

The fastest way to obtain the India PESO certification for explosion proof products

India is one of the countries with the highest industrial growth in the world. In recent years this rapid growth has led to an increased demand for products and components produced outside of India, including various types of explosion proof equipment used in local manufacturing plants.

Products installed in hazardous areas need to undergo thorough checking by the Indian authorities. This process has been institutionalized under the PESO certification. This article aims to provide an overview on the certification process itself, its origin and what products require mandatory PESO certification. The relevant steps to successfully obtain the certification are outlined in this article.

PESO certification: origin and employment

The PESO certification, previously called the Chief Controller of Explosives (CCoE) certification, has its origins in the Explosives Act of 1884 and the Petroleum Act of 1934. Since then various laws have been enacted that further define the certification requirements for explosion-proof equipment, such as the Explosive Rules 2008, Gas Cylinders Rules 2004 and others. During administrative simplification and increasing specialization of the Indian authorities, the original Department of Explosives was transformed into the current Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation in 2010. The formal title CCoE still exists and is the official title of the Indian auditors and department directors within the organization who are responsible for issuing certificates and licences. The term "CCoE certification" is still widely used. For most cases the PESO certification process is purely document-based, meaning that usually no factory inspection or product tests in India are required by the authority. However, in some cases an audit of the production plant as well as product testing in India may be mandatory.



ATEX and/or IECEx certificates including the corresponding test reports must be submitted for the PESO certification. These test reports are recognised by PESO and replace the required product tests. In addition to the tests, it must be proven that the relevant products and components are to be used by an Indian company. Whether you deliver directly to an Indian customer or whether there are several other companies in between is not relevant from the authority's point of view. What matters is that the entire supply chain is verifiable by means of documents (for example by submitting purchase orders or order confirmations).

Additional documents are also required, which include extensive company information, detailed product information, as well as commercial information with supporting documents. A more detailed breakdown of the required documents can be found under "PESO certification procedure – roadmap to success".

In addition to the required documents, the manufacturer must nominate an Indian representative, also known as an Authorised Indian Representative (AIR). The AIR must be a company registered in India such as the company's own Indian subsidiary or a reliable local sales partner. Alternatively, the AIR can also be supplied by external service providers. In the context of PESO certification, the AIR acts as the main contact person for the authority and is responsible for submitting the application. In addition, the AIR must have demonstrable technical know-how of the relevant products and must be contracted for at least five years.

Since the certification process normally does not include a factory inspection or product testing in India, the whole procedure can usually be completed in about 3-4 months after submitting the application to PESO. The expected costs can vary greatly depending on product type and on the total number of all products and/or components to be certified.

Is the PESO certification mandatory?

Generally, all products and components that are ATEX and/or IECEx certified require a PESO certificate in India. While the name of the certification already suggests a variety of products related to petroleum or explosives, some of the products requiring certification are less obvious. For example, electrical equipment that must withstand corrosive salt water or very hot temperatures also falls under the mandatory certification requirements. Purely mechanical components are also subject to certification if they are used in hazardous areas. In addition, PESO certification also covers other product groups, such as gas cylinders and associated valves, pressure vessels and their fittings, explosives, petroleum piping and many more.



PESO certification procedure – a roadmap to success

The PESO certification process includes the following key steps:



1. Preparation of application and supporting documentation
2. Verification of the documents by PESO
3. Issuance of the PESO certificate
4. Issuance of the import licence to the Authorised Indian Representative (AIR)

Besides the actual PESO certificate, there are three documents that are issued during the certification process: the manufacturing license, a design approval as well as the import license.

The manufacturing license is issued for each relevant production plant individually. For the initial approval, this license usually comes with a validity of one year. After that, the license can be renewed which comes with lower requirements than the initial certification. In case of a successful renewal, the validity is usually extended for more than one year. However, the overall timeframe that a manufacturing license can be prolonged for is always at the discretion of the authority. For applicants with a good track record a prolongation for up to 10 years is possible.

Apart from the manufacturing license, design approvals are also very important. These approvals need to be obtained for all relevant products and/or components. Once the approval is granted, it remains valid under the condition that the design of the product remains unchanged. If a manufacturer would like to add new products to their portfolio in India it is possible to simply add design approvals to a valid manufacturing license.

Finally, the import licence will be issued. This license is granted on a batch basis, meaning that it needs to be obtained for all individual shipments requiring customs clearance in India. It is also possible for an Indian distributor to directly obtain the import license when having both manufacturing license and design approval available, as well as a valid storage license.

It should also be noted that the document requirements for Indian and for foreign companies may differ. As previously mentioned, the catalogue of documents to be submitted should not be underestimated. Technical and commercial characteristics of the product are relevant for the certification process.

For successful certification documents of the following categories must be provided:

- Application documents: completed application forms, contract with AIR for minimum of 5 years, technical proof of competence of AIR, etc.
- Manufacturer information: manufacturer's business licence (also from AIR), global organizational chart including PESO responsible person, etc.
- Product information: manufacturer's profile, ATEX/IECEX certificates & corresponding test reports, list of production equipment and test instruments, ISO certificates, video of production facility, etc.
- Commercial information: sales figures for the last three years, list of Indian customers, documentary evidence such as Indian company purchase order or request, information on installation in the hazardous area of the with indication of installation location and purpose for the equipment, etc.



The PESO approval process can be challenging and complex. Efficient communication with the Indian authorities as well as an accurate preparation of all relevant documents are essential for the successful certification. It is important to ensure that all documents contain the required information and are up to date to limit queries from the authority, which can be lengthy. It is also important to be aware that the authority often give very little time to amend incorrect documents. Missing deadlines may require that the entire process be restarted from the beginning.

Once the PESO certificate has been issued it is typically valid for 1-5 years. The period of validity depends on the product category. Mechanical products, such as valves or pressure vessels usually receive initial certification for one year. For electrical products, the certificates are usually issued for five years. Within this period of validity, the certified products and components can be imported to India without restrictions and also distributed locally. Similar to the manufacturing license, the certification can be extended again. It is important to note that the requirements of the authority for an extension do not significantly differ from those for the initial approval.

Different Types of PESO approvals

PESO certificates are not only for individual products and/or components. Assembled parts can also be approved within the framework of a so-called "blanket approval". This is possible even if not all built-in components are produced by the manufacturer of the assembly. ATEX and/or IECEx certificates and their corresponding test reports must be submitted for all components requiring certification. However, the required documents concerning the manufacturers of the respective components are not nearly as extensive as the requirements for the applicant. It should be noted that the components certified within the scope of a blanket approval can only be imported to India as part of the certified assembly.

If the components are also used in other products that are to be imported into India, regular certification is recommended. For already certified components, the corresponding PESO certificates can be submitted as part of the PESO certification of an assembly, which is why no further inspection of such components are necessary during the application process.

This also means that manufacturers of components which are already PESO certified have a strengthened market position compared to their non-certified competitors. Not only do they make blanket approvals easier for the manufacturer of assembled parts, but they can also help reduce the overall costs related to such a project.

Unfortunately, there is no shortcut to receiving a PESO approval in India, such as import approvals for smaller batches that come with lower requirements. Having a valid manufacturing license, design approval and import license are all mandatory for importing products to India and cannot be avoided. However, once a manufacturing license has been granted, adding new designs to the portfolio does not require as much documentation as an initial certification.



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