

World's first tablet for Zone 1 / Div. 1

Globally, ecom instruments is the leading manufacturer of mobile devices for use in explosive areas, whether including chemicals and petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas production, mining or energy and the environment. In its four core disciplines of mobile computing, communication, portable hand lamps and measurement calibration, ecom instruments offers a huge variety of innovative and proven mobile solutions. The company this year introduces the Tab-Ex as the first tablet computer for Zone 1 / Div. 1 classified hazardous areas. Christian Uhl, VP Marketing at ecom, explains why this new ecom product is so widely anticipated.



ecom was founded in 1986 as Ecom Rolf Nied GmbH in Assamstadt, Germany. Four years later, the company introduced its first in-house developed explosion-shielded calibrator (EX-mAG 20) to the market. Over the past twenty years, ecom has continued to internationalise its business, during which it has engaged in pursuing regulatory approval for its intrinsically safe mobile devices in most parts of the world.

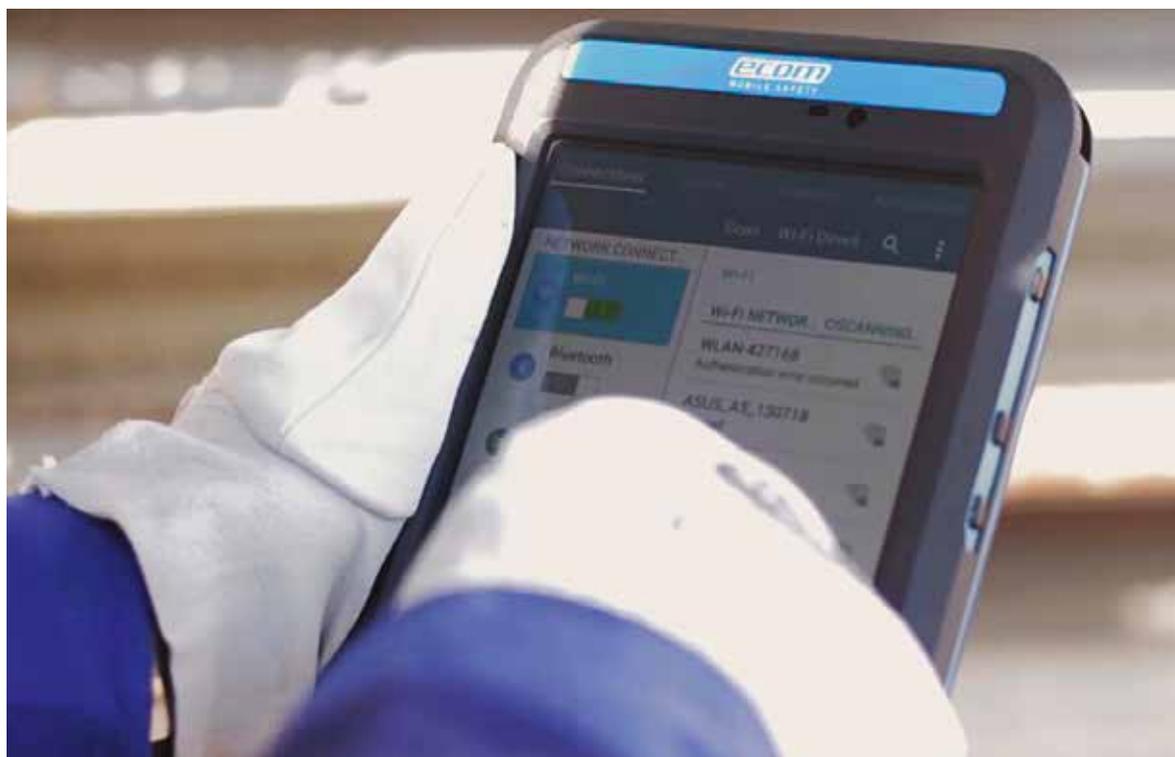
Intrinsic safety (IS) is generally defined as a protection technique for safe operation of electrical equipment in hazardous areas. In order to provide the highest level of safety possible, laws, regulations and standards have been developed. These now have to be implemented by companies because the operator of a plant is solely responsible for safe operation in accordance with

the directive 1999/92/EC. Certifying bodies allow manufacturers such as ecom to affix a label or mark to identify that the equipment has been designed to the relevant product safety standards for specific zones. In a Zone 0 area, an explosive gas-air mixture is continuously present or present for long periods, in oil tanks for example. In Zone 1, combustible or conductive dusts are present; it is designated an area in which an explosive gas-air mixture is likely to occur for short periods in normal operation. In Zone 2, an explosive gas-air mixture is not likely to occur, and if it occurs it will only exist for a very short time due to an abnormal condition.

ecom has various industry first approvals to its name with devices for all zones. The company was first with a Zone 1 Mobile Phone and PDA, notably, and recently also introduced the first tablet computer for Zone 1, in the newly launched Tab-Ex® series. The first in this series of tablets will be available in production quantities in the fourth quarter of 2014.

In a press release on the subject, ecom specifies that the new tablet is





lightweight and compact, and operates on the latest Android Kitkat 4.4. The 8" screen enables not only standard desktop applications to become mobile in hazardous areas, allowing workers to view and interact with SCADA/DCS systems, enterprise systems, and computer aided design systems, when they are moving around the hazardous area. Augmented reality and video conferencing also become much easier to use with Tab-Ex®. Built-in cameras and full range of wireless capability allowing equipment defects to be captured as inspection and maintenance work is executed, and instantly visible to those who need to diagnose the issue and determine the follow-on actions.

In the same press release, ecom emphasises that Tab-Ex® includes numerous new patents and is built on the Samsung GALAXY Tab Active platform. The state-of-the-art tablet GALAXY Tab Active offers, amongst others, IP67 Water & Dust Resistance, Anti-shock 1.2m Drop Test with included cover as well as easy handling and lightweight, an auto-focus camera (with flash) for barcode scanning and Samsung's warranty packages. Mr. Uhl

says that Samsung Knox, specifically, has helped to make Android devices, including ecom's Tab-Ex, suitable for the workplace: this solution provides compatibility and a wide range of preloaded applications for a safer work environment with unparalleled security functions like device encryption, MDM, VPN and secure connectivity (Samsung KNOX). Knox is part of the Samsung Approved For Enterprise (SAFE) offerings for smartphones and tablets.

In September, ecom presented the new tablet at IFA, where it was very well received, says Mr. Uhl. "People had been waiting for a Zone 1 tablet for a long time." He points out that workers in hazardous areas don't tend to stay in one area. "With the Tab-Ex, they no longer have to switch devices when they move from non hazardous to hazardous areas (Zone 1 or 2), or vice versa. Also, companies no longer have to train their staff in the use of two different devices." Mr. Uhl expects that the Tab-Ex will be popular with ecom's existing customers and that it also may open up new markets in industries outside the conventional hazardous industries of oil and gas. He believes that the company is well positioned for

continued growth. "We're unique with our focus on mobile devices and track record of industry firsts, and enjoy an excellent reputation for the reliability of our products as well as for global service and support. "



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