



GUIDE 41

Packaging — Recommendations for addressing consumer needs

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

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Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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ISO/IEC Guide 41 was prepared by the ISO Committee on consumer policy (COPOLCO).

This first edition of ISO/IEC Guide 41 cancels and replaces ISO Guide 41:1984 which has been technically revised.

Introduction

Packaging of products is of consumer interest, the cost of which is borne indirectly by the consumer. Standardization of aspects of packaging should therefore address such factors as safety, healthiness for the intended purpose, comfort and reliability, as well as such general needs as protection of the environment and energy conservation.

The primary purpose of this document is to provide guidance to:

- those drafting standards to meet the packaging needs and requirements of consumers as prospective purchasers of goods or services;
- committees preparing standards for consumer products or services;
- product designers, manufacturers, and others engaged in the work of making decisions concerning packaging;
- enforcement organizations.

A supplier of high quality packaging can benefit from an enhanced reputation. Cost savings in time and money may also be achieved by reduced levels of enquiries and complaints.

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Packaging — Recommendations for addressing consumer needs

1 Scope

This Guide gives the general recommendations to be taken into consideration when determining the most suitable type of packaging to be used at the point of sale to protect goods. It is not applicable to packaging solely intended to protect goods in bulk when being transported between manufacturers and retailers.

The objectives of this Guide are to maximize the direct and indirect benefits to purchasers of goods and services by:

- eliminating unnecessary packaging so as to reduce the price of goods and the amount of waste;
- ensuring that goods reach consumers in the condition intended by the manufacturer;
- protecting consumers from any potentially harmful effects of the packaging or its contents;
- enabling consumers to store the goods and their packaging appropriately and to keep, dispose of, or recycle them, in a manner that minimizes their environmental impact.

2 Human and environmental safety of packaging material

2.1 In storage

2.1.1 The packaging material should not be potentially harmful by causing:

- a) the emission of substances which may endanger or be harmful to health or to the environment;
- b) the contamination of its contents or the contamination resulting from the interaction of the packaging material with its contents.

2.1.2 The contents should not leak through the packaging. Of greatest concern is the leakage of potentially hazardous materials. In particular, the following possible causes should be considered, where appropriate:

- a) lack of a seal;
- b) deterioration of the packaging caused by outside influences, such as temperature, light or foreseeable mechanical forces;
- c) deterioration of the packaging caused by the contents.

2.1.3 In cases where the contents are potentially hazardous, the packaging should be clearly labelled with relevant warnings and instructions for storage and disposal of both packaging and its contents. Special consideration should be given to the guidelines specified in ISO 3864-1 and ISO 3864-2, and in particular to certain consumers in need of tactile warning symbols specified in ISO 11683. The packaging should also be child resistant in accordance with ISO 8317.

2.1.4 In cases where the passage of time affects the safety and/or degradation of the product, the packaging should be clearly labelled to this effect.