



GUIDE 15

First edition – 1977-10-01

ISO/IEC code of principles on “reference to standards”

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UDC 006.065

Ref. No. ISO/IEC GUIDE 15-1977 (E)

Descriptors : reference to standards.

Price based on 2 pages

FOREWORD

The ISO/IEC Code of principles on reference to standards was drawn up by a joint ISO/IEC ad hoc group, set up in 1973. The Code was approved by ISO Council in September 1973 and by IEC Council in January 1974. In August 1977 it was decided to publish the Code in the ISO/IEC Guide series.

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ISO/IEC code of principles on “reference to standards”

The advantages of the principle of “reference to standards” in legislation and regulations are by now well-known among governmental agencies; for example, a document drawn up by a group of experts of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe in May 1973, makes clear that if technical requirements are expressed in standards:

- a) The legislative work is simplified and accelerated.
- b) The elimination of barriers to trade is facilitated.
- c) The results of the work of international standards organizations can be more easily taken into account.
- d) Technical regulations can be changed more easily to take account of technological advance.
- e) Technical requirements are better observed as technical staff are more accustomed to using standards in their daily work than laws.
- f) All technical regulations could be arranged within one, unified systematic collection, if the method is applied consistently.
- g) The implementation of national technical regulations is better secured and discordances between the national standards of different countries are avoided if all interested parties participate in the preparation of the standards.

The standards-making procedures of ISO and IEC and their members are at the disposal of intergovernmental organizations and national governmental agencies wishing to use the principle of reference to standards. With a view to guiding the work of ISO and IEC and their members towards standards which can be referenced in legislation or regulations the ISO and IEC Councils have adopted principles 1 to 5 below.

- 1** ISO and IEC will give special attention to work requested by intergovernmental organizations which plan to recommend enactment of national legislation or regulations making reference to standards. Target dates for the completion of such work will be established on request. Similar principles will be observed by members of ISO and IEC in relations with national governmental authorities.
- 2** The national committees and their delegations engaged in the relevant standardization work should be fully representative of the views of all interested parties : government, public authorities, producers, distributors, users, etc.
- 3** With a view to ensuring wide-spread governmental acceptance of ISO or IEC standards for reference in conjunction with legislation and regulations, ISO and IEC technical committees will pay special attention to preparing international standards which have the widest possible geographical support.
- 4** ISO and IEC members shall contribute to the implementation of the relevant international standard, as soon as and as far as possible, either by endeavouring to ensure the closest possible conformity of the respective national standard with the international standard, or by conferring the appropriate status to the latter directly, within their own territory. If deviations from the international standard are necessary these should be indicated in the national standard, at the time of its next revision.
- 5** If a regional intergovernmental authority should call upon a regional standards organization for the preparation of standards to which national governments refer in conjunction with regulations, the ISO and IEC members belonging to that regional organization shall ensure that relevant ISO and IEC standards are taken into consideration in the development of a regional standard, preferably, wherever possible, by direct adoption of the ISO or IEC standard as a regional standard.

Successful application of the principle of "reference to standards" requires close collaboration between government and standards bodies, and the ISO and IEC Councils have therefore also drawn up principles 6 to 10 below, setting out certain desiderata for such collaboration. ISO and IEC members are requested to draw these to the attention of their respective governmental authorities, inviting acceptance of them.

6 When national authorities or intergovernmental organizations wishing to refer to international standards in their regulatory work put requests to ISO and IEC or through member bodies for such standards, understanding should be sought from the beginning on the scope of the standardization work requested.

7 In such cases the interested national authorities or intergovernmental organizations should consider agreeing that during a certain period they would abstain from regulatory action which could hamper the work of developing the standard.

8 The interested national authorities should be willing to offer appropriate assistance in the standardization work thus undertaken; their experts are invited to participate in the work together with the other delegates and should be willing to envisage any appropriate modifications of their national legislation or regulations in the field in question.

9 Wherever international standards exist, national authorities and intergovernmental organizations should refer thereto in their regulatory texts either directly or through harmonized national standards.

10 National and international standards are revised in the light of experience and technical progress. When choosing among the various techniques of reference to standards it is desirable that governmental authorities adopt a technique which will take advantage of these revisions with the least delay.

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