Hazardous locations
Classification

Areas where the possibility of explosion and fire is created by the presence of flammable gases, vapors, liquids, dust, fibers or flyings.

Class I – Gases, vapors or liquids

Class I locations are those in which flammable gases, flammable liquid-produced vapors or combustible liquid-produced vapors are or may be present in the air in quantities sufficient to produce explosive or ignitable mixtures.

Typical class I locations
Petroleum refineries and gasoline storage and dispensing areas
Industrial firms that use flammable liquids in dip tanks for parts cleaning or other operations
Petrochemical companies that manufacture chemicals from gas and oil
Dry cleaning plants where vapors from cleaning fluids can be present
Companies that have spraying areas where they coat products with paint or plastics
Aircraft hangars and fuel serving areas
Utility gas plants and operations involving storage and handling of liquified petroleum gas or natural gas

Class II – Combustible dusts

Class II locations are those that are hazardous because of the presence of combustible dust.

Typical class II locations
Grain elevators, flour and feed mills
Plants that manufacture, use or store magnesium or aluminum powders
Plants that have chemical or metallurgical processes: producers of plastics, medicines and fireworks, etc.
Producers of starch or candies
Spice-grinding plants, sugar plants and cocoa plants
Coal preparation plants and other carbon handling or processing areas

Class III – Fibers and flyings

Class III locations are those that are hazardous because of the presence of easily ignitable fibers or where materials producing combustible flyings are handled, manufactured or used, but in which such fibers/flyings are not likely to be in suspension in the air in quantities sufficient to produce ignitable mixtures.

Typical class III locations
Textile mills, cotton gins, cotton seed mills and flax processing plants
Any plant that shapes, pulverizes or cuts wood and creates sawdust or flyings

Fibers and flyings are not likely to be suspended in the air but can collect around machinery or on lighting fixtures and where heat, a spark or hot metal can ignite them.

Division 1 – Normally hazardous

Hazardous gases, vapors or dusts are present under normal operation conditions or during frequent repair and maintenance activity.

Groups A, B, C, D

The gases and vapors of Class I locations are broken into four groups by the code A, B, C and D. These materials are grouped according to the ignition temperature of the substance, its explosion pressure and other flammable characteristics.

Groups E, F, G

Class II dust locations groups E, F and G are classified according to the ignition temperature and the conductivity of the hazardous substance.

Division 2 – Not normally hazardous

Hazardous gases, vapors or dusts are not present under normal operating conditions.

Area classification | Divisions versus zones		
Continuous hazard	Intermittent hazard	Hazard under abnormal conditions
Zone 0	Zone 1	Zone 2
	Division 1	Division 2

These are simplified definitions. Complete data is in the U.S. National Electrical Code (NEC) and the Canadian Electrical Code (CEC).