



**BSI Standards Publication**

# **Explosive atmospheres**

Part 10-1: Classification of areas —  
Explosive gas atmospheres

## National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of EN 60079-10-1:2015. It is identical to IEC 60079-10-1:2015, incorporating corrigendum November 2015. It supersedes BS EN 60079-10-1:2009 which is withdrawn.

IEC corrigendum November 2015 corrects Equation B.6.

BSI, as a member of CENELEC, is obliged to publish EN 60079-10-1 as a British Standard. However, attention is drawn to the fact that during the document's development, the UK committee voted against its approval as a European Standard.

The UK Committee has some concerns that the methodologies in the Informative Annexes C and D for determining zone type and extents have not been appropriately validated as required in Section 5.2., and suggest users consider the below issues when working with this standard:

- The ventilation rate (volume of air per unit time) relative to the release rate of the flammable substance is the most important factor that determines the ability of a release in an enclosure to become dilute. The 'ventilation velocity' has only a secondary effect: the UK Committee's view is that this is not adequately reflected in the standard.
- The extent of flammable gas or vapour from its point of release is dependent on the material being released, the release conditions (e.g. hole size and pressure) and the environment into which it is being released (e.g. ventilation rate or weather conditions). Various scientifically based approaches exist for determining these zone extents, including industry specific standards and dispersion models.
- EN 60079-10-1 places no limitations on a Zone 2 NE classification. However the UK committee believes a Zone 2 NE classification would only be applicable for a source pressure less than 10 barg which is the limit accepted in other industry based guidance.
- For assessment of pool evaporation from volatile hydrocarbons, other standards and sources of information need to be used to cross-check the results to ensure that risks are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable.

The UK Committee will revisit these issues during the next revision cycle of this standard, rather than publishing a national annex as previously stated.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted by Technical Committee EXL/31, Equipment for explosive atmospheres, to Subcommittee EXL/31/3, Codes of practice.

A list of organizations represented on this subcommittee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

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**Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.**

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**Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication**

| Date             | Text affected             |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 31 December 2016 | National foreword updated |

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English Version

**Explosive atmospheres - Part 10-1: Classification of areas -  
Explosive gas atmospheres  
(IEC 60079-10-1:2015 + COR1:2015)**

Atmosphères explosives - Partie 10-1: Classement des  
emplacements - Atmosphères explosives gazeuses  
(IEC 60079-10-1:2015 + COR1:2015)

Explosionsgefährdete Bereiche - Teil 10-1: Einteilung der  
Bereiche - Gasexplosionsgefährdete Bereiche  
(IEC 60079-10-1:2015 + COR1:2015)

This European Standard was approved by CENELEC on 2015-10-13. CENELEC members are bound to comply with the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations which stipulate the conditions for giving this European Standard the status of a national standard without any alteration.

Up-to-date lists and bibliographical references concerning such national standards may be obtained on application to the CEN-CENELEC Management Centre or to any CENELEC member.

This European Standard exists in three official versions (English, French, German). A version in any other language made by translation under the responsibility of a CENELEC member into its own language and notified to the CEN-CENELEC Management Centre has the same status as the official versions.

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European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization  
Comité Européen de Normalisation Electrotechnique  
Europäisches Komitee für Elektrotechnische Normung

**CEN-CENELEC Management Centre: Avenue Marnix 17, B-1000 Brussels**

## European foreword

The text of document 31J/253/FDIS, future edition 2 of IEC 60079-10-1, prepared by SC 31J "Classification of hazardous areas and installation requirements", of IEC/TC 31 "Equipment for explosive atmospheres" was submitted to the IEC-CENELEC parallel vote and approved by CENELEC as EN 60079-10-1:2015.

The following dates are fixed:

- latest date by which the document has to be implemented at national level by publication of an identical national standard or by endorsement (dop) 2016-07-13
- latest date by which the national standards conflicting with the document have to be withdrawn (dow) 2018-10-13

This document supersedes EN 60079-10-1:2009.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CENELEC [and/or CEN] shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

## Endorsement notice

The text of the International Standard IEC 60079-10-1:2015 + COR1:2015 <sup>1)</sup> was approved by CENELEC as a European Standard without any modification.

In the official version, for Bibliography, the following notes have to be added for the standards indicated:

|                |      |                                             |
|----------------|------|---------------------------------------------|
| IEC 60079-10-2 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 60079-10-2.                |
| IEC 61285:2004 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 61285:2004 (not modified). |
| IEC 60079-20-1 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 60079-20-1.                |

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1) COR1:2015 applies to English version only.

**Annex ZA**

(normative)

**Normative references to international publications  
with their corresponding European publications**

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

NOTE 1 When an International Publication has been modified by common modifications, indicated by (mod), the relevant EN/HD applies.

NOTE 2 Up-to-date information on the latest versions of the European Standards listed in this annex is available here: [www.cenelec.eu](http://www.cenelec.eu).

| <u>Publication</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Title</u>                                                                                   | <u>EN/HD</u> | <u>Year</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| IEC 60079-0        | -           | Explosive atmospheres -<br>Part 0: Equipment - General requirements                            | EN 60079-0   | -           |
| IEC 60079-14       | -           | Explosive atmospheres -<br>Part 14: Electrical installations design,<br>selection and erection | EN 60079-14  | -           |

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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

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EXPLOSIVE ATMOSPHERES –**Part 10-1: Classification of areas –  
Explosive gas atmospheres**

## FOREWORD

- 1) The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is a worldwide organization for standardization comprising all national electrotechnical committees (IEC National Committees). The object of 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, IEC publishes International Standards, Technical Specifications, Technical Reports, Publicly Available Specifications (PAS) and Guides (hereafter referred to as “IEC Publication(s)”). 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. 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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International Standard IEC 60079-10-1 has been prepared by subcommittee 31J: Classification of hazardous areas and installation requirements, of IEC technical committee 31: Equipment for explosive atmospheres.

This second edition of IEC 60079-10-1 cancels and replaces the first edition, published in 2008, and constitutes a technical revision. The significant technical changes with respect to the previous edition are as follows:

|                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       | Type                        |           |                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Changes                                                                                                                                                                                | Clause                | Minor and editorial changes | Extension | Major technical changes |
| Complete restructuring and dividing into sections to identify possible methodologies for classifying hazardous areas and to provide further explanation on specific assessment factors | Main body of the text | X                           | X         | X                       |
| Introducing new terms and the definitions                                                                                                                                              | 3                     |                             | X         |                         |
| Introducing clauses for alternative methods of area classification                                                                                                                     | 5                     |                             | X         | X                       |
| Updating examples for presentation of hazardous area classification                                                                                                                    | Annex A               |                             | X         | X                       |
| Updating calculations for release rate                                                                                                                                                 | Annex B               |                             | X         | X                       |
| Complete re-write with a new approach based upon the degree of dilution instead of the degree of ventilation                                                                           | Annex C               |                             | X         | X                       |
| Introduced as a new Annex for zone extents                                                                                                                                             | Annex D               |                             | X         |                         |
| Updated with new examples to explain the methodology set forth in Annexes A, B, C and D                                                                                                | Annex E               |                             |           | X                       |
| Update of the flow chart illustrating the area classification procedure by dividing it into four sections                                                                              | Annex F               |                             | X         |                         |
| Introduced as a new Annex on hydrogen                                                                                                                                                  | Annex H               |                             | X         |                         |
| Introduced as a new Annex on hybrid mixtures                                                                                                                                           | Annex I               |                             | X         |                         |
| Introduced as a new Annex with supplementary equations                                                                                                                                 | Annex J               |                             | X         |                         |
| Introduced as a new Annex for reference to national and industry codes with specific examples of hazardous area classification                                                         | Annex K               |                             | X         |                         |

NOTE The technical changes referred to include the significance of technical changes in the revised IEC Standard, but they do not form an exhaustive list of all modifications from the previous version.

**Explanations:****Definitions****Minor and editorial changes**

clarification  
 decrease of technical requirements  
 minor technical change  
 editorial corrections

These are changes which modify requirements in an editorial or a minor technical way. They include changes of the wording to clarify technical requirements without any technical change.

**Extension**

addition of technical options

These are changes which add new or modify existing technical requirements, in a way that new options are given, but without increasing requirements.

**Major technical changes**

addition of technical requirements  
 increase of technical requirements

These are changes to technical requirements (addition, increase of the level or removal).

NOTE These changes represent current technological knowledge. However, these changes should not normally have an influence on equipment already placed on the market.

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

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| FDIS         | Report on voting |
| 31J/253/FDIS | 31J/256/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 2.

A list of all parts of the IEC 60079 series, under the general title *Explosive atmospheres*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of this publication will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC website under "<http://webstore.iec.ch>" in the data related to the specific publication. At this date, the publication will be

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

A bilingual version of this publication may be issued at a later date.

**IMPORTANT – The 'colour inside' logo on the cover page of this publication indicates that it contains colours which are considered to be useful for the correct understanding of its contents. Users should therefore print this document using a colour printer.**

## INTRODUCTION

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

## **EXPLOSIVE ATMOSPHERES –**

### **Part 10-1: Classification of areas – Explosive gas atmospheres**

#### **1 Scope**

This part of IEC 60079 is concerned with the classification of areas where flammable gas or vapour hazards may arise and may then be used as a basis to support the proper selection and installation of equipment for use in hazardous areas.

It is intended to be applied where there may be an ignition hazard due to the presence of flammable gas or vapour, mixed with air, but it does not apply to:

- a) mines susceptible to firedamp;
- b) the processing and manufacture of explosives;
- c) catastrophic failures or rare malfunctions which are beyond the concept of abnormality dealt with in this standard (see 3.7.3 and 3.7.4);
- d) rooms used for medical purposes;
- e) commercial and industrial applications where only low pressure fuel gas is used for appliances e.g. for cooking, water heating and similar uses, where the installation is compliant with relevant gas codes;
- f) domestic premises;
- g) where a hazard may arise due to the presence of combustible dusts or combustible flyings but the principles may be used in assessment of a hybrid mixture (refer also IEC 60079-10-2).

NOTE Additional guidance on hybrid mixtures is provided in Annex I.

Flammable mists may form or be present at the same time as flammable vapour. In such case the strict application of the details in this standard may not be appropriate. Flammable mists may also form when liquids not considered to be a hazard due to the high flash point are released under pressure. In these cases the classifications and details given in this standard do not apply. Information on flammable mists is provided in Annex G.

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

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 substances.

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

This standard does not take into account the consequences of ignition of an explosive atmosphere.

#### **2 Normative references**

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For

undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60079-0, *Explosive atmospheres – Part 0: Equipment – General requirements*

IEC 60079-14, *Explosive atmospheres – Part 14: Electrical installations design, selection and erection*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in IEC 60079-0 and the following apply.

NOTE Additional definitions applicable to explosive atmospheres can be found in IEC 60050-426.

#### 3.1

##### **explosive atmosphere**

mixture with air, under atmospheric conditions, of flammable substances in the form of gas, vapour, dust, fibres, or flyings, which, after ignition, permits self-sustaining flame propagation

[SOURCE: IEC 60079-0:2013, 3.30]

#### 3.2

##### **explosive gas atmosphere**

mixture with air, under atmospheric conditions, of flammable substances in the form of gas or vapour, which, after ignition, permits self-sustaining flame propagation

Note 1 to entry: Although a mixture which has a concentration above the upper flammable limit (UFL) is not an explosive gas atmosphere, it can readily become so and, generally for area classification purposes, it is advisable to consider it as an explosive gas atmosphere.

Note 2 to entry: There are some gases and vapours which are explosive with the concentration of 100 % (e.g. acetylene, CAS no. 74-86-2,  $C_2H_2$ ; monovinyl acetylene, CAS no. 689-97-4,  $C_4H_4$ ; 1-propyl nitrate (vapour), CAS no. 627-13-4,  $CH_3(CH_2)_2NO_3$ ; isopropyl nitrate (vapour), CAS no. 1712-64-7,  $(CH_3)_2CHONO_2$ ; ethylene oxide (vapour), CAS no. 75-21-8,  $(CH_2)_2O$ ; hydrazine (vapour), CAS no. 302-01-2,  $H_4N_2$ ).

[SOURCE: IEC 60079-0:2013, 3.32, modified (addition of Notes to entry)]

#### 3.3

##### **hazardous areas and zones**

##### 3.3.1

##### **hazardous area** (on account of explosive gas atmospheres)

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

Note 1 to entry: The interior of many items of process equipment are commonly considered as a hazardous area even though a flammable atmosphere may not normally be present to account for the possibility of air entering the equipment. Where specific controls such as inerting are used the interior of process equipment may not need to be classified as a hazardous area.

##### 3.3.2

##### **non-hazardous area** (on account of explosive gas atmospheres)

an 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 equipment

##### 3.3.3

##### **zones**

hazardous area classification based upon the frequency of the occurrence and duration of an explosive atmosphere

**3.3.4****zone 0**

an area in which an explosive gas atmosphere is present continuously or for long periods or frequently

Note 1 to entry: Both “long” and “frequently” are the terms which are intended to describe a very high likelihood of a potentially explosive atmosphere in the area. In that respect, those terms do not necessarily need to be quantified.

**3.3.5****zone 1**

an area in which an explosive gas atmosphere is likely to occur periodically or occasionally in normal operation

**3.3.6****zone 2**

an area in which an explosive gas atmosphere is not likely to occur in normal operation but, if it does occur, it will exist for a short period only

Note 1 to entry: Indications of the frequency of the occurrence and duration may be taken from codes relating to specific industries or applications.

[SOURCE: IEC 60050-426:2009, 426-03-05]

**3.3.7****extent of zone**

distance in any direction from the source of release to where a gas/air mixture will be diluted by air to a concentration below the lower flammable limit

**3.4****releases****3.4.1****source of release**

a point or location from which a flammable gas, vapour, mist or liquid may be released into the atmosphere so that an explosive gas atmosphere could be formed

[SOURCE: IEC 60050-426:2009, 426-03-06, modified (addition of “mist”)]

**3.4.2****continuous grade of release**

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

Note 1 to entry: Both “frequently” and “long” are the terms which are intended to describe a very high likelihood of a potential release. In that respect, those terms do not necessarily need to be quantified.

**3.4.3****primary grade of release**

release which can be expected to occur periodically or occasionally during normal operation

**3.4.4****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

**3.4.5****release rate**

quantity of flammable gas, liquid, vapour or mist emitted per unit time from the source of release

### 3.5

#### **ventilation and dilution**

##### 3.5.1

##### **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)

##### 3.5.2

##### **dilution**

the mixing of flammable vapour or gas with air which, over time, will reduce the flammable concentration

##### 3.5.3

##### **dilution volume**

the volume in the vicinity of a source of release where the concentration of flammable gas or vapour is not diluted to a safe level

Note 1 to entry: In certain instances, the volumes under 3.5.3 and 3.5.5 could be the same.

##### 3.5.4

##### **background concentration**

the mean concentration of flammable substance within the volume under consideration outside of the release plume or jet

##### 3.5.5

##### **volume under consideration**

the volume served by the ventilation in the vicinity of the release being considered

Note 1 to entry: For an enclosed space this could be an entire room or part of a larger space where the considered ventilation will dilute the gas or vapour from a given source of release. Outdoors, this is the volume around a source of release where an explosive mixture could form. In congested outdoor places this volume could be dictated by the partial enclosure provided by the surrounding objects.

### 3.6

#### **properties of flammable substance**

##### 3.6.1

##### **flammable substance**

substance which is itself flammable, or is capable of producing a flammable gas, vapour or mist

##### 3.6.2

##### **flammable liquid**

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

Note 1 to entry: An example of a foreseeable operating condition is one in which the flammable liquid is handled at temperatures close to or above its flash point.

Note 2 to entry: This definition is used for the classification of hazardous areas and may be different from the definition of flammable liquids used for other purposes e.g. codes for classification of flammable liquids for transport.

##### 3.6.3

##### **liquefied flammable gas**

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

##### 3.6.4

##### **flammable gas or vapour**

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

**3.6.5****flammable mist**

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

**3.6.6****hybrid mixture**

mixture of a flammable gas or vapour with a dust.

Note 1 to entry: According IEC 60079-10-2 the term “dust” is defined as including both combustible dust and combustible flyings.

**3.6.7****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 temperature (air is equal to 1,0)

**3.6.8****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

**3.6.9****boiling point**

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

Note 1 to entry: 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.

**3.6.10****vapour pressure**

pressure exerted when a solid or liquid is in equilibrium with its own vapour

Note 1 to entry: This is also, the partial pressure of the substance in the atmosphere above the liquid. It is a function of the substance and of the temperature.

**3.6.11****ignition temperature of an explosive gas atmosphere**

lowest temperature of a heated surface which, under specified conditions (according to IEC 60079-20-1), will ignite a flammable substance in the form of a gas or vapour mixture with air

[SOURCE: IEC 60079-0:2013, 3.37]

**3.6.12****lower flammable limit (LFL)**

the concentration of flammable gas, vapour or mist in air below which an explosive gas atmosphere will not be formed

[SOURCE: IEC 60050-426:2009, 426-02-09, modified (definition in 60050-426 referred to "Lower Explosive Limit")]

**3.6.13****upper flammable limit (UFL)**

the concentration of flammable gas, vapour or mist in air above which an explosive gas atmosphere will not be formed

[SOURCE: IEC 60050-426:2009, 426-02-10, modified (definition in 60050-426 referred to "Upper Explosive Limit")]

### **3.7 operation**

#### **3.7.1**

##### **normal operation**

situation when the equipment is operating within its designed parameters

Note 1 to entry: Failures (such as the breakdown of pump seals, flange gaskets or spillages) caused by accidents which involve repair or shut-down are not considered to be part of normal operation.

Note 2 to entry: Normal operation includes start-up and shut-down conditions and routine maintenance, but excludes initial start up as part of commissioning.

#### **3.7.2**

##### **routine maintenance**

action to be performed occasionally or periodically in normal operation to maintain proper performance of equipment

#### **3.7.3**

##### **rare malfunction**

type of malfunction which may happen only in rare instances

Note 1 to entry: Rare malfunctions in the context of this standard include failure of separate and independent process controls, that may be either automated or manual, that could trigger a chain of events that would lead to major release of flammable substance.

Note 2 to entry: Rare malfunctions could also include unanticipated conditions that are not covered by the plant design such as unexpected corrosion that results in a release. Where releases due to corrosion or similar conditions may or could reasonably be expected as part of the plant operations then this is not considered as a rare malfunction.

#### **3.7.4**

##### **catastrophic failure**

an occurrence which exceeds the design parameters of the process plant and control system resulting in a release of flammable substance

Note 1 to entry: Catastrophic failures in the context of this standard include, for example, major accidents such as the rupture of a process vessel, or large scale failures of equipment or piping such as total breakdown of a flange or seal.

## **4 General**

### **4.1 Safety principles**

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

It is important to examine those parts of process equipment and systems from which a release of flammable substance 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 substance.

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 activities other than those of normal operation, e.g. commissioning or non-routine maintenance, the area classification may not be valid. It is expected that the activities other than those of normal operation would be dealt with by a safe system of work. The area classification should take into account any routine maintenance.

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 accepted as low as reasonably practicable. Such measures may be used individually, if they are recognized as being highly reliable or in combination to achieve the required level of safety.

#### 4.2 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, installation and operation of equipment to be used safely in that environment. The classification also takes into account the ignition characteristics of the gas or vapour such as ignition energy and ignition temperature. Area classification has two main objectives, the determination of the type of any hazardous zone, and the extent of the zone (see 7 and 8).

NOTE Selected characteristics may be designated for equipment e.g. ignition energy and temperature ratings, see IEC 60079-20-1.

In most practical situations where flammable substances are used, it is difficult to ensure that an explosive gas atmosphere will never occur. It may also be difficult to ensure that equipment 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 equipment which has a low likelihood of creating a source of ignition. Conversely, where the likelihood of an explosive gas atmosphere occurring is reduced, equipment constructed with less rigorous requirements may be used.

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 a flammable substance 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 plant design, 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 substance 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 prepared, it is important that no modification to equipment or operating procedures is made without reference to those responsible for the area classification. The classification should be updated for any plant or operational changes. Reviews should be carried out during the life of the plant.

#### 4.3 Explosion risk assessment

Subsequent to the completion of the area classification, a risk assessment may be carried out to assess whether the consequences of ignition of an explosive atmosphere requires the use of equipment of a higher equipment protection level (EPL) or may justify the use of equipment with a lower equipment protection level than normally required.

In some cases a zone of negligible extent (NE) may arise and may be treated as non hazardous. Such a zone implies that an explosion, if it takes place, will have negligible consequences. The zone NE concept can be applied irrespective of any other adjustments for risk assessment to determine EPL.

NOTE 1: An example of Zone NE is a natural gas cloud with an average concentration that is 50 % by volume of the *LFL* and that is less than 0,1 m<sup>3</sup> or 1,0 % of the enclosed space concerned (whichever is smaller).

The EPL requirements may be recorded, as appropriate, on the area classification documents and drawings to allow proper selection of equipment.

NOTE 2: IEC 60079-0 describes EPLs and IEC 60079-14 defines the application of EPLs to an installation.

#### 4.4 Competence of Personnel

The area classification should be carried out by those who understand the relevance and significance of the properties of the flammable substances, principles of gas/vapour dispersion and those who are familiar with the process and the equipment. It may be beneficial for other engineering disciplines, e.g. electrical and mechanical engineers, and personnel with specific responsibility for safety to be part of and have an input to the area classification process. The competency of the person shall be relevant to the nature of the plant and methodology used for carrying out the area classification. Appropriate continuing education or training should be undertaken by personnel on a regular basis where required.

NOTE Competency can be demonstrated in accordance with a training and assessment framework relevant to national regulations or standards or user requirements.

### 5 Area classification methodology

#### 5.1 General

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.

In determining where a release of flammable gas or vapour may occur, the likelihood and duration of the release should be assessed in accordance with the definitions of continuous, primary and secondary grades of release. Once the grade of release, the release rate, concentration, velocity, ventilation and other factors are assessed there is then a firm basis on which to assess the likely presence of an explosive gas atmosphere in the surrounding areas and determine the type and/or extent of the hazardous zones.

This approach therefore requires detailed consideration to be given to each item of process equipment which contains a substance flammable by itself or due to process conditions, and which could therefore be a source of release.

Subclauses 5.3 to 5.6 give guidance on options for classifying areas in which there may be an explosive gas atmosphere. An example of a schematic approach to the classification of hazardous areas is given in Annex F.

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

Consideration should always be given to the type, number and location of various potential points of release so that relevant zone and boundary conditions are assigned in the overall assessment. Control systems designed and installed to a Functional Safety standard may reduce the potential for a source of release and/or the quantity of a release (e.g. batch sequence controls, inerting systems). Such controls may therefore be considered where relevant to the hazardous area classification.

When classifying areas consideration should also be given to a careful evaluation of prior experience with the same or similar installations. It is not enough to identify only a potential source of flammable substance and proceed immediately to defining the extent of zone 1 or

zone 2 classified areas. Where experience or documented evidence indicates that a particular plant design and operations are sound this may be used to support the classification chosen. Furthermore, it is conceivable that an area could be reclassified based on industry experience or new evidence.

## 5.2 Classification by sources of release method

Classification may be approached by calculation, considering appropriate statistical and numerical assessments for the factors concerned, for each source of release.

Refer Annex F. The source of release approach can be summarized as follows:

- Identify sources of release;
- Determine the release rate and grade of release for each source based on likely frequency and duration of release;
- Assess ventilation or dilution conditions and effectiveness;
- Determine zone type based on grade of release and ventilation or dilution effectiveness;
- Determine extent of zone.

Formulae relevant to determining the release rates under specified conditions can be found in Annex B. These formulae are generally accepted as providing a good basis for calculating release rates for the conditions provided.

Guidance on the assessment of ventilation and dispersion is provided in Annex C. Other forms of assessment, e.g. computational fluid dynamics (CFD), may be used and may provide a good basis for assessment in some situations. Computer modelling is also an appropriate tool when assessing the interaction of multiple factors.

In all cases the assessment method and tools used should be validated as suitable or used with appropriate caution. Those carrying out the assessment should also understand the limitations or requirements of any tools and adjust the input conditions or results accordingly to ensure appropriate conclusions.

## 5.3 Use of industry codes and national standards

Industry codes and national standards may be used where they provide guidance or examples appropriate to the application and comply with the general principles of this standard.

Annex K identifies some relevant industry codes and national standards that may provide further detail as well as examples.

## 5.4 Simplified methods

Where it is not practicable to make required assessments from individual sources of release, a simplified method may be used.

Simplified methods shall identify sources for each of the zone types, zone 0, 1 and 2 that are suitably conservative to allow for potential sources of release without individual detail. The judgement is best made by reference to a set of criteria based on industry experience and appropriate to the particular plant.

It is not necessary to carry out a detailed assessment of all items in a plant where an assessment for one item or condition would be adequate to provide a conservative classification for all other similar items or conditions on the plant.

Larger zone areas are characteristic of simplified methods, stemming from the approach and the necessity to apply more conservative zonal classification where doubt exists as to the hazards involved. This approach shall err on the side of safety.

To arrive at less conservative or more accurate figures of the boundaries of the classified area, reference to illustrative examples or more detailed assessment of point sources of release, as applicable should be used.

## 5.5 Combination of methods

The use of different methods may be appropriate for classification of a plant at various stages of its development or for various parts of the plant.

For example, at the initial conceptual stage of a plant the simplified method may be appropriate to set out the equipment separations, plant layout and plant boundaries. This might be the only method that could be applied due to lack of detailed data on sources of release. As the plant design proceeds and detailed data is available on the potential sources of release, the classification should be upgraded using a more detailed method of assessment.

In some cases the simplified method can be applied to a group of similar equipment in sections of plant (e.g. sections of piping with flanges, such as pipe racks) while applying a more detailed assessment to the more significant potential sources of release (e.g. relief valves, vents, gas compressors, pumps and the like).

In many cases the classification examples provided in relevant national or industry codes can, where appropriate, be used to classify some components of larger plants.

## 6 Release of flammable substance

### 6.1 General

The release rate of a flammable substance is the most important factor that affects the extent of a zone.

Generally, the higher the release rate the larger the extent of the zone.

NOTE Experience has shown that a release of ammonia, with a *LFL* of 15 % by volume, will often dissipate rapidly in the open air, so an explosive gas atmosphere will, in most cases be of negligible extent.

An introduction to the nature of releases that should be considered when approaching classification of potentially explosive areas is provided in the 6.2 to 6.5.

### 6.2 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 or grades of the 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 flammable substances can exist in the area concerned. Generally speaking, such gases and vapours (and flammable liquids or solids which may give rise to them) are contained within process equipment that may or may not be totally enclosed. It is necessary to identify where a flammable atmosphere can exist inside process equipment, or where a release of flammable substances can create a flammable atmosphere outside process equipment.

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

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

If it is established that the item may release a flammable substance into the atmosphere, it is necessary, first of all, to determine the grade or grades 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'.

NOTE 1 Releases may form part of process, e.g. taking samples, or may occur as part of a routine maintenance procedure. These forms of release are generally classified as continuous or primary grades of release. Accidental releases are generally classified as secondary grades of release.

NOTE 2 One item may give rise to more than one grade of release. For example, there may be a small primary grade release, but a larger release could occur under abnormal operation; thus giving rise to a secondary grade release. In this situation, both release conditions (both grades of release) need full consideration as described in this standard.

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

If the quantity of a flammable substance available for release is 'small', for example, laboratory use, whilst a potential explosion condition may exist, it may not be appropriate to use this area classification procedure. In such cases, account shall be taken of the particular factors involved.

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

In some cases the construction of closed systems where specific construction codes are met can be accepted as effectively preventing and/or limiting releases of flammable substances to a negligible leakage hazard. The hazardous area classification of such equipment or installations requires a complete assessment to verify the full compliance of the installation to the relevant constructional and operating standards. Verification of compliance should consider design, installation, operation, maintenance and monitoring activities.

Mists which form through leaks of pressurized liquid can be flammable even though the liquid temperature is below the flash point (see Annex G).

### 6.3 Forms of release

#### 6.3.1 General

The characteristic of any release depends upon the physical state of the flammable substance, its temperature and pressure. The physical states include:

- a gas, which may be at an elevated temperature or pressure;
- a gas liquefied by the application of pressure, e.g. LPG;
- a gas which can only be liquefied by refrigeration, e.g. methane;
- a liquid with an associated release of flammable vapour.

Releases from such plant items as pipe connections, pumps and compressor seals and valve packings often start with a low flow rate. However, if the release is not stopped erosion at the source of the release can greatly increase the rate of release and hence the extent of the hazard.

A release of flammable substance above its flashpoint will give rise to a flammable vapour or gas cloud which may initially be less or more dense than the surrounding air or may be neutrally buoyant. The forms of release and the pattern of behaviour at various conditions are displayed as a flow chart in Figure B.1.

Every form of release will eventually end as a gaseous or vapour release and the gas or vapour may appear as buoyant, neutrally buoyant or heavy (see Figure B.1). This characteristics will affect the extent of the zone generated by a particular form of release.

The horizontal extent of the zone at ground level will generally increase with increasing relative density and the vertical extent above the source will generally increase with decreasing relative density.

### 6.3.2 Gaseous release

A gas release will produce a gas jet or plume at the release source depending on the pressure at the point of release, e.g. pump seal, pipe connection or evaporative pool area. The relative density of the gas, the degree of turbulent mixing and the prevailing air movement will all influence the subsequent movement of any gas cloud.

In calm conditions low velocity releases of a gas that is significantly less dense than air will tend to move upwards, e.g. hydrogen and methane. Conversely, a gas that is significantly denser than air will tend to accumulate at ground level or in any pits or depressions, e.g. butane and propane. Over time, atmospheric turbulence will cause the released gas to mix with air and become neutrally buoyant. A gas or vapour with density that is not significantly different to air is regarded as neutrally buoyant.

Higher pressure releases will initially produce jets of released gas which will mix turbulently with the surrounding air and entrain air in the jet.

At high pressures, a thermodynamic effect due to expansion can come into play. As the gas escapes, it expands and cools down and may initially behave as heavier than air. However, the cooling due to the Joule-Thomson effect is eventually offset by the heat supplied by the air. The resulting gas cloud will eventually become neutrally buoyant. The transition from heavier than air to neutrally buoyant behaviour may occur at any time depending on the nature of the release and may occur after the cloud has been diluted to below the *LFL*.

NOTE Hydrogen demonstrates a reverse Joule-Thomson effect, heating up as it expands and so will never exhibit a heavier than air effect.

### 6.3.3 Liquefied under pressure

Some gases can be liquefied by the application of pressure alone, e.g. propane and butane, and are usually stored and transported in this form.

When a pressurized liquefied gas leaks from its containment the most likely scenario is that the substance will escape as a gas from any vapour space or gas lines. The rapid evaporation produces significant cooling at the point of release and icing due to the condensation of water vapour from the atmosphere may occur.

A liquid leak will partially evaporate at the point of release. This is known as flash evaporation. The evaporating liquid pulls energy from itself and the surrounding atmosphere and in turn cools down the leaking fluid. The cooling of the fluid prevents total evaporation and therefore an aerosol is produced. If the leak is large enough then cold pools of fluid can accumulate on the ground which will evaporate over time to add to the gas release.

The cold aerosol cloud will act like a dense gas. A pressurized liquid release can often be seen as the cooling effect of evaporation will condense ambient humidity to produce a visible cloud.

#### 6.3.4 Liquefied by refrigeration

Other gases, the so-called permanent gases, can only be liquefied by refrigeration e.g. methane and hydrogen. Small leaks of refrigerated gas will evaporate quickly without forming a pool of liquid by drawing heat from the environment. If the leak is large a cold pool of liquid may form.

As the cold liquid pulls energy from the ground and surrounding atmosphere the liquid will boil generating a cold dense gas cloud. As with liquids, dikes or bund walls can be used to direct or hold the flow of leakages.

NOTE 1 Care needs to be taken when classifying areas containing cryogenic flammable gases such as liquefied natural gas. Vapours emitted will generally be heavier than air at low temperatures but will become neutrally buoyant on approaching ambient temperature.

NOTE 2 Permanent gases have a critical temperature lower than  $-50\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

#### 6.3.5 Aerosols

An aerosol is not a gas, but consists of small droplets of liquid suspended in air. The droplets are formed from vapours or gases under certain thermodynamic conditions or by flash evaporation of pressurized liquids. The scattering of light within an aerosol cloud frequently makes the cloud visible to the naked eye. The dispersion of an aerosol may vary between the behaviour of a dense gas or a neutrally buoyant gas. Aerosol droplets can coalesce and rain out of the plume or cloud. Aerosols from flammable liquids may absorb heat from the surrounding environment, evaporate and add to the gas/vapour cloud (for more details see Annex G).

#### 6.3.6 Vapours

Liquids at equilibrium with their environment will generate a layer of vapour above their surface. The pressure this vapour exerts in a closed system is known as the vapour pressure, which increases in a non-linear function with temperature.

The process of evaporation uses energy which may come from a variety of sources, for example from the liquid or the surrounding environment. The evaporation process may decrease the temperature of the liquid and limit temperature rise. However, changes in liquid temperature due to increased evaporation from normal environmental conditions are considered too marginal to affect the hazardous area classification. The concentration of the generated vapour is not easy to predict as it is a function of the evaporation rate, temperature of the liquid and the surrounding air flow.

#### 6.3.7 Liquid releases

The release of flammable liquids will normally form a pool on the ground, with a vapour cloud at the liquid's surface unless the surface is absorbent. The size of the vapour cloud will depend on the properties of the substance and its vapour pressure at the ambient temperature (see B.7.2).

NOTE The vapour pressure is an indication of a liquid's evaporation rate. A substance with a high vapour pressure at normal temperatures is often referred to as volatile. As a general rule, vapour pressure of liquid at ambient temperatures increases with decreasing boiling point. As the temperature rises so does the vapour pressure.

Release may also occur on water. Many flammable liquids are less dense than water and are often not miscible. Such liquids will spread on the surface of water, whether it is on the ground, in plant drains, pipe trenches or on open waters (sea, lake or river), forming a thin film and increasing the evaporation rate due to the increased surface area. In these circumstances the calculations in Annex B are not applicable.

## 6.4 Ventilation (or air movement) and dilution

Gas or vapour released into the atmosphere may dilute through turbulent mixing with air, and to a lesser extent by diffusion driven by concentration gradients, until the gas disperses completely and the concentration is essentially zero. Air movement due to natural or artificial ventilation will promote dispersion. Increased air movement may also increase the rate of release of vapour due to increased evaporation on an open liquid surface.

Suitable ventilation rates can reduce the persistence time of an explosive gas atmosphere thus influencing the type of zone.

A structure with sufficient openings to allow free passage of air through all parts of the building is considered in many cases to be well ventilated and should be treated as an open air area, e.g. a shelter with open sides and rooftop ventilation openings.

Dispersion or diffusion of a gas or vapour into the atmosphere is a key factor in reducing the concentration of the gas or vapour to below the lower flammable limit.

Ventilation and air movement have two basic functions:

- a) To increase the rate of dilution and promote dispersion to limit the extent of a zone;
- b) To avoid the persistence of an explosive atmosphere that may influence the type of a zone.

With increased ventilation or air movement the extent of a zone will normally be reduced. Obstacles which impede the ventilation or air movement may increase the extent of a zone. Some obstacles, for example, dykes, walls and ceilings, which limit the extent of vapour or gas movement, may also limit the extent of the zone.

**NOTE 1** Increased air movement may also increase the release rate of vapour due to increased evaporation from open liquid surfaces. However the benefits of increased air movement normally outweigh the increase in release rate.

For low velocity releases the rate of gas or vapour dispersion in the atmosphere increases with wind speed, but in stable atmospheric conditions layering of the gas or vapour may occur and the distance for safe dispersal can be greatly increased.

**NOTE 2** In plant areas with obstructions to ventilation such as large vessels and structures, even at low wind speeds, eddies may be formed behind such obstructions thus forming pockets of gas or vapour without sufficient turbulence to promote dispersion.

In normal practice, the tendency of layering is not taken into account in area classification because the conditions which give rise to this effect are rare and occur only for short periods. However, if prolonged periods of low wind speed are expected for the specific circumstance then the extent of the zone should take account of the additional distance required to achieve dispersion.

## 6.5 Main types of ventilation

### 6.5.1 General

The two types of ventilation are:

- a) natural ventilation;
- b) artificial (or forced) ventilation, either general to the area or local to the source of release.

### 6.5.2 Natural ventilation

Natural ventilation in buildings arises from pressure differences induced by the wind and/or by temperature gradients (buoyancy induced ventilation). Natural ventilation may be effective in

certain indoor situations (for example, where a building has openings in its walls and/or roof) to dilute releases safely.

Examples of natural ventilation:

- an open building which, having regard to the relative density of the gases and/or vapours involved, has openings in the walls and/or roof so dimensioned and located that the ventilation inside the building, for the purpose of area classification, can be regarded as equivalent to that in an open-air situation;
- a building which is not an open building but which has natural ventilation (generally less than that of an open building) provided by permanent openings made for ventilation purposes.

Consideration of natural ventilation in buildings should recognise that gas or vapour buoyancy may be a significant factor and so, ventilation should be arranged to promote dispersion and dilution.

Ventilation rates arising from natural ventilation are inherently very variable. Where dilution of releases is by natural ventilation, the worst case scenario shall preferably be considered to determine the degree of ventilation. Such a scenario will then lead to a higher level of availability even though the degree of the ventilation is reduced. Generally, with any natural ventilation, a lower degree of ventilation leads to a higher level of availability and vice versa which will compensate for overly optimistic assumptions made in estimating the degree of ventilation.

There are some situations which require special care. This is particularly the case where the ventilation openings are limited to mainly one side of the enclosure. Under certain unfavourable ambient conditions, such as windy days when the wind is blowing onto the ventilated face of the enclosure, the external air movement may prevent the operation of the thermal buoyancy mechanism. Under these circumstances the level of ventilation and the availability will both be poor resulting in a more rigorous classification.

### **6.5.3 Artificial ventilation**

#### **6.5.3.1 General**

Air movement required for ventilation may also be provided by artificial means, for example, fans or extractors. Although artificial ventilation is mainly applied inside a room or enclosed space, it can also be applied to situations in the open air to compensate for restricted or impeded air movement due to obstacles.

The artificial ventilation may be either general (e.g. a whole room) or local (e.g. extraction near a point of release) and for both of these, differing degrees of air movement and replacement can be appropriate.

With the use of artificial ventilation it is sometimes possible to achieve:

- reduction in the type and/or extent of zones;
- shortening of the time of persistence of an explosive gas atmosphere;
- prevention of the generation of an explosive gas atmosphere.

#### **6.5.3.2 Ventilation considerations**

Artificial ventilation can provide an effective and reliable ventilation system in an indoor situation. The following considerations should be included for artificial ventilation systems:

- a) classification of the inside of the extraction system and immediately outside the extraction system discharge point and other openings of the extraction system;

- b) for ventilation of a hazardous area the ventilation air should normally be drawn from a non-hazardous area taking into account the suction effects on the surrounding area;
- c) before determining the dimensions and design of the ventilation system, the location, grade of release, release velocity and release rate should be defined.

In addition, the following factors will influence the quality of an artificial ventilation system:

- a) flammable gases and vapours usually have densities other than that of air, thus they may accumulate near to either the floor or ceiling of an enclosed area, where air movement is likely to be reduced;
- b) proximity of the artificial ventilation to the source of release; artificial ventilation close to the source of release will normally be more effective and may be needed to adequately control gas or vapour movement;
- c) changes in gas density with temperature;
- d) impediments and obstacles may cause reduced, or even no, air movement, i.e. no ventilation in certain parts of the area;
- e) turbulence and circulating air patterns.

For more details see Annex C.

Consideration should be given to the possibility or need for recirculation of air in the ventilation arrangement. This may impact the background concentration and effectiveness of the ventilation system in reducing the hazardous area. In such cases the classification of the hazardous area may need to be modified accordingly. Recirculation of air may also be necessary in some applications e.g. for some processes or to provide for the needs of personnel or equipment in high or low ambient temperatures where supplemental cooling or heating of the air is required. Where recirculation of air is needed then additional controls for safety may also be required. e.g. a gas analyzer with dampers controlling fresh air intake.

#### **6.5.3.3 Examples of artificial ventilation**

General artificial ventilation may include a building which is provided with fans in the walls and/or in the roof to improve the general ventilation in the building.

The role of fans may be twofold. They can increase the air flow through a building, helping to remove gas from the building. Fans within a building can also increase turbulence and aid the dilution of a cloud which is much smaller than the room which contains it, even if no gas is transported out of the room. Fans may also enhance dilution by increasing turbulence in some outdoor situations.

Local artificial ventilation may be:

- a) An air/vapour extraction system applied to an item of process equipment which continuously or periodically releases flammable vapour.
- b) A forced or extraction ventilation system applied to a local area where it is expected that an explosive gas atmosphere may otherwise occur.

For more details see C.4.

#### **6.5.4 Degree of dilution**

The effectiveness of the ventilation in controlling dispersion and persistence of the explosive atmosphere will depend upon the degree of dilution, the availability of ventilation and the design of the system. For example, ventilation may not be sufficient to prevent the formation of an explosive atmosphere but may be sufficient to avoid its persistence.

The degree of dilution is a measure of the ability of ventilation or atmospheric conditions to dilute a release to a safe level. Therefore a larger release corresponds with a lower degree of

dilution for a given set of ventilation / atmospheric conditions, and a lower ventilation rate corresponds with a lower degree of dilution for a given size of release.

If other forms of ventilation, e.g. cooling fans are taken into account, then care should be exercised as to ventilation availability. Ventilation for other purposes may also affect dilution in either a positive or negative manner.

The degree of dilution will also affect the dilution volume. The dilution volume is mathematically equal to the hazardous volume but the boundary of the hazardous area additionally takes into account other factors such as possible movement of the release due to the direction and velocity of the release and of the surrounding volume of air.

Degrees of dilution depend not only on the ventilation, but also on the nature and the type of the expected release of gas. Some releases, e.g. release with low velocity, will be amenable to mitigation by enhanced ventilation with others much less so, e.g. release with high velocity.

The following three degrees of dilution are recognized:

a) High dilution

The concentration near the source of release reduces quickly and there will be virtually no persistence after the release has stopped.

b) Medium dilution

The concentration is controlled resulting in a stable zone boundary, whilst the release is in progress and the explosive gas atmosphere does not persist unduly after the release has stopped.

c) Low dilution

There is significant concentration whilst release is in progress and/or significant persistence of a flammable atmosphere after the release has stopped.

## 7 Type of zone

### 7.1 General

The likelihood of the presence of an explosive gas atmosphere depends mainly on the grade of release and the ventilation. This is identified as a zone. Zones are recognized as: zone 0, zone 1, zone 2 and the non-hazardous area.

Where zones created by adjacent sources of release overlap and are of different zonal classification, the more severe classification criteria will apply in the area of overlap. Where overlapping zones are of the same classification, this common classification will normally apply.

### 7.2 Influence of grade of the source of release

There are three basic grades of release, as listed below in order of decreasing frequency of occurrence and/or duration of release of flammable substance:

- 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.

The grade of release generally determines type of the zone. In an adequately ventilated area (typical open air plant) a continuous grade of release generally leads to zone 0.

classification, a primary grade to zone 1 and a secondary grade to zone 2. This general rule may be modified by considering the degree of dilution and availability of ventilation which may result in a more or less severe classification (see 7.3 and 7.4).

### 7.3 Influence of dilution

The effectiveness of ventilation or degree of dilution shall be considered when estimating the type of zone classification. A medium degree of dilution will generally result in the predetermined types of the zones based upon the types of the sources of release. A high degree of dilution will allow a less severe classification, e.g. zone 1 instead of zone 0, zone 2 instead of zone 1 and even zone of negligible extent in some cases. On the other hand a low degree of dilution will require a more severe classification (see Annex D).

### 7.4 Influence of availability of ventilation

The availability of ventilation has an influence on the presence or formation of an explosive gas atmosphere and thus also on the type of zone. As availability, or reliability, of the ventilation decreases, the likelihood of not dispersing flammable atmospheres increases. The zone classification will tend to be more severe, i.e. a zone 2 may change to a zone 1 or even zone 0. Guidance on availability is given in Annex D.

NOTE Combining the concepts of the efficiency of ventilation and the availability of ventilation results in a qualitative method for the evaluation of the zone type. This is further explained in Annex D.

## 8 Extent of zone

The extent of the zone depends on the estimated or calculated distance over which an explosive atmosphere exists before it disperses to a concentration in air below its lower flammable limit. Determination of the extent of the zone should consider the level of uncertainty in the assessment by the application of a safety factor. When assessing the area for spread of gas or vapour before dilution to below its lower flammable limit, expert advice should be sought.

Consideration should always be given to the possibility that a gas which is heavier than air may flow into areas below ground level (for example, pits or depressions) and that a gas which is lighter than air may be retained at high level (for example, in a roof space).

Where the source of release is situated outside an area or in an adjoining area, the penetration of a significant quantity of flammable gas or vapour into the area can be prevented by suitable means such as:

- a) physical barriers;

NOTE An example of a physical barrier is a wall or other obstruction that will limit the passage of gas or vapour at atmospheric pressure, thus preventing the accumulation of a flammable atmosphere.

- b) maintaining a sufficient overpressure in the area relative to the adjacent hazardous areas, so preventing the ingress of the explosive gas atmosphere;
- c) purging the area with sufficient flow of fresh air, so ensuring that the air escapes from all openings where the flammable gas or vapour may enter.

The extent of the zone requires assessment of a number of physical and chemical parameters, some of which are intrinsic properties of the flammable substance; others are specific to the situation (refer also to Clauses 6 and 7).

For releases where only a small mass is available to be released a lesser distance may be accepted to an on-going release.

Under some conditions heavier than air gases and vapours can behave like a spilled liquid spreading down terrain slopes, through plant drains or pipe trenches and can be ignited at a

point remote from the original leakage, therefore putting at risk large areas of a plant (see B.6). The layout of the plant, where possible, should be designed to aid the rapid dispersal of explosive gas atmospheres.

An area with restricted ventilation (for example, in pits or trenches) that would otherwise be zone 2 may require zone 1 classification; on the other hand, wide shallow depressions used for pumping complexes or pipe reservations may not require such rigorous treatment.

## 9 Documentation

### 9.1 General

It is recommended that the steps taken to carry out area classification and the information and assumptions used are fully documented. The area classification document should be a living document and should include the method used for area classification and should be revised during any plant changes. All relevant information used should be referenced. Examples of such information, or of a method used, would be:

- a) recommendations from relevant codes and standards;
- b) gas and vapour dispersion characteristics and calculations;
- c) a study of ventilation characteristics in relation to flammable substance release parameters so that the effectiveness of the ventilation can be evaluated.
- d) the properties of all process substances used on the plant (see IEC 60079-20-1), which may include:
  - molar mass
  - flash point
  - boiling point
  - minimum ignition temperature
  - vapour pressure
  - vapour density
  - flammability limits
  - equipment group and temperature class

A suggested format for the substances listing is given in Table A.1 and a format for recording the results of the area classification study and any subsequent alterations is given in Table A.2.

The source of information (code, national standard, calculation) needs to be recorded so that, at subsequent reviews, the philosophy adopted is clear to the area classification team.

### 9.2 Drawings, data sheets and tables

Area classification documents may be in hard copy or electronic form and should include plans and elevations or three dimensional models, as appropriate, which show both the type and extent of zones, equipment group, ignition temperature and/or temperature class.

Where the topography of an area influences the extent of the zones, this should be documented.

The documents should also include other relevant information such as:

- a) The location and identification of sources of release. For large and complex plants or process areas, it may be helpful to itemize or number the sources of release so as to facilitate cross-referencing between the area classification data sheets and the drawings.

- b) The position of openings in buildings (for example, doors, windows and inlets and outlets of air for ventilation).

The area classification symbols which are shown in Figure A.1 are the preferred ones. A symbol key shall always be provided on each drawing. Different symbols may be necessary where multiple equipment groups and/or temperature classes are required within the same type of zone (for example, zone 2 IIC T1 and zone 2 IIA T3).