



# GUIDE 14

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## Product information for consumers

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**FOREWORD**

ISO/IEC Guide 14 has been drawn up by a joint ISO/IEC group. The document secured the necessary support of the IEC national committees and ISO member bodies, and was subsequently accepted by the IEC Council in May 1976 and by the ISO Council in September 1976.

This Guide cancels recommendation ISO/R 436.

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# GUIDE 14-1977 (E)

## Product information for consumers

### 0 INTRODUCTION

This guide is one of a series dealing with various aspects of consumer information, including comparative testing and marks of conformity with standards.

### 1 SCOPE

This guide establishes certain basic principles for the functioning of a system of product information for consumers.

It concerns those cases where the information is based in general on standards approved or recognized by ISO, IEC, or the national standards body.

### 2 DEFINITIONS

**2.1 product information for consumers :** A system aimed at giving the consumer objective information which will enable him to make a reasoned choice amongst products on the basis of their essential characteristics.

NOTE — The product information is intended to enable the consumer to compare products of the same kind, where they are offered, on the basis of objective, verifiable data. This information can take the form of a label or be introduced into the documents which are available for the consumer; in the latter case it must be presented in a clearly distinguishable and separate section which can be differentiated from all other information given in these documents.

**2.2 product information body :** A duly constituted body responsible for the surveillance and management of a product information system according to the rules of this system.

**2.3 licensee :** Any person, company or body to which is granted, according to the provisions of a product information system, the right to present the information for the products of its manufacture under the system.

### 3 PRINCIPLES

#### 3.1 Use of reference to standards

It is recommended that, whenever information of a technical nature relating to the characteristics of a product is made known to the public through product information for consumers, and except where there are official national legislation or regulations applying to certain products, the definitions of these characteristics and the method of verifying such information should be based as far as possible on ISO and IEC standards, or on national standards harmonized with them.

If such standards are not available, non-harmonized national standards should be used.

#### 3.2 General rules of product information systems

It is recommended that such rules should :

**3.2.1** indicate precisely the respective rights and duties of the product information body and of the licensee;

**3.2.2** require the licensee to declare, under his own responsibility, that the product complies with the national legislation or regulations in force including the appropriate safety requirements;

**3.2.3** provide for possible periodical revision of the content of the information provided in the light of experience and having regard to the consumers' views and the development of technology;

**3.2.4** be published and disseminated as widely as possible;

**3.2.5** take into consideration, depending upon the laws and regulations in force, the conditions in which users' claims may be deemed admissible together with the procedure for settling them.

**3.3 Specific rules for individual types of products**

It is recommended that such rules should :

**3.3.1** define the conditions for issuing and using the product information, including the procedure for verification that the data indicated correspond to the true data concerning the product, and the relevant system of sanctions (warning, suspension, penalty, etc.);

**3.3.2** list those characteristics of the product which are considered to be of special importance to the consumer. The characteristics should be stated in such a way that the consumer can understand them;

**3.3.3** specify the relevant methods of test or measurement by reference to the standards, when they exist; if they do not exist, the methods used should correspond to generally accepted practice. The tests defined by these methods should be reproducible and make it possible to check, over a period of time, the essential characteristics mentioned in 3.3.2. These methods must be accessible to all interested parties;

**3.3.4** establish, in the conditions laid down in 3.3.2, a terminology and, if necessary, a defined system of symbols — in conformity with standards where they exist — associating the words and symbols used with the results of tests or measurements effected according to the methods mentioned in 3.3.3;

**3.3.5** define the format of the information, including its layout and content. The characteristics listed in 3.3.2 should be taken into account as well as the terminology and system of symbols referred to in 3.3.4. In addition to these items, there may be instructions for use and care of the products and, if applicable, indication of any hazard they may present.

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