEC and EN standards as well as discusses other regional standards including Brazilian, Russian, Indian and US/Canadian standards

Do I need to do all of these at the same time?

No. We offer standalone units as well as combination units to allow candidates to work at achieving your CoPC at your own pace.

How long is the training/assessment?

The Ex 001 Unit is a two-day training & assessment program. We have combinations with the Ex 001 in which we combine, for example, the Ex 009 Design unit back to back in a four-day program.

So how long does my certification last and what proof do I get by passing a particular Unit(s)?

The certificate is valid for five years. All certificates are also listed by name on the IECEx website under the CoPC program, just like IECEx product certificates.

What if I only want the training but don't care to be assessed? Is that an option?

Yes, absolutely. Some candidates do not want or need the assessment and only want the training for their own personal reasons. The course content is the same, but it is at a reduced cost since no assessments are required by QPS. Each candidate would be provided a certificate of attendance by Source IEx.

Ok. I get it. So again, why is this important?

As we mentioned, it meets the requirements competency specified in the 60079-14 standard for Ex installations. Depending on where the project is located and the client specifications, it may be mandatory to be third-party assessed.

However, it is important for so many other reasons: We are working in the Ex world each day. Thousands of dollars are spent on expensive pieces of electrical devices to be safely used in hazardous areas each day. Everyone should take seriously the need for compliance to all regulatory and safety requirements when selecting these important pieces of equipment because working in a potentially explosive atmosphere can be a very dangerous situation. However, just because you spend money on all of this expensive equipment, if it is not properly selected, purchased, installed, maintained, inspected

all of the money spent won't deliver the level of safety required. **Safety is only as good as the weakest link.**

For more information, please visit www.sourceiex.com or at training@sourceiex.com