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Products and related services information for consumers

为消费者提供产品及相关服务的信息

(ISO/IEC GUIDE 14:2018, Products and related services - Information for
consumers, MOD)

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Products and related services information for consumers

1 Scope

This document provides the general principles and requirements for the content, method, format and design of providing information on products and related services to consumers, so that consumers can compare and choose consumer products and related services before purchasing.

This document applies to:

- committees that develop standards on consumer products and related services;
- consumer product designers, manufacturers, technicians, marketers, graphic artists or other staff involved in the writing of information;
- other organizations (such as law enforcement agencies) or consumer ombudsmen.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

The following terms and definitions are applicable to this document.

3.1

Complaint

<Customer satisfaction> An expression of dissatisfaction with an organization regarding the product, service, or complaint handling process, whether or not it is clearly answered or resolved.

Note: Specific content of complaints handling in organizations are given in GB/T 19012.

[Source: GB/T 19000-2016, 3.9.3]

3.2

Consumer

verification methods should refer to relevant national laws and regulations or national standards; where a national standard is unavailable or the national standard is not applicable, industry standards can also be cited.

The applicable relevant standards should be indicated, so that consumers can identify which characteristics of consumer goods or services are standard-compliant. It is recommended that the standardization professional technical committee or other organizations representing various stakeholders be responsible for screening and classifying consumer-related product (or service) characteristics and basic requirements.

4.3 Basic information and representation

Potential purchasers are interested in information in varying degrees, so it is sometimes necessary to provide information from two aspects:

- at the first level, provide basic information about the key characteristics of the consumer product or service;
- at the second level, provide more detailed information, for example: including basic information (content contained in the first level), specific functions or technical content such as restrictions on consumer goods or services.

For consumers who need more detailed consumer product or service information to decide whether to purchase or sign a contract, it is advisable to clarify the method of obtaining more detailed information so that consumers can make informed decisions on product purchase and maintenance.

In practice, an accurate description of the consumer product is helpful for consumers to make informed choices. The following contents should be included:

- a) identification of the consumer product or service, including its characteristics, content and materials (e.g., chemicals) and restrictions on use;
- b) the country in which the consumer product is manufactured or assembled;
- c) the name and detailed address of the manufacturer or supplier;
- d) basic performance characteristics, conditions of use and limitations of use;
- e) instructions for use, storage and maintenance;
- f) information on spare parts or replaceable parts and how to obtain them;
- g) information on additional components (e.g., guards) that may be used in a particular environment;
- h) safety factors, including known risks, existing hazards and residual risks;

- i) warranty/guarantee;
- j) complaint handling procedures;
- k) the need for professional installation;
- l) resource consumption (e.g., energy required for use);
- m) life expectancy of the product (e.g., product testing, clinical trials);
- n) product privacy statement;
- o) environmental issues and potential negative impacts (including recycling) related to the development, use, storage or disposal of the product and any of its component parts;
- p) the method of contacting the supplier, such as mailing address, website and/or toll-free telephone number;
- q) information about the reliability of the product, especially in comparison with similar products, to give the consumer confidence in the choice of the product.

The address, nature and content in relation to consumer products or services should be clearly mentioned on the first page of each document. If necessary, pictures should be provided. Accurate and clear picture information helps consumers better understand information and make informed choices.

Attention to the needs of vulnerable consumers is important because they do not necessarily have access to printed information (literacy issues), electronic information (digital divide, poverty) or linguistic information (physical separation, language barriers).

Note 1: The relevant content of complaint handling in enterprises is given in GB/T 19012.

Note 2: The relevant content of consumer product safety guidelines for suppliers is given in GB/T 35248.

Note 3: The relevant content of consumer product recall is given in GB/T 34400.

Note 4: The relevant content of instructions for use is given in GB/T 5296.1-2012 and GB/T 19678.1.

Note 5: The relevant content of residual risk of packaging is given in GB/T 17306.

Note 6: The relevant content of attention to vulnerable consumers is given in GB/T 20002.1 and GB/T 20002.2.

4.6 Second-hand goods

There may be a lot of problems during the maintenance of the product, especially for second-hand goods. The rules on providing information to consumers apply to second-hand goods of the same product. Local suppliers should be responsible for the warranty, exemption, replacement or complaint handling of second-hand goods.

Note: The detailed content of cross-border trade of second-hand goods is given in ISO 20245.

5 Information transmission methods

5.1 Written and printed information

Existing information transmission methods usually combine the following two types of information.

- a) Attach a brief description on the consumer product, including some basic points of consumer product information.
- b) Provide more extensive information in catalogues, leaflets, websites or other consumer product-related materials.

The integrity of purchase information depends on consumers' ability to receive and use both types of information. The content expression of each method should be complete and accurate, while echoing with another method.

Specific information on complaints and consumer redress should be included in the purchase contract and should be readily obtained when buyers are making purchasing decisions.

Note: Terms regarding the cooling-off period, return, refund, repair and warranty, late or non-delivery shipment, unequal treaties and complaints may vary from region to region.

5.2 Online information

5.2.1 General

When using online information to make a purchase, the link provided should take the consumer directly to the relevant page.

Particular attention should be paid to information on consumer products and related services available online. This approach of information transmission can provide purchasers with a convenient way to obtain a large amount of information. This approach may include information interaction between consumer products and related service providers and purchasers, a combination of various purchase information

(including corporate official websites, social media, video displays or clips), and electronic payments.

When providing information to consumers on the Internet, it should be ensured that the online information enables consumers to fully understand whether consumer products are safe and suitable for use. To help consumers make safe and sensible purchases, the following information should be provided:

- clear and concise consumer product descriptions;
- high-resolution images of the consumer product so that consumers can zoom in to view label information and other relevant information;
- label pictures, warning pictures and safety pictures;
- ingredient list;
- clear instructions for use;
- a list of basic information (see 4.3);
- electronic payment methods;
- purchase verification and confirmation;
- website complaint handling column;
- online consumer comments;
- detailed contact information (name, phone number, URL and full address);
- information relevant to the needs of vulnerable consumers.

Note 1: ISO/TC 290 Online reputation standardization technical committee covers the field of online consumer comments.

Note 2: GB/T 20002.2 gives the needs of vulnerable consumers.

5.2.2 Machine-readable information

Using a mobile device, such as a smartphone, to read the machine-readable information printed on the packaging is one way to secure information electronically. This technology may be disadvantageous to some vulnerable consumers.

One of the ways is to use two-dimensional code (QR code), that is, to print the Internet uniform resource locator (URL) containing consumer product information (or basic information of the manufacturer) on the product packaging or product display shelf, and use any software – which can scan the QR code – in the mobile phone can scan the QR code to link to the relevant information page.

in a language that consumers can easily understand and respects the privacy of consumers.

The same principles that apply to other forms of information apply to oral information.

Telemarketers and customer service personnel should speak slowly and speak clearly. The language and/or dialect used by the agency or the voice information service transferred from the agency should be Mandarin or adapted to the language of the region where the consumer is located. Suppliers should consider the different needs, circumstances and capabilities of vulnerable consumers. A list of the types of information provided during the verbal exchange of information shall benefit both parties.

6 Format and design

6.1 General

Taking appropriate measures can help improve consumers' awareness of purchase information. Consumers' familiarity with format and design principles can enhance their awareness and trust in purchase information.

Note: GB/T 5296.1 and GB/T 19678.1 give more guidance on the basis of the original principles and recommendations for designing and formulating information for consumers.

6.2 Basic principles

In order to facilitate understanding, identification and comparison, the purchase information provided should eliminate or minimize consumer misunderstandings. The provision of information should comply with the following recommendations when it comes to essential characteristics of a product or service.

- In order to ensure that consumers have the opportunity to see and understand the necessary information, suppliers should adopt a variety of easy-to-understand methods when providing purchase information, and provide information at different stages of the consumer purchase process.
- When providing information, it is advisable to use plain language.
- Unless there are specific requirements or other requirements for the information provided, the data should adopt the International System of Units (SI), unit pricing, and be based on a common basis (preferably a national standard).
- The individual data is given in relation to the mainstream data of the market.

Note 1: Guidance on unit pricing is provided in ISO 21041.

Note 2: There may be some supply prices that do not allow the possibility of comparing the product with that of other manufacturers.

6.3 Use of diagrams, symbols, graphs, values and tables

Graphics are an important way of presenting information, including:

- Charts, such as filling data into a table for an overall description, which helps to provide more transparent information on the purchase of consumer products or services;
- Diagrams, tables or graphs, which link the actual values of individual performance characteristics with the range of market-relevant performance characteristics.

Pictures, diagrams, symbols, values, and tables can effectively convey purchase information and should be distinct and clear. The provision of marking and symbols should comply with relevant national standards.

If a single consumer product and related service is a component of a similar consumer product and related service category, it is advisable to introduce the consumer product and related service in the context of the consumer product and related service category, so as to facilitate consumers to choose and purchase substitutes.

Symbols and graphics should only be used after they have been objectively verified to independently convey meaning and are understood by potential consumers. Graphic symbols should comply with published standards, such as GB/T 16273.1, GB/T 10001.1, or GB/T 5465.1, GB/T 5465.2. In addition, symbols, graphics and identification should be explained in the instructions for use of consumer products.

Note: For more details, please refer to GB/T 5296.1 and GB/T 7291.

6.4 Legibility and consistency

Legibility is an extremely important element of product information, and product information should be placed in the most appropriate position.

The information should be obvious and clear within the range of the user's reading distance (within the range of normal vision). Elements that contribute to legibility include viewing distance and angle, typeface, size and colour of text, background colour and its contrast to text colour.

Note 1: The relevant content of information legalization is given in GB/T 5296.1, GB/T 17306 and GB/T 19678.1.

When emphasizing safety alerts and any other safety-related information, it is recommended to use larger font size or different fonts, or other methods of prominence.

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