



ISO 14785

Tourist information offices

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Tourist information and
reception services
Requirements

OPEN

First edition
2014-04-01



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ISO/TC 228 *Tourism and related services*

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Executive summary

- Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world and a key driver for socio-economic progress. According to UNWTO, in 2012 international tourism arrivals grew by 5% to 1.087 billion tourists and the tourism industry accounted for 9% GDP (direct, indirect and induced), 1/11 jobs and 6% of World's exports.
- With such an important impact on the economy, countries have much to gain from ensuring that travellers have a pleasant experience during their visits.
- More often than not, Tourist Information Offices are the welcoming point for travellers, and therefore responsible for generating first impressions of a tourist destination.
- The role of tourist information offices is key, since they act as an interface between service providers and tourists receiving complaints and suggestions, and providing helpful guidance whether face-to-face, in print or via the Internet.
- Therefore, the quality of the service provided and the information given may be determinant in shaping the experience of a visitor.
- This standard will help ensure a consistent level of service from tourist information offices, of any type and size, whether publicly or privately operated, regardless of destination.

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [Foreword - Supplementary information](http://www.iso.org/foreword)

The committee responsible for this document is Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Introduction

Many tourist information offices (TIO) are run by public administrations. There are also TIOs that are operated privately, and these ideally work in partnership with the relevant tourist authorities. The administrations that control TIO units can apply for implementation for all units or some of them.

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1 Scope

This International Standard establishes minimum quality requirements for services provided by tourist information offices (TIO) of any type and size, whether publicly or privately operated, in order to satisfy visitors' expectations.

2 Terms and definitions

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

2.1 tourist information office TIO

organization responsible for welcoming, advising visitor and promoting tourism-related activities

Note 1 to entry: Tourist information offices are also known as tourism information centres (TIC).

Note 2 to entry: This definition is also applicable to tourist information offices operated abroad or in other destination in the same country.

Note 3 to entry: Promotion can be done through brochures, leaflets and electronic supports.

2.2 visitor

customer who contacts (in person or by other means) a tourist information office

3 Service provision

3.1 Reception of visitors

3.1.1 Location and access

The most appropriate location of facilities and types of service shall be established according to the characteristics of the destination and visitor requirements.

The TIO shall be located where there is the most important flow of tourists.

NOTE Suitable locations include the town centre, tourist sites, transport arrival terminals and main access roads into the destination.

The TIO shall be easy to find, regardless of the means of transport used.

Access should be provided for people with disabilities.

Access to the TIO should be free of charge.

The TIO shall be sign-posted. Sign-posting shall be consistent in style and should comply with ISO 7001.

The TIO shall be visible by means of an "i" sign placed on or in front of the building, in accordance with local regulations (e.g. a sign or a banner). There shall be sign-posting to direct motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Maps and brochures published by the TIO shall indicate the TIO location.

Parking areas or nearby parking facilities shall be indicated (if available).

3.1.2 Opening times

The TIO shall define and document its opening timetable according to the number of visitors, tourist activities and seasons.

The TIO shall indicate its opening times at the entrance, as well as on notice boards, location maps, answering machines, destination websites (where available) and/or any other media.

Outside normal working hours, information shall be provided by destination websites.

Emergency contacts shall be indicated, clearly visible from the outside to visitors.

A local map shall be visible from the outside.

A list of accommodation with telephone numbers should be visible from the outside,

as well as an indication of where this list can be obtained, if possible.

An answer phone message, in at least two languages, shall inform visitors about the opening hours and the website address (see [3.1.3](#)).

3.1.3 Contact

The TIO shall establish, document and communicate to staff the expectations with respect to behaviour etiquette and crowd management.

Staff shall look professional and provide an efficient service, and shall show they are available and welcoming by:

- a) initiating conversation with a greeting;
- b) being patient;
- c) being polite and friendly;
- d) giving priority to visitors over administration work or any other task;
- e) clarifying visitors' enquiries in order to provide a satisfactory response;
- f) taking leave with a greeting.

Staff shall be easily identifiable, by means of their clothing or appropriate badges, etc.

The TIO shall choose and justify the languages understood and spoken at the reception desk, as well as on answering machines and websites. This choice shall correspond to the expected profile of international visitors and shall include at least one international language.

NOTE Staff are expected to communicate with visitors in the language chosen by the visitor, if possible.

The TIO shall establish a tool to enable visitors to identify the languages spoken by each person of the staff.

3.1.4 Call and mail handling

All visitors shall receive the same treatment, whether they visit the TIO in person or not.

TIO contact information shall be widely promoted using the available means of communication.

The TIO shall establish a telephone calls handling procedure. This procedure shall define the time limit between the first ring and the transfer of the call to a member of staff. If the defined time limit is exceeded, a message shall explain how to contact the TIO (via the web, by e-mail) or shall give visitors the option of leaving a contact number.

NOTE 1 If possible, calls are answered before the fourth ring and calls are transferred to a staff member within 40 s.

NOTE 2 It is not advisable to put a caller on hold with music for too long. If possible, priority is given to visitors in person, especially when there is only one employee.

If a caller leaves a contact number on the answering machine, a call back should be made within 30 min during opening hours. If the caller is put on hold, regular contact shall be maintained to enable him/her to either wait, call back or be called back (at the caller's request).

Recorded messages shall be processed and answered every working day. Letters shall be processed and answered within three working days. E-mails shall be processed and answered within two working days.

3.2 Provision of information

3.2.1 Information for visitors

Information shall be accurate and regularly updated. The TIO shall consider only tourist providers meeting appropriate legal and regulatory requirements.

Information shall be available on a broad range of topics.

NOTE The topics can include accommodation, travel agencies, eating out, transport, cycle routes, shopping, local products and crafts, walks, cultural activities, holidays, heritage and sports activities and outdoor pursuits, banks, currency exchange, tax free conditions, chambers of commerce, local customs, religion and places of worship, libraries, medical services, police and post offices, real estate agencies, local and regional attractions, and weather forecasts.

The TIO shall have general and specific information about the destination and about tourist attractions, with the necessary details for the visit: location, description, features, conditions and opening hours.

The TIO shall have details of the day, time, place of performance and content for events and activities carried out at the destination (recreational, cultural, sporting or leisure).

Information shall take account of the interests of children and the needs of people with disabilities.

The TIO shall give information to visitors about health, safety and good practices to help them to enjoy the area.

For safety reasons, and in order to avoid risks to visitors, the TIO shall provide appropriate information about drinking water, high and low tides, the presence of poisonous plants, other local dangers that might be encountered, etc.

The TIO should provide a website and or other electronic support with such information.

The TIO shall give information to facilitate the visitors' choice (see [Annex A](#)).

The TIO should also provide tourism information at national level or indicate how to obtain it.

If commercial leaflets and brochures are displayed, they shall be separated from the TIO information.

If the TIO has unmanned information service points, they should provide the same items.

There shall be an indication of materials which shall be paid for as well as indication of the price.

The TIO shall give written information, either printing it on demand or making it possible to take notes. The TIO should offer information in several forms, trying to avoid unnecessary printing (see [Annex B](#)).

The TIO shall develop a visitors' rights and duties charter, and shall give advice about avoiding disrespectful attitudes towards local customs and beliefs (see [Annex C](#)).

The TIO shall establish a procedure for leaflets and written material supply according to TIO needs.

The TIO shall develop and put in place surveys to follow up and record visitors and their service satisfaction.

TIO information shall be available and suitable for use and shall be adequately protected.

3.2.2 Information for TIO staff

TIO staff shall be able to access the following information:

- a) phone directories of local and destination services and emergency contact information;
- b) transport routes, arrivals and departures and transportation timetables at the TIO destination;
- c) destination city maps;
- d) tourist guide contacts in the destination and surrounding areas;
- e) a table of distances and the time needed to travel;
- f) accommodation guides;
- g) destination newspapers and journals;