
ISO
standards
How to
write standards
Tips for standards writers

How to

write standards



Contents

How this brochure can help you 2
Writing plain language 3
Verbal forms 4
Title 4
Table of contents 4
Foreword 4
Introduction 5
Scope 5
Normative references 6
Terms and definitions 6
Clauses and subclauses 8
Notes and Examples 8
Tables and Figures 10
Mathematical formulae 12
Annexes 13
Bibliography 14
Graphical symbols 15
Conformity assessment 16
Management system standards (MSS) 16
Templates and preferred file formats 17

How this brochure can **help you**

This brochure is designed to help people write clear, concise and user-friendly International Standards and other ISO documents. For more detailed drafting and editorial rules, see the **ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, 2016, Principles and rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents**. References to the Directives are given in parentheses next to the relevant header.



Writing plain language

Write your document with the user in mind. Using plain language is an effective means of getting your message across.

By being clear and concise – but not simplistic – writers can avoid misinterpretation. This reduces time and cost in translation.

Because plain language is easier to understand, it also reduces discussion during drafting.

Using plain language does not mean reducing the length of your message, changing its meaning or oversimplifying your text.

How to use plain language:

- Be clear to yourself about your main message – try reading it to yourself out loud
- Put yourself in the place of the reader
- Keep your sentences short
- Have one idea per sentence
- Leave out words you don't need
- Use lists when you can
- Use the active voice when you can
- Be concise, use short, simple words and avoid turning verbs into nouns
- Punctuate your writing carefully
- Use more full stops, fewer commas and brackets
- Phrase your points positively
- Use everyday language whenever possible and reduce jargon
- Plain language is particularly important in the Scope

HINT

Use the same term for the same concept everywhere. Don't use synonyms

Verbal forms

In all clauses, be clear about what is a requirement and what is a recommendation or other type of statement. In order to make clear what the user must do, the following verbal forms are used in ISO documents:

- Requirements – shall, shall not
- Recommendations – should, should not
- Permission – may, need not
- Possibility and capability – can, cannot

HINT

Check that information is not duplicated between the Introduction and the Scope

Title (Clause 11)

The Title must be clear and concise, containing a maximum of three elements:

- an introductory element
- a main element
- a complementary element

Cereals and pulses – Specification and test methods – Part 1: Rice

(introductory) (main) (complementary)

Table of contents

The Table of contents is automatically generated.

Foreword (Clause 12)

The Foreword of an ISO document contains generic text which is inserted by ISO Central Secretariat during editing and publishing. When revising an existing standard, include a list of the major changes compared with the previous edition.

Introduction (Clause 13)

The Introduction is optional but ISO encourages its inclusion. It can describe the content of the document and give information on why the document is needed.

Introduction

This document was developed in response to worldwide demand for minimum specifications for rice traded internationally, since most commercial bulks of grain, which have not been screened or aspirated, contain a proportion of other grains, weed seeds, chaff, straw, stones, sand, etc.

Scope (Clause 14)

The Scope is mandatory and it describes what the document does. For example, this document

- specifies ...
- establishes ...
- gives guidelines for ...
- defines terms ...

The Scope is written as a series of statements of fact. Don't put any requirements, recommendations or permissions in the Scope.

1 Scope

This document specifies minimum requirements and test methods for rice (*Oryza sativa* L.).
It is applicable to husked rice, husked parboiled rice, milled rice and milled parboiled rice, suitable for human consumption, directly or after reconditioning.
It is not applicable to cooked rice products.

Normative references (Clause 15 and 10.2)

The Normative references clause is mandatory, even if there are no normative references in the document. It lists reference documents which are cited in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of the document (e.g. "Sampling shall be carried out in accordance with ISO 24333:2009, Clause 5"). Remember to date the reference if it refers to a specific clause, sub-clause, figure, table, etc., in that reference document. References are generally made to other ISO and IEC standards. Documents from other organizations can also be referenced under certain conditions. References must be publicly available.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements 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 712, *Cereals and cereal products – Determination of moisture content – Reference method*

ISO 24333:2009, *Cereals and cereal products – Sampling*

Terms and definitions (Clause 16)

The Terms and definitions clause is a mandatory clause clarifying the meaning of certain words in the context of the document. Only terms which are used in the document shall be defined.

HINT

For guidance on terminological entries, see ISO 10241-1

HINT

Abbreviated terms and symbols can be listed in a separate clause immediately after Clause 3

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at **http://www.iso.org/obp**

— IEC Electropedia: available at **http://www.electropedia.org**

Terms and definitions from ISO documents are available on the ISO Online Browsing Platform (**www.iso.org/obp**). Search the OBP by committee and by standard to find terms that are already defined. A **definition** is a single phrase that can replace the term wherever used. It does not start with an article (e.g. "a", "the") or end with a full-stop. It does not take the form of, or contain, a requirement or recommendation. Additional information can be included in a Note to entry or an Example. The example below shows a range of elements that can be included in a terminological entry.

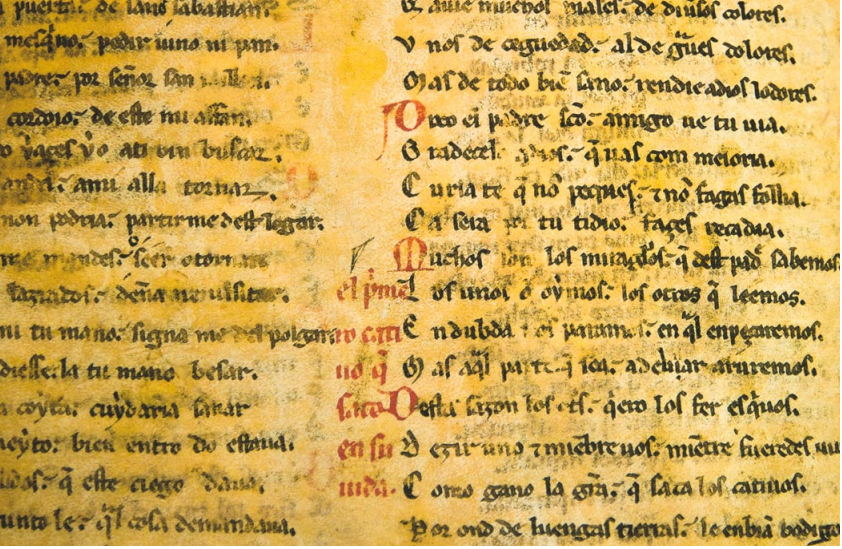
3.2
special language

language for special purposes

LSP

language used in a *domain* (3.1.2) and characterized by the use of specific linguistic means of expression

Note 1 to entry: The specific linguistic means of expression always include domain- or subject-specific terms and other kinds of designations as well as phraseology and also may cover stylistic or syntactic features.



Clauses and subclauses (Clause 22)

Clauses and subclauses form the main part of any ISO document. They tell users of the document what they need to do to implement it.

Number the clauses and subclauses to help people reference key parts of the document.

ISO does not allow its documents to mandate the use of services, such as testing or certification (e.g. by another company). Write the requirements so they can be verified by anyone.

ISO documents should avoid referring to trademarks or companies. Patented items can be referred to under certain conditions (see **ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1**).

ISO documents do not contain legal or contractual requirements.

Notes (Clause 24) and Examples (Clause 25)

Notes and Examples are used for giving additional information intended to assist the understanding or use of the document. Don't put any requirements, recommendations or permissions in the notes or examples.

HINT

If the note is removed, do you lose essential information? If so, it should not be a note

4 Specifications

4.1 General characteristics

Kernels of rice, whether parboiled, husked or milled, and whether whole or broken, shall be sound, clean and free from foreign odours or odour which indicates deterioration.

4.2 Physical and chemical characteristics

4.2.1 The mass fraction of moisture, determined in accordance with ISO 712, using an oven complying with the requirements of IEC 61010-2, shall not be greater than 15 %.

The mass fraction of extraneous matter and defective kernels in husked and milled rice, whether or not parboiled, determined in accordance with Annex A, shall not be greater than the values specified in Table 1.

NOTE Lower mass fractions of moisture are sometimes needed for certain destinations depending on the climate, duration of transport and storage. For further details, see ISO 6322-1, ISO 6322-2 and ISO 6322-3.

4.2.2 The defect tolerance for the categories considered, and determined in accordance with the method given in Annex A, shall not exceed the limits given in Table 1.

5 Sampling

Sampling shall be carried out in accordance with ISO 24333:2009, Clause 5.

HINT

Subclauses can be with or without headings. But be consistent within a subclause

Tables (Clause 29) and Figures (Clause 28)

HINT
Cite all tables and figures in the text

Tables and figures should have labels and titles as shown below.

Table 1 – Maximum permissible mass fraction of defects

Defect	Maximum permissible mass fraction of defects w_{max} %			
	in husked rice	in milled rice (non-glutinous)	in husked parboiled rice	in milled parboiled rice
Extraneous matter:				
— organic[a]	1,0	0,5	1,0	0,5
— inorganic	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5

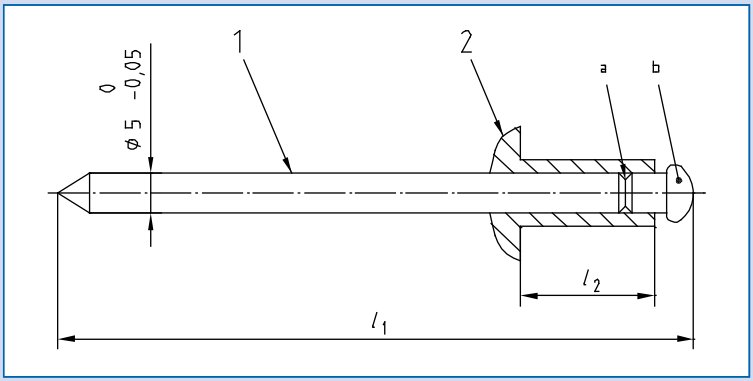
NOTE 1 Only full red husked (cargo) rice is considered in this table.

NOTE 2 Some commercial contracts require information in addition to that provided in this table.

[a] Organic extraneous matter includes foreign seeds, husks, bran, parts of straw, etc.

Notes used in tables and figures follow the same guidelines as notes to text.





Key

1 mandrel shank

2 blind rivet head

The mandrel shall be designed such that the blind rivet end deforms during installation, and the shank can expand.

NOTE Figure 1 illustrates a type A rivet head.

[a] The break area shall be milled.

[b] The mandrel head is commonly chromium plated.

Figure 1 – Blind rivet



Mathematical formulae (Clause 27)

Use the International System of Units (SI units). Explain the meaning of the symbols used in a list underneath the formula. Number your formulae sequentially in the text, as shown below.
Formulae are generally preceded by an introductory sentence.

Calculate the mass fraction, expressed as a percentage, of the waxy rice, w_{wax}, using Formula (1):

$$w_{wax} = \frac{m_1}{m_1 + m_2} \times 100 \qquad (1)$$

where

m_1 is the mass, expressed in grams, of the waxy rice portion
m_2 is the mass, expressed in grams, of the non-waxy rice portion

HINT

Commonly used symbols include:

t = time
l = length
m = mass
v = velocity

Annexes (Clause 20)

Annexes are used to provide additional information. They can be normative (e.g. a test method that the user is required to follow) or informative (additional information that complements the user's understanding). The status (normative or informative) is determined by how the annex is cited in the main body of the document. Annexes are designated by a capital letter (A, B, C, ...).

Annex A
(informative)

Attributes of enhanced risk management

A.1 General

All organizations should aim at the appropriate level of performance of their risk management framework in line with the criticality of the decisions that are to be made. The list of attributes below represents a high level of performance in managing risk. To assist organizations in measuring their own performance against these criteria, some tangible indicators are given for each attribute.

A.2 Key outcomes

A.2.1 The organization has a current, correct and comprehensive understanding of its risks.

A.2.2 The organization's risks are within its risk criteria.

A.3 Attributes

A.3.1 Continual improvement

An emphasis is placed on continual improvement in risk management through the setting of organizational performance goals...

A.3.2 Full accountability for risks

Enhanced risk management includes comprehensive accountability for risks...

Bibliography (Clause 21)

List documents in the Bibliography that provide background information. Be sure to list all references cited in the document either in the Bibliography or in Clause 2 (depending on how they are cited in the text).

HINT

Keep your Bibliography as concise as possible

Bibliography

[1] ISO 78-2, *Chemistry – Layouts for standards – Part 2: Methods of chemical analysis*

[2] ISO 31000, *Risk management – Principles and guidelines*

[3] ISO/IEC 15288, *Systems and software engineering – System life cycle processes*

[4] IEC 31010, *Risk management – Risk assessment techniques*

[5] ASTM E 2608, *Standard Practice for Equipment Control Matrix*

[6] ALLEN, B. *Vanishing Wildlife of North America*. Washington, D.C., National Geographic Society, 1974

[7] GRUEN E. Collisional Balance of Meteoritic Complex. *Icarus*. 1985, **62**, pp. 244-272

[8] The Conference Board of Canada, 2012. Municipal Waste Generation [viewed 2013-01-10]. Available from **www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/environment/municipal-waste-generation.aspx**

HINT

For guidance on styling, see ISO 690

Graphical symbols

If your document contains graphical symbols, contact **ISO/TC 145, *Graphical symbols***, to have them reviewed and visit **http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink?func=ll&objid=8755210&objAction=browse** for the procedure for standardizing new graphical symbols.

Search the OBP to find existing graphical symbols (**www.iso.org/iso/home/store/graphical_symbols.htm**).





Conformity assessment (Clause 33)

If your document mentions conformity assessment, consult CASCO and visit **www.iso.org/iso/Casco** for information.

Management system standards (MSS) (Clause 34)

If your document is a management system standard, or you think it might deal with management system themes, contact your committee's Technical Programme Manager and visit **www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards.htm** for information.



Templates and preferred file formats

Templates and information about preferred formats are available at the following link:
www.iso.org/iso/home/standards_development/resources-for-technical-work/iso_templates.htm

About **ISO**

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 163* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 21 300* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

For more information, please visit **www.iso.org**.

*November 2016

International Organization for Standardization

ISO Central Secretariat
Ch. de Blandonnet 8
Case Postale 401
CH – 1214 Vernier, Geneva
Switzerland

iso.org

© ISO, 2016
All rights reserved

ISBN 978-92-67-10686-1

