
INTERNATIONAL STANDARD



5218

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION • МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО СТАНДАРТИЗАЦИИ • ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE NORMALISATION

Information interchange — Representation of human sexes

Échange d'information — Représentation des sexes humains

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Descriptors : data processing, information interchange, humans, sexes, numeric codes.

FOREWORD

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards institutes (ISO member bodies). The work of developing International Standards is carried out through ISO technical committees. Every member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been set up has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for approval before their acceptance as International Standards by the ISO Council.

International Standard ISO 5218 was developed by Technical Committee ISO/TC 97, *Computers and information processing*, and was circulated to the member bodies in November 1976.

It has been approved by the member bodies of the following countries :

Australia	Germany	Sweden
Belgium	Hungary	Switzerland
Brazil	Italy	Turkey
Canada	Japan	United Kingdom
Chile	New Zealand	U.S.A.
Czechoslovakia	Philippines	Yugoslavia
Finland	Poland	
France	South Africa, Rep. of	

No member body expressed disapproval of the document.

Information interchange — Representation of human sexes

1 SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

This International Standard specifies a uniform representation of human sexes for the interchange of information. It is intended to :

- a) reduce the time required to record and/or format the representation of sexes and transmit them;
- b) improve clarity and accuracy of interchange;
- c) minimize the amount of human intervention required for communicating the representation of sexes; and
- d) reduce costs.

This International Standard does not prescribe file sequences, storage media, programming languages, or other features of information processing to be used in its implementation.

This International Standard meets the requirements of most applications that need to code human sexes. It does not provide codes for sexes that may be required in specific medical and scientific applications or in applications that need to code sex information for other than human beings.

This International Standard does not supplant national standards for coding sexes that are designed based upon codes derived from the names of the sexes in the various languages (for example "M" for "Male" and "F" for "Female" in the English language). It provides a numeric code that is independent of language-derived codes and as

such is intended to provide a common basis for the international exchange of information containing sex data elements.

2 REPRESENTATION OF SEXES

Sex is represented by a one-character numeric code.

The following data items and codes are used :

Data item	Code
Not known	0 (zero)
Male	1 (one)
Female	2 (two)
Not specified	9 (nine)

3 DESIGNATOR

The use of this standard and associated codes may be referred to by the designator "SEX".

4 QUALIFICATION

No significance is to be placed on the fact that "Male" is coded "1" and "Female" is coded "2". This standard was developed based upon predominant practices of the countries involved and does not convey any meaning of importance, ranking or any other basis that could imply discrimination.