

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

## NORME INTERNATIONALE

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**Medical electrical equipment –  
Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance**

**Appareils électromédicaux –  
Partie 1: Exigences générales pour la sécurité de base et les performances  
essentiels**



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**MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –  
Part 1: General requirements for basic safety  
and essential performance**

**INTERPRETATION SHEET 1**

This interpretation sheet has been prepared by SC 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice

The text of this interpretation sheet is based on the following documents:

ISH	Report on voting
62A/599/ISH	62A/613/RVD

Full information on the voting for the approval of this interpretation sheet can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

Subclause 1.1

*This subclause is clarified by the following:*

IEC 60601-1 does not apply to medical gas pipeline systems covered by ISO 7396-1, *Medical gas pipeline systems — Part 1: Pipeline systems for compressed medical gases and vacuum*.

NOTE Subclause 6.3 of ISO 7396-1 applies the requirement of IEC 60601-1-8 to certain monitoring and alarm signals.

This clarification will remain valid until a new version of IEC 60601-1 is published.

## MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –

### Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance

#### INTERPRETATION SHEET 2

This interpretation sheet has been prepared by subcommittee 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice, of IEC technical committee 62: Electrical equipment in medical practice.

The text of this interpretation sheet is based on the following documents:

ISH	Report on voting
62A/634/ISH	62A/640/RVD

Full information on the voting for the approval of this interpretation sheet can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

#### Subclause 11.3

*This subclause is clarified by the following:*

As stated in the rationale for this subclause, fire ENCLOSURES are intended to be used only where there is a significant likelihood of fire due to the presence of a source of ignition (as described in the subclause) *and* a *significant* source of fuel. Most materials used in the construction of ME EQUIPMENT are not considered to be such a source of fuel unless they are in the presence of an OXYGEN RICH ENVIRONMENT. MANUFACTURERS should determine, through analyses documented in the RISK MANAGEMENT FILE, whether the ME EQUIPMENT contains combustible materials (fuel) in sufficient quantities to support combustion in conjunction with ignition sources (capable of releasing greater than 900 J).

#### Subclause 13.1.2

*This subclause is clarified by the following:*

As stated in subclause 4.7, it is the MANUFACTURER'S RISK ANALYSIS that determines which components are subject to failure testing based on the associated RISK. Where the associated RISK of fire exceeds the MANUFACTURER'S criteria for RISK acceptability, the MANUFACTURER'S simulation analysis (such as FMEAs) should be accepted in lieu of physical testing. As also stated in 4.7, component reliability and ratings are to be considered in such failure simulation analyses. Common electronic components that have a history of use without causing equipment fires should not be considered a likely source of ignition.

Where the subclause identifies "emission of flames, molten metal, poisonous or ignitable substance in hazardous quantities;" as a hazardous situation, this refers to emissions from *the ENCLOSURE* not from components themselves. Where it identifies "exceeding the allowable values for 'other components and materials' identified in Table 22 times 1,5 minus 12,5 °C", this applies only where doing so would result in an unacceptable RISK (as identified in the MANUFACTURER'S RISK ANALYSIS according to 4.7). Typically, this would be cases where

ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE would not be maintained or where greater than 900 J of energy would be released in the presence of flammable materials that could sustain combustion.

The first exemption to fault analysis or testing identified in subclause 13.1.2 (“The construction or the supply circuit limits the power dissipation in SINGLE FAULT CONDITION to less than 15 W or the energy dissipation to less than 900 J.”) is intended to apply where the component design itself (“The construction”) or fusing (or other current limiting devices) in the supply circuit (“or the supply circuit”) assure the energy released during failures will not exceed the limits. For most common signal level components rated for operation below 5 Watts, the energy released by short-circuiting of outputs will not exceed the 900 J limit.

This clarification will remain valid until a new version of IEC 60601-1 is published.

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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

**MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –****Part 1: General requirements for basic safety  
and essential performance**

## FOREWORD

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International Standard IEC 60601-1 has been prepared by subcommittee 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice, of IEC technical committee 62: Electrical equipment in medical practice.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition published in 1988, its Amendment 1 (1991) and Amendment 2 (1995). This edition constitutes a technical revision. This edition has been significantly restructured. Requirements in the electrical section have been further aligned with those for information technology equipment covered by IEC 60950-1 and a requirement for including a RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS has been added. For an expanded description of this revision, see Clause A.3.



The text of this standard is based on the following documents:

FDIS	Report on voting
62A/505A/FDIS	62A/512/RVD

Full information on the voting for the approval of this standard can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This publication has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

In this standard the following print types are used:

- Requirements and definitions: in roman type.
- *Test specifications: in italic type.*
- Informative material appearing outside of tables, such as notes, examples and references: in smaller type. Normative text of tables is also in a smaller type.
- TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THIS STANDARD THAT HAVE BEEN DEFINED IN CLAUSE 3 AND ALSO GIVEN IN THE INDEX: IN SMALL CAPITALS.

In referring to the structure of this standard, the term

- “clause” means one of the seventeen numbered divisions within the table of contents, inclusive of all subdivisions (e.g. Clause 7 includes subclauses 7.1, 7.2, etc.);
- “subclause” means a numbered subdivision of a clause (e.g. 7.1, 7.2 and 7.2.1 are all subclauses of Clause 7).

References to clauses within this standard are preceded by the term “Clause” followed by the clause number. References to subclauses within this standard are by number only.

In this standard, the conjunctive “or” is used as an “inclusive or” so a statement is true if any combination of the conditions is true.

The verbal forms used in this standard conform to usage described in Annex G of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2. For the purposes of this standard, the auxiliary verb:

- “shall” means that compliance with a requirement or a test is mandatory for compliance with this standard;
- “should” means that compliance with a requirement or a test is recommended but is not mandatory for compliance with this standard;
- “may” is used to describe a permissible way to achieve compliance with a requirement or test.

An asterisk ( \* ) as the first character of a title or at the beginning of a paragraph or table title indicates that there is guidance or rationale related to that item in Annex A.

The committee has decided that the contents of this publication will remain unchanged until the maintenance result date indicated on the IEC web site under “<http://webstore.iec.ch>” in the data related to the specific publication. At this date, the publication will be

- reconfirmed;
- withdrawn;
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

The contents of the corrigenda of December 2006 and 2007 and the Interpretations sheets of April 2008 and January 2009 have been included in this copy.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1976, IEC subcommittee 62A published the first edition of IEC/TR 60513, *Basic aspects of the safety philosophy for electrical equipment used in medical practice*. The first edition of IEC/TR 60513 provided the basis for developing:

- the first edition of IEC 60601-1 (the parent safety standard for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT);
- the IEC 60601-1-xx series of collateral standards for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT;
- the IEC 60601-2-xx series of particular standards for particular types of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT; and
- the IEC 60601-3-xx series of performance standards for particular types of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.

Aware of the need and the urgency for a standard covering electrical equipment used in medical practice, the majority of National Committees voted in 1977 in favour of the first edition of IEC 60601-1, based on a draft that at the time represented a first approach to the problem. The extent of the scope, the complexity of the equipment concerned, and the specific nature of some of the protective measures and the corresponding tests for verifying them, required years of effort in order to prepare this first standard, which can now be said to have served as a universal reference since its publication.

However, the frequent application of the first edition revealed room for improvement. These improvements were all the more desirable in view of the considerable success that this standard has enjoyed since its publication.

The careful work of revision subsequently undertaken and continued over a number of years resulted in the publication of the second edition in 1988. This edition incorporated all the improvements that could be reasonably expected up to that time. Further developments remained under constant study. The second edition was amended in 1991 and then again in 1995.

The original IEC approach was to prepare separate BASIC SAFETY and performance standards for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. This was a natural extension of the historical approach taken at the national and international level with other electrical equipment standards (e.g. those for domestic equipment), where BASIC SAFETY is regulated through mandatory standards but other performance specifications are regulated by market pressure. In this context, it has been said that, "The ability of an electric kettle to boil water is not critical to its safe use!"

It is now recognized that this is not the situation with many items of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, and RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS have to depend on standards to ensure ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE as well as BASIC SAFETY. Such areas include the accuracy with which the equipment controls the delivery of energy or therapeutic substances to the PATIENT, or processes and displays physiological data that will affect PATIENT management.

This recognition means that separating BASIC SAFETY and performance is somewhat inappropriate in addressing the HAZARDS that result from inadequate design of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. Many particular standards in the IEC 60601-2-xx series address a range of ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE requirements that cannot be directly evaluated by the RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION without applying such standards. (However, the current IEC 60601 series includes fewer requirements for ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE than for BASIC SAFETY).

In anticipation of a third edition of IEC 60601-1, IEC subcommittee 62A prepared a second edition of IEC/TR 60513 [12]<sup>1)</sup> in 1994. It was intended that the second edition of IEC/TR 60513 would provide guidance for developing this edition of IEC 60601-1, and for the further development of the IEC 60601-1-xx and IEC 60601-2-xx series.

In order to achieve consistency in international standards, address present expectations in the health care community and align with developments in IEC 60601-2-xx, the second edition of IEC/TR 60513 includes two major new principles:

- the first change is that the concept of “SAFETY” has been broadened from the BASIC SAFETY considerations in the first and second editions of IEC 60601-1 to include ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE matters, (e.g. the accuracy of physiological monitoring equipment). Application of this principle leads to the change of the title of this publication from “Medical electrical equipment, Part 1: General requirements for safety” in the second edition, to “Medical electrical equipment, Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance”;
- the second change is that, in specifying minimum safety requirements, provision is made for assessing the adequacy of the design PROCESS when this is the only practical method of assessing the safety of certain technologies such as programmable electronic systems. Application of this principle is one of the factors leading to introduction of a general requirement to carry out a RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS. In parallel with the development of the third edition of IEC 60601-1, a joint project with ISO/TC 210 resulted in the publication of a general standard for RISK MANAGEMENT of medical devices. Compliance with this edition of IEC 60601-1 requires that the MANUFACTURER have a RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS complying with ISO 14971 in place (see 4.2).

This standard contains requirements concerning BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE that are generally applicable to MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. For certain types of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, these requirements are either supplemented or modified by the special requirements of a collateral or particular standard. Where particular standards exist, this standard should not be used alone.

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1) Figures in square brackets refer to the Bibliography.

## MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –

### Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance

#### 1 Scope, object and related standards

##### 1.1 \* Scope

This International Standard applies to the BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT and MEDICAL ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS, hereafter referred to as ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS.

If a clause or subclause is specifically intended to be applicable to ME EQUIPMENT only, or to ME SYSTEMS only, the title and content of that clause or subclause will say so. If that is not the case, the clause or subclause applies both to ME EQUIPMENT and to ME SYSTEMS, as relevant.

HAZARDS inherent in the intended physiological function of ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEMS within the scope of this standard are not covered by specific requirements in this standard except in 7.2.13 and 8.4.1.

NOTE See also 4.2.

This standard can also be applied to equipment used for compensation or alleviation of disease, injury or disability.

In vitro diagnostic equipment that does not fall within the definition of ME EQUIPMENT is covered by the IEC 61010 series <sup>2)</sup>. This standard does not apply to the implantable parts of active implantable medical devices covered by ISO 14708-1 <sup>3)</sup>.

##### 1.2 Object

The object of this standard is to specify general requirements and to serve as the basis for particular standards.

##### 1.3 \* Collateral standards

In the IEC 60601 series, collateral standards specify general requirements for BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE applicable to:

- a subgroup of ME EQUIPMENT (e.g. radiological equipment);
- a specific characteristic of all ME EQUIPMENT not fully addressed in this standard.

Applicable collateral standards become normative at the date of their publication and shall apply together with this standard.

NOTE 1 When evaluating compliance with IEC 60601-1, it is permissible to independently assess compliance with the collateral standards.

<sup>2)</sup> IEC 61010 (all parts), *Safety requirements for electrical equipment for measurement, control, and laboratory use*

<sup>3)</sup> ISO 14708-1, *Implants for surgery – Active implantable medical devices – Part 1: General requirements for safety, marking and for information to be provided by the manufacturer*

NOTE 2 When declaring compliance with IEC 60601-1, the declarer should specifically list the collateral standards that have been applied. This allows the reader of the declaration to understand which collateral standards were part of the evaluation.

NOTE 3 Members of IEC maintain a register of valid International Standards. Users of this standard should consult this register to determine which collateral standards have been published.

If a collateral standard applies to ME EQUIPMENT for which a particular standard exists, then the particular standard takes priority over the collateral standard.

#### 1.4 \* Particular standards

In the IEC 60601 series, particular standards may modify, replace or delete requirements contained in this standard as appropriate for the particular ME EQUIPMENT under consideration, and may add other BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE requirements.

NOTE Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of valid International Standards. Users of this standard should consult these registers to determine which particular standards have been published.

A requirement of a particular standard takes priority over this standard.

## 2 \* Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

**ATTENTION: Additional collateral standards of the IEC 60601 series, which are issued subsequent to publication of this standard, become normative at the date of their publication and shall be considered as being included among the normative references below. See 1.3.**

NOTE Informative references are listed in the Bibliography on page 372.

IEC 60065:2001, *Audio, video and similar electronic apparatus – Safety requirements*

IEC 60068-2-2:1974, *Environmental testing – Part 2: Tests. Tests B: Dry heat*  
Amendment 1 (1993)  
Amendment 2 (1994)

IEC 60079-0, *Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 0: General requirements*

IEC 60079-2, *Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 2: Pressurized enclosures “p”*

IEC 60079-5, *Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 5: Powder filling “q”*

IEC 60079-6, *Electrical apparatus for explosive gas atmospheres – Part 6: Oil-immersion “o”*