

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

## NORME INTERNATIONALE



**Medical electrical equipment –  
Part 1-8: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance –  
Collateral standard: General requirements, tests and guidance for alarm systems  
in medical electrical equipment and medical electrical systems**

**Appareils électromédicaux –  
Partie 1-8: Exigences générales pour la sécurité de base et les performances  
essentielles – Norme collatérale: Exigences générales, essais et guide pour  
les systèmes d’alarme des appareils et des systèmes électromédicaux**



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INTERNATIONAL  
ELECTROTECHNICAL  
COMMISSION

COMMISSION  
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INTERNATIONALE

## CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	4
<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE AMENDMENT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
INTRODUCTION.....	7
1 * Scope, object and related standards .....	9
1.1 Scope.....	9
1.2 Object .....	9
1.3 Related standards .....	9
2 Normative references .....	10
3 Terms and definitions .....	10
4 General requirements .....	15
5 ME EQUIPMENT identification marking and documents .....	15
5.1 Indicator lights and controls.....	15
5.2 ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS.....	15
6 ALARM SYSTEMS.....	15
6.1 ALARM CONDITION .....	15
6.2 * Disclosures for INTELLIGENT ALARM SYSTEM .....	16
6.3 Generation of ALARM SIGNALS .....	17
6.4 * Disclosure of delays.....	24
6.5 ALARM PRESETS.....	24
6.6 ALARM LIMIT .....	27
6.7 * ALARM SYSTEM security.....	28
6.8 * ALARM SIGNAL inactivation states .....	28
6.9 * ALARM RESET .....	31
6.10 * NON-LATCHING and LATCHING ALARM SIGNALS .....	31
6.11 * DISTRIBUTED ALARM SYSTEM .....	32
6.12 * ALARM- <del>CONDITION</del> SYSTEM logging .....	33
Annex A (informative) General guidance and rationale.....	35
Annex B (informative) Guide to marking and labelling requirements for ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS.....	72
Annex C (normative) Symbols on marking.....	75
ANNEX D (informative) Guidance for auditory ALARM SIGNALS .....	81
ANNEX E (informative) Verbal ALARM SIGNALS.....	83
ANNEX F (normative) * Reserved melodies for ALARM SIGNALS.....	85
Bibliography.....	86
Index of defined terms used in this collateral standard .....	88
Figure 1 – Illustration of temporal characteristics of auditory ALARM SIGNALS .....	21
Figure A.1 – Graphical representation of components of ALARM SYSTEM delay .....	53

Table 1 – <del>ALARM CONDITION priorities</del> Determination of ALARM CONDITIONS and assignment of priorities .....	16
Table 2 – Characteristics of alarm indicator lights .....	18
Table 3 – * Characteristics of the BURST of auditory ALARM SIGNALS .....	20
Table 4 – * Characteristics of the PULSE of auditory ALARM SIGNALS.....	20
Table 5 – ALARM SIGNAL inactivation states.....	30
Table A.1 – Reference interpretation of Table F.1 .....	71
Table A.2 – Reference interpretation of Table F.2.....	71
Table B.1 – Cross-reference of marking.....	72
Table B.2 – Cross-reference of ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS .....	73
Table B.3 – Cross-reference of instructions for use .....	73
Table B.4 – Cross-reference of technical description .....	74
Table C.1 – Graphical symbols for ALARM SYSTEMS .....	75
Table C.2 – Alternative ALARM SYSTEM related markings.....	80
Table D.1 – Attributes of perceived urgency.....	81
Table F.1 – * Equipment encoded auditory ALARM SIGNALS categorized by ALARM CONDITION and priority complying with Table 3 and Table 4 .....	85
Table F.2 – * Auditory LOW PRIORITY ALARM SIGNAL complying with Table 3 and Table 4 .....	85

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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

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**MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –****Part 1-8: General requirements for basic safety  
and essential performance –  
Collateral Standard: General requirements, tests and guidance for alarm  
systems in medical electrical equipment and medical electrical systems**

## FOREWORD

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**This consolidated version of IEC 60601-1-8 consists of the second edition (2006) [documents 62A/519/CDV and 62A/537A/RVC] and its amendment 1 (2012) [documents 62A/824/FDIS and 62A/837/RVD]. It bears the edition number 2.1.**

**The technical content is therefore identical to the base edition and its amendment and has been prepared for user convenience. A vertical line in the margin shows where the base publication has been modified by amendment 1. Additions and deletions are displayed in red, with deletions being struck through.**

International standard IEC 60601-1-8 has been prepared by IEC subcommittee 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice of IEC technical committee 62: Electrical equipment in medical practice, and ISO subcommittee SC 3: Lung ventilators and related devices of ISO technical committee 121: Anaesthetic and respiratory equipment.

It is published as double logo standard.

IEC 60601-1-8 constitutes a collateral standard to IEC 60601-1: *Medical electrical equipment – Part 1: General requirements for safety and essential performance* hereafter referred to as the general standard.

This edition of IEC 60601-1-8 was revised to structurally align it with the 2005 edition of IEC 60601-1 and to implement the decision of IEC Subcommittee 62 A that the clause numbering structure of collateral standards written to IEC 60601-1:2005 would adhere to the form specified in ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2:2004. The principle technical changes are in Clause 4, which now recognizes that there is a general requirement for a risk management process in IEC 60601-1:2005.

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

In the 60601 series of publications, collateral standards specify general requirements for safety applicable to:

- a subgroup of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT (e.g. radiological equipment); or
- a specific characteristic of all MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, not fully addressed in the general standard (e.g. ALARM SYSTEMS).

In this collateral standard, the following print types are used:

- Requirements and definitions: roman type.
- *Test specifications: italic type. In addition, in Annex A text in italics indicates guidance that describes means to achieve the safety objectives of this collateral standard.*
- 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 DEFINED IN CLAUSE 3 OF THE GENERAL STANDARD, IN THIS COLLATERAL STANDARD OR AS NOTED: 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 6 includes Subclauses 6.1, 6.2, etc.);
- “subclause” means a numbered subdivision of a clause (e.g. 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.1 are all subclauses of Clause 6).

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 H 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.

Clauses, subclauses and definitions for which a rationale is provided in informative Annex A are marked with an asterisk (\*).

A list of all parts of the IEC 60601 series, under the general title: *Medical electrical equipment*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of the base publication and its amendments will remain unchanged until the stability 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.

**NOTE** The attention of National Committees is drawn to the fact that equipment manufacturers and testing organizations may need a transitional period following publication of a new, amended or revised IEC or ISO publication in which to make products in accordance with the new requirements and to equip themselves for conducting new or revised tests. It is the recommendation of the committee that the content of this publication be adopted for mandatory implementation nationally not earlier than 3 years from the date of publication.

**IMPORTANT – The “colour inside” logo on the cover page of this publication indicates that it contains colours which are considered to be useful for the correct understanding of its contents. Users should therefore print this publication using a colour printer.**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE AMENDMENT

The second edition of IEC 60601-1-8 was published in 2006. Since its publication, an issue has been identified with respect to pulse and burst testing. In addition, issues have been raised by IEC/62D/MT 22, *Electromedical diagnostic and patient monitoring equipment*, during implementation of alarm system requirements in particular standards within their scope of work.

At the Brussels meeting, IEC/SC 62A accepted a proposal, based on ISO/TC 121/SC 3 Resolution Orebro 6, to develop the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to IEC 60601-1-8:2006 to address the issues identified above. IEC/SC 62A – ISO/TC 121/SC 3 Joint Working Group 2, *Alarms*, was reactivated as a maintenance team to develop this amendment.

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## INTRODUCTION

MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT and MEDICAL ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS are increasingly used in medical practice. ALARM SIGNALS are frequently used to indicate unsatisfactory physiological PATIENT states, unsatisfactory functional states of the MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT or MEDICAL ELECTRICAL SYSTEM or to warn the OPERATOR of HAZARDS to the PATIENT or OPERATOR due to the MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT or MEDICAL ELECTRICAL SYSTEM. INFORMATION SIGNALS convey information that is independent of an ALARM CONDITION.

Surveys of healthcare personnel have indicated significant discontent with ALARM SIGNALS. Problems include difficulty in identifying the source of an ALARM SIGNAL, loud and distracting ALARM SIGNALS, and the high incidence of FALSE POSITIVE or NEGATIVE ALARM CONDITIONS [16]<sup>1)</sup>. Surveys of MANUFACTURERS of medical monitors demonstrated a wide variety of DEFAULT ALARM PRESETS. The leading reason for disabling ALARM SIGNALS is the large number of ALARM SIGNALS associated with FALSE POSITIVE ALARM CONDITIONS. See also bibliography.

Safety of PATIENTS depends on the ability of the OPERATOR to correctly discern the characteristics of ALARM SIGNALS. USABILITY is an important element in the design of ALARM SIGNALS that are readily discernible without being unnecessarily distracting or disturbing. This approach is intended to rationalize the current situation, to reduce confusion by limiting proliferation of ALARM SIGNALS and their control states, and to minimize distraction for other people. This collateral standard was developed with contributions from clinicians, engineers and applied psychologists.

The terminology, requirements, general recommendations and guidance of this collateral standard are intended to be useful for MANUFACTURERS of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT and MEDICAL ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS and for technical committees responsible for particular standards.

The effectiveness of any ALARM SYSTEM depends critically on its implementation by the RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION. It is important that the RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION configure the ALARM SYSTEM so that an OPERATOR is not able to compromise it.

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1) Figures in brackets refer to the bibliography.

## MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –

### Part 1-8: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance –

### Collateral Standard: General requirements, tests and guidance for alarm systems in medical electrical equipment and medical electrical systems

## 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.

This collateral standard specifies requirements for ALARM SYSTEMS and ALARM SIGNALS in ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS.

It also provides guidance for the application of ALARM SYSTEMS.

### 1.2 Object

The object of this collateral standard is to specify BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE requirements and tests for ALARM SYSTEMS in ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS and to provide guidance for their application. This is accomplished by defining alarm categories (priorities) by degree of urgency, consistent ALARM SIGNALS and consistent control states and their marking for all ALARM SYSTEMS.

This collateral standard does not specify:

- whether any particular ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEM is required to be provided with ALARM SYSTEMS;
- the particular circumstances which initiate an ALARM CONDITION;
- the allocation of priorities to a particular ALARM CONDITION; or
- the means of generating ALARM SIGNALS.

### 1.3 Related standards

#### 1.3.1 IEC 60601-1

For ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS, this collateral standard complements IEC 60601-1.

When referring to IEC 60601-1 or to this collateral standard, either individually or in combination, the following conventions are used:

- "the general standard" designates IEC 60601-1 alone (latest edition including any amendments);
- "this collateral standard" designates IEC 60601-1-8 alone;
- "this standard" designates the combination of the general standard and this collateral standard.

### 1.3.2 Particular standards

A requirement in a particular standard takes priority over the corresponding requirement in this collateral standard.

## 2 Normative references

The following ~~referenced~~ documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for ~~the its~~ 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.

IEC 60417, *Graphical symbols for use on equipment*. Available from: <<http://www.graphical-symbols.info/equipment>>

IEC 60601-1:2005, *Medical electrical equipment – Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance*

Amendment 1:2012

~~IEC 60601-1-2:---<sup>2)</sup>, *Medical electrical equipment – Part 1-2: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance – Collateral Standard: Electromagnetic compatibility – Requirements and tests*~~

~~IEC 60601-1-6:---<sup>3)</sup>, *Medical electrical equipment – Part 1-6: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance – Collateral standard: Usability*~~

IEC 60651:1979<sup>4)</sup>, *Sound level meters*

Amendment 1 (1993)

Amendment 2 (2000)

IEC 61672-1:2002, *Electroacoustics – Sound level meters – Part 1: Specifications*

IEC 62366:2007, *Medical devices – Application of usability engineering to medical devices*

ISO 3744:1994 2010, *Acoustics – Determination of sound power levels and sound energy levels of noise sources using sound pressure – Engineering method in for an essentially free field over a reflecting plane*

ISO 7000:1989, *Graphical symbols for use on equipment – Index and synopsis*. Available from: <<http://www.graphical-symbols.info/equipment>>

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in IEC 60601-1:2005+A1:2012 and IEC 62366:2007, ~~IEC 60601-1-2:---<sup>5)</sup>, IEC 60601-1-6:---<sup>6)</sup>~~, and the following definitions apply.

<sup>2)</sup> ~~A second edition of IEC 60601-1-2 exists, published in 2004 under the title *Medical electrical equipment – Part 1-2: General requirements for safety – Collateral Standard: Electromagnetic compatibility – Requirements and tests*. A third edition under the title given above is currently to be published. References to IEC 60601-1-2 in this standard refer to the new edition.~~

<sup>3)</sup> ~~A first edition of IEC 60601-1-6 exists, published in 2004 under the title *Medical electrical equipment – Part 1-6: General requirements for safety – Collateral Standard: Usability*. A second edition under the title given above is currently to be published. References to IEC 60601-1-6 in this standard refer to the new edition.~~

<sup>4)</sup> ~~IEC 60651:1979 has been withdrawn and replaced by IEC 61672-1:2002 and IEC 61672-2:2003. Future editions of this publication will be amended to take this fact into account.~~

<sup>5)</sup> ~~To be published. See footnote 2.~~