ISO IEC

GUIDE 74

Graphical symbols — Technical guidelines for the consideration of consumers' needs

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Foreword

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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.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC Guide 74 was prepared jointly by the ISO *Committee on consumer policy* (COPOLCO), and Technical Committee ISO/TC 145, *Graphical symbols*.

Introduction

Poorly designed and researched graphical symbols, and also the proliferation of graphical symbols with the same intended meaning, can cause confusion for consumers. Such problems will become ever more common in an age of mass travel, mobility of labour, and global trading unless graphical symbols are designed, evaluated and standardized in accordance with procedures set out in the relevant International Standards.

Both the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) have published International Standards that specify the procedures to be followed when producing and standardizing graphical symbols.

Without doubt, graphical symbols can have important benefits in the field of communication, for example,

— they have visual impact,

— they can provide information in a compact form,

— they can provide information in a visual form that is independent of language, and

— they can guide the viewer to a desired outcome or appropriate decision.

However, these benefits are not always achieved in practice and the purpose of this Guide is to ensure that the needs of consumers are adequately addressed when a possible new requirement for a graphical symbol is being considered. If a symbol is to be effective and widely understood, it has to be used frequently, and for the same function. This will help create familiarity for the user. In the case of graphical symbols used on products or equipment, it will reduce the need for consumers to refer repeatedly to the users' manual. However, there will be instances when optimum results can only be achieved by the provision of supplementary text.

It is important for consumers that graphical symbols should clearly and successfully convey the intended message. In particular, they should differentiate between information that relates to safety requirements (including those associated with unsafe use or the misuse of products and equipment) and those which relate to non-safety information. It is therefore recommended that when technical committees consider the development of graphical symbols intended to convey messages to consumers, they ensure that the relevant groups are involved in the development process. This could be through consumer representation on the committee, through undertaking research on consumer usage, or both.

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1 Scope

This Guide gives procedures for the development of graphical symbols for

— public information,

— use in safety signs and product safety labels, and

— use on equipment and products.

Such graphical symbols can be included in consumer documentation.

This Guide does not cover road traffic signs and graphical symbols for use in technical documentation.

Rules for the design of graphical symbols are given in International Standards. This Guide brings together information on relevant international reference documents and standards to assist technical committees and designers to follow "best practice" when considering the need for a new graphical symbol.

NOTE   This guidance is also applicable at a regional and national level. For example, procedural guidance for CEN technical committees on the preparation of graphical symbols exists in *Guidance — Graphical symbols* in the CEN Business Operations Support System (BOSS): URL http://www.cenorm.be/boss/.

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.

ISO 3864-1, *Graphical symbols — Safety colours and safety signs — Part 1: Design principles for safety signs in workplaces and publics areas*

ISO 17724, *Graphical symbols — Vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 17724 apply.