



A Quick Trip to Brazil and Back!

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Increasingly electrical equipment manufacturing is becoming highly globalised. An oil refinery in Sydney decides that it urgently needs a large 1600kW electric motor to expand its refining capacity and it is ordered from a company in Brazil.

Electric motors for use in industries such as oil refining generally need certification to ensure that they are explosion proof or non-sparking, but in order to achieve this in a global setting it is more cost effective to take the certifiers to the equipment rather than the equipment to the certifiers.

For these large companies, with their own in-house testing facilities, it is becoming increasingly commonplace, for TestSafe staff to be requested to undertake part of their testing and certification role at the client's factory. This work is not only fully cost recoverable but earns a new stream of revenue for TestSafe.

So on a sunny Sydney Sunday both Jim Bes and myself set off on a arduous trip to an isolated town called Jaragua do Sul in southern Brazil, to do international work approved by the Minister for Industrial Relations, the Hon. John Della Bosca. We were to witness a range of tests of the equipment designed for installation in the Sydney oil refinery, and to undertake a quality audit of the department of one of the world's largest electric motor manufacturers, WEG Industrias S.A - Motores and Maquinas, that produces low and high voltage motors. All this within an extremely tight timeframe specified by the client. Certainly no time for Rio, Samba or Carnivale.

Jaragua do Sul is not an easy place to reach. We flew via Auckland, Santiago,



Company Profile

The name WEG Industries is drawn from the first-name initials of the 3 founders on the company (Werner Ricardo Voigt, Eggon-Joao da Silva, and Geraldo Werninghaus).

They established a factory in 1961 in the small inland town of Jaragua do Sul in the southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina. In the first year, the business struggled and only 146 electric motors were produced but in the next year this had grown to 4085 Units. Initially WEG produced only electric motors but during the 1980's it diversified into the manufacture of generators, electro-electronic components, power and distribution transformers, liquid and powder paints, and electro-insulating varnishes.

Chile, and then over the Andes to Sao Paulo. From there it was by a 2-hour domestic flight to the provincial city of Curitiba and then on a 3-hour car trip to our final destination. WEG Industrias S.A is the biggest industry in Jaragua du Sul (a place the equivalent size of Wollongong) with more than 10,000 employees.

The town is located in tropical surroundings in a valley surrounded by mountains, and is about 50kms from the coast (see photograph below). We were to discover that, like Australians, the town was vacated at weekends when everyone headed to their beachside haciendas.

Due to the power of the Internet, we have a flourishing and constant interaction with staff at WEG and particularly Wesley Nascimento, WEG's Certification Manager. It is pleasing to know that WEG, given that it is constantly dealing with a large number of international testing agencies in different world markets, is impressed by both our level of professionalism and the thoroughness of our quality audits. Over time, it has come to be a frequent user of our services, in preference to other bodies.



For Jim Bes, with a newly acquired passport and on his first trip to an international manufacturer, it was impressive to see the production of electric motors in a large state-of-the-art factory and to observe at first-hand the internal testing procedures on large motors.



The visit further cemented the ongoing relationship with the client and we were able to confirm that WEG's Quality system met the requirements of the Australian standard MP87.