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Products and related services — Information for consumers

Produits et services connexes — Informations pour les consommateurs

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) are worldwide federations of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies and IEC National Committees). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO and IEC technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO or IEC, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by the ISO Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO).

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO/IEC Guide 14:2003), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared with the previous edition are as follows:

— mention of new purchase information labelling tools (e.g. QR codes or RFID tags), available on the packaging of the product;

— clarification of the relationship with ISO/IEC Guide 37, ISO/IEC Guide 41 and IEC 82079-1;

— consideration of the product information needs of vulnerable persons;

— content added on recycling and second-hand goods;

— improved treatment of risk, sustainability and privacy issues;

— addition of new clauses on performance and conditions of use and dependability considerations;

— deletion of obsolete content on purchase information bodies and purchase information systems.

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Introduction

Product information for consumers is a vital part of any consumer product or service. Improving the quality of information increases the ability of consumers to make an informed purchasing choice. It helps to minimize the risk of incorrect or inappropriate purchases or contracts. Consumer uncertainties are reduced and consumer satisfaction is increased. Those who supply a high standard of product information, taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable consumers, enhance their commercial reputation and save time and money, by reducing enquiries, complaints and returns.

This document addresses the following:

— committees preparing standards for consumer products and related services;

— consumer product designers, manufacturers, technical writers, marketers, graphic artists or others engaged in the work of drafting such information;

— other bodies such as enforcement agencies or consumer ombudsmen.

The primary purpose of this document is to provide guidance to those responsible for drafting national or international standards on what information prospective purchasers require and expect for products and their related services. However, it can also assist those who write purchase information (e.g. suppliers), as well as enforcement authorities.

Aspects of product information can vary in various jurisdictions and/or industry standards or technical specifications. Suppliers can establish, implement and maintain a procedure to identify the applicable laws and regulations of the countries where the consumer products and related services are manufactured, imported, distributed and sold, in order to ensure that applicable legal requirements are taken into account.

A number of methods can be used (individually or in combination) to provide information to consumers about products and related services, in order to accommodate varying levels of ability:

— written or printed;

— online;

— verbal.

Online information is increasingly used by consumers for pre-purchase research and decision-making.

There is considerable scope for further standardization in the field of product information in terms of individual consumer products and related services, and even more so for groups of consumer products and related services.

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Products and related services — Information for consumers

1 Scope

This document provides guidance on the provision of information concerning products and their related services intended for consumers. It outlines general principles and recommendations for content, methods, formats and designs enabling consumers to compare and choose consumer products and their related services prior to purchase.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
complaint
<customer satisfaction> expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its product or service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

Note 1 to entry: ISO 10002 provides information on complaints handling in organizations.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.9.3, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.2
consumer
individual member of the general public purchasing or using property, products or services for private purposes

Note 1 to entry: The term "consumer" covers both customers and potential customers. *Consumer products* (3.3) and services can be one-time purchases or long-term contracts or obligations.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.2, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.3
consumer product
product designed and produced primarily for, but not limited to, personal use, including its components, parts, accessories, instructions and packaging

[SOURCE: ISO 10377:2013, 2.2]

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3.4
consumer redress
compensation for economic *harm* (3.7), whether in the form of a monetary payment (restitution, damages, or other form of relief) or a conduct remedy with a restorative element (exchange of a good or service, specific performance or rescission of a contract)[SOURCE: OECD Recommendation on Consumer Dispute Resolution and Redress[35], modified.]

3.5
cooling-off period
period of time following a purchase during which a *consumer* (3.2) can change his or her mind and return the purchase

3.6
guarantee
warranty
written assurance issued to the purchaser of a product or related service by its *supplier* (3.19), promising to repair, refund or replace the product or related service within a specified period of time, if it is not of a specified quality

3.7
harm
injury or damage to the health of people or damage to property or the environment

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, 3.1]

3.8
hazard
potential source of *harm* (3.7)

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, 3.2]

3.9
instructions for use
information provided by the *supplier* (3.19) of a product to the user, containing all the necessary provisions to convey the actions to be performed for the safe and efficient use of the product

3.10
label
item, attached to a *consumer product* (3.3) (if practicable) or its packaging which displays information related to one or more characteristic(s) of the consumer product

3.11
life cycle
consecutive and interlinked stages of a product (or service) system, from raw material acquisition or generation from natural resources to final disposal

Note 1 to entry: The life cycle stages include acquisition of raw materials, design, production, transportation/delivery, use, end-of- life treatment and final disposal.

[SOURCE: ISO 14044:2006, 3.1, modified — The words "(or service)" have been added to the definition; Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.12
marking
symbols, pictograms, warnings, logos, or inscriptions on the *consumer product* (3.3), *label* (3.10) or packaging to identify its type, which can also include short textual messages

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3.13
purchase information
information that describes the physical or functional aspects of a product which is given to a consumer prior to the purchase of a product to allow informed choice

EXAMPLE Function; price; physical characteristics; warnings; safety aspects; expected life; storage; safe disposal; sustainability; unique features; service information.

3.14
residual risk
risk (3.15) remaining after *risk reduction measures* (3.16) have been implemented

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, 3.8]

3.15
risk
combination of the probability of occurrence of *harm* (3.7) and the severity of that harm

Note 1 to entry: The probability of occurrence includes the exposure to a hazardous situation, the occurrence of a hazardous event and the possibility to avoid or limit the harm.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, 3.9]

3.16
risk reduction measure
protective measure
action or means to eliminate *hazards* (3.8) or reduce *risks* (3.15)

EXAMPLE Inherently safe design; protective devices; personal protective equipment; information for use and installation; organization of work; training; application of equipment; supervision.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, 3.13]

3.17
safety data sheet
document that provides information on the properties of hazardous chemicals, how they affect health and safety in the workplace and how to manage the hazardous chemicals in the workplace

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 13329:2012, 3.29]

3.18
second-hand goods
goods or components/parts that have been in service (leased, loaned or owned) and that are re-entering a market for sale, lease or use by a second or later end user

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, products that are rebuilt, refurbished or remanufactured within the context of the WTO concept paper[34] are not considered to be second-hand goods.

Note 2 to entry: Second-hand goods do not include those goods that are sold for the first time but can have deficiencies or imperfections which can also be referred to as “seconds”.

[SOURCE: ISO 20245:2017, 3.7, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]

3.19
supplier
organization or person that supplies a *consumer product* (3.3) or provides a service

EXAMPLE Designer, producer/manufacturer, importer, distributor, or retailer of a product or service.

Note 1 to entry: In a contractual situation, a supplier is sometimes called “contractor/vendor”.

[SOURCE: ISO 10377:2013, 2.24, modified — The words “that provides a service” have been replaced by “that supplies a consumer product or provides a service” in the definition; the words “or service” have

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been added in the Example; the original Note 1 to entry has been deleted; the term “contractor” has been replaced by “contractor/vendor” in the Note to entry.]

3.20
vulnerable consumer
consumer who, either temporarily or permanently, is at greater *risk* (3.15) of *harm* (3.7) from products or systems, due to age, level of literacy, physical or mental condition or limitations, or inability to access product safety information

Note 1 to entry: ISO/IEC Guide 51 provides information about risk.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, 3.16, modified — The words “who, either temporarily or permanently, is” have been added; Note to entry has been added.]

4 Purchase information

4.1 Objective of purchase information

The overall objective of purchase information is to provide information to consumers that will enable them to make informed decisions when purchasing a new or used consumer product, including assurance that adequate details are provided on using, assembling, installing, maintaining, storing and disposing of the product in a safe manner.

NOTE 1 ISO 20245 provides in-depth information about cross-border trade in second-hand goods.

NOTE 2 ISO/IEC Guide 37 and IEC 82079-1 provide information about instructions for use.

NOTE 3 ISO/IEC Guide 41 provides information on consumer needs in packaging.

NOTE 4 ISO/IEC Guide 50 provides information on child safety in standards.

NOTE 5 ISO/IEC Guide 51 provides information on safety aspects in standards.

NOTE 6 ISO/IEC Guide 76 provides information on consumer needs in services.

4.2 General principles

This clause provides a description of principles for conveying information to consumers (by written, printed or verbal means, or using online content) when they are considering whether or not to acquire a new or used product or service. In addition, it describes general considerations that apply to all. The principles are listed in Table 1, under the following categories:

— use of language;

— presentation of information;

— business practice.

NOTE Purchasing includes buying products and related services, leasing products and related services, or obtaining products or services distributed with no financial transaction.

Table 1 — Principles for consumer information by category

Category	Principle
Use of language	Use clear, simple, unambiguous, relevant, complete language that is intelligible in the country of sale/access.
	Give the consumer information in the official language(s) of the region where the product is distributed.

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