
**Tourism and related services —
Wellness spa — Service requirements**

*Tourisme et services connexes — Spa de bien-être — Exigences du
service*

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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 World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

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

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Introduction

ISO 18513 defines spas as “acknowledged health resorts, with specific natural factors — natural remedies of the soil (for example, mineral spring), the sea or the climate — sometimes complemented by appropriate health treatments”, and notes that spas are specifically recognized and regulated in some countries. Consequently, this document establishes quality requirements for wellness spa services, while respecting the principle of cultural identity and cultural differences.

Instead of placing emphasis on the desired effects of naturally occurring local remedies, a “wellness spa” aims to promote and balance all health components in each individual, including physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health. The wellness spa clients expect to gain “pleasure at leisure”, supporting health benefits through relaxation, peaceful reflection, revitalization of the body, mind and spirit and finally being ready to fully return to their daily lives again.

As the appreciation of health, successful ageing and longevity grows, the wellness spa gains more and more popularity. The diversity of wellness spas has become increasingly pronounced. There is the need for identification of good quality services, creating transparency in the exchange of services, raising clients’ confidence, business competence and promoting knowledge transfer about quality of services.

At the present time, the wellness spa represents an international trade in services. The international market requires a foundation of strategies which generate quality improvements and competitive pricing.

The lack of identification of the essence of wellness spa services, together with the absence of reference standards, will affect the service chain throughout the industry from top management and their establishments to trade industries, government regulation bodies and most importantly, it will affect clients. This document aims to define, establish and develop the quality requirements of the wellness spa services, in order for them to be monitored, as well as to provide guidelines for the selection of the relevant measurement methods, to ensure their effectiveness and adaptation.

Since 1947, the constitution of the World Health Organization has stated that “health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. The definition is composed of two main ideas, including well-being and disease/infirmity.

However, the perception of health in general has the idea of disease/infirmity at its core. Presently, caring for health is disease-oriented; all are familiar with disease prevention, disease control or treatment of disease. This approach to health which places emphasis on the absence of sickness is not familiar in character and scarcely suitable for a dynamic programme to improve the level of wellness. The idea that there are different levels of health has gained more and more support. Persons who may not be affected by a specific disease or disability are not considered to be equally healthy.

Although the gradations of health are not measurable, the concept has definite and understandable meaning. A healthy individual can be described as a well-integrated individual, both as to physical structure and as to physiological and psychological functioning. The completely healthy person meets trouble with equanimity. They have time and inclination for sociability and recreation. The goal of health from this positive perspective calls for not only the cure or alleviation of disease. It calls for even more than the prevention of disease. Rather, it looks beyond, to strive for maximum physical, mental and social efficiency for the individual, for the family and for the community.

Concomitant progress in science and medicine has led to better preservation of the body and increasing absence of disease, yet, mental, emotional, social and spiritual problems are often left untreated. High-level wellness can never be achieved in fragments, ignoring the unity of the whole. This special state of health comprises an overall sense of well-being and sees man as consisting of body, spirit and mind and being dependent on his environment.

This dynamic state is an ongoing process, not a static state which we reach and never have to consider again.

There are degrees of wellness as there are degrees of sickness, and wellness services should be oriented towards identifying causes of wellness rather than causes of sickness. Seekers after their own wellness

can claim services which are very similar to medical services used by patients in a conventional hospital, but with the motive of exploitation of their potential for a better quality of life. Although it is possible that hospitals can house both patients and wellness clients, offering them similar services, or at least a similar infrastructure, plus their know-how, they are not wellness seekers' preference. Seekers frequently look for locations and activities that are transcendent. It is no coincidence that many wellness spas are located beside the ocean or on a mountain top. Again, though the strength of the wellness spas mainly has to do with their atmosphere and surroundings or location, these are not all about the wellness spas. In order to qualify as a wellness spa, some deliberate contribution has to be made to psychological, spiritual or emotional well-being in addition to physical. With this end in view, the wellness spa is often an alternative space in which one can engage in self-analysis without the stresses and distractions of home.

The addition of a variety of wellness programs or treatments can help to further encourage the individual on a journey of self-discovery to the destination of rejuvenation, living longer and happier.

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Tourism and related services — Wellness spa — Service requirements

1 Scope

This document establishes the service requirements of a wellness spa, the main supporting processes and the quality of service to be provided to the client.

This document can be used by all types and sizes of wellness spas even if it is part of another activity (e.g. accommodation facilities, fitness centres and hospitals).

This document does not include any accommodation or food and beverage requirements.

This document does not apply to medical spas and thalassotherapy centres.

This document does not cover decisions that are related to medical professions, medical training or any religious aspects.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

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/>

3.1

sauna

wooden cabin with hot dry air

[SOURCE: ISO 18513:2003, 4.2.2]

3.2

steam bath

room or cabin with hot steam

[SOURCE: ISO 18513:2003, 4.2.3]

3.3

well-being

feeling of being comfortable, healthy and happy

3.4

wellness

state of health and *well-being* (3.3), featuring the harmony of body, mind, spirit, emotion and social relations through self-responsibility

Note 1 to entry: An approach towards wellness is not disease-oriented but to improve one's level of wellness. Different persons not affected by a specific disease can have different levels of wellness. People living with illness can achieve higher levels of wellness.

**3.5
wellness consultation**

process of getting advice from a *wellness spa therapist* (3.7)

**3.6
wellness spa**

establishment dedicated to the provision of *wellness spa treatments* (3.8) or treatment packages within a secluded space with a relaxing ambience, for the promotion of health and *well-being* (3.3)

Note 1 to entry: Its effort is to provide care and enhancement of health through a holistic approach, aimed at rejuvenating and relaxing the body, mind and spirit.

**3.7
wellness spa therapist**

personnel contracted by the *wellness spa* (3.6), with a demonstrable evidence of knowledge and competence in applying the wellness approach and the *wellness spa treatments* (3.8)

**3.8
wellness spa treatment**

intervention to promote *well-being* (3.3)

Note 1 to entry: The wellness spa treatments are mainly categorized into manual treatment, water treatment and/or holistic activities.

Note 2 to entry: The treatment is not related with medication or medical treatment.

**3.9
whirlpool**

bath or tub with a mechanism that swirls heated water

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4 Facilities and equipment

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4.1 Wellness facilities

4.1.1 General requirements

Adequate space shall be provided for the comfort, privacy, well-being and safety of clients. The wellness spa shall provide a secluded space appropriate for clients to use at peak times with enough privacy space for each individual.

The ambience shall be peaceful and relaxing.

4.1.2 Reception

There shall be a reception area. The reception area shall be in good condition in terms of cleanliness and illumination and without obstacles.

If the spaces for the client service (reception, porter's lodge, cash, etc.) are differentiated, they shall be clearly identified and with signs.

NOTE International Standards related to signs (e.g. ISO 7001) can be used.

4.1.3 Treatment area

There shall be a treatment area. The treatment area shall have a sink, except in temporary settings such as in natural areas.

A minimum floor space should be allotted for each type of treatment.

The treatment room shall have an adequate level of illumination (including requirements for cleaning and safety) and adjustable lighting system.

For closed-door treatment rooms, air conditioning (cooling or heating) in the treatment rooms shall be individually controlled, well-serviced and maintained.

If the treatment room is to be used for herbal wraps or mud treatments, a shower shall be available in the area.

If wet treatments are provided, there shall be a floor drain.

The wellness spa shall provide safety systems (emergency stops, alarms, etc.) for its wellness facilities. Technical provision shall be made to avoid unsafe situations to the clients.

All wellness facilities which can be used without therapist surveillance shall have the usage instructions displayed in a visible place.

A wellness spa shall define a procedure for being able to give first aid to the clients.

The first-aid kit shall be visible and easily reachable for the staff.

4.2 Equipment

The wellness spa shall provide measuring devices such as clocks, hour glasses and thermometers that can be viewed within the wellness facilities so that clients can monitor their activities and avoid overexertion.

The wellness spa shall provide thermometers in its wellness facility areas to allow the staff to monitor and maintain safe thermal conditions for clients.

The wellness spa shall ensure that all aquatic wellness facilities including whirlpool, hydrotherapy pools and other equipment filled with water, in which clients share a common area, are clean, free from debris and have the proper water chemistry. The water chemical levels shall be monitored on a regular basis.

All floor surfaces shall be designed and constructed to accommodate the intended activities for each area, for example, non-slip floors in wet areas.

All electrical installations and equipment shall be properly constructed and maintained and correct for the purpose and environment in which they are used. All electrical work (installation, extension and repairs) shall be undertaken by specialist workers or supervised by those with specialist knowledge. Electrical checks are required to find faults in insulation, earthed and contamination by dust or water. The records of checks, work and maintenance shall be well-documented.

5 Staff requirements

5.1 Human resources general requirements

The top management of the wellness spa shall define the appropriate requirements and criteria for staff recruitment with regard to certain positions or functions that are considered key for optimal service provision. Certain tasks shall be developed by qualified staff. Considering their type of clients, the top management shall define the profile of the staff that is usually in contact with clients, who will be required to be able to communicate in foreign languages.

Following the recruitment, a new member of staff shall undergo a training period, throughout which, the service levels offered will be duly explained, as well as the rest of the rules of conduct for a better and earlier adaptation to the working position. To make this activity easier, the wellness spa shall have a written document explaining the basic aspects of the wellness spa so that the new members of the staff can be aware of them. Temporary staff shall be subject to a prompt and basic training process, so that the incorporation of this type of staff is not considered as an adverse condition to service provision. The top management shall approve a training plan in those areas or specialties that can affect the service

provision or client satisfaction. Such a plan shall contain training activities conducted by external or internal staff. In order to prepare such a plan, the wellness spa shall define the indicators to identify all training needs, whether by units, by activities or other. The training plan shall be monitored at reasonable intervals and adapted if necessary. The top management shall offer the necessary training so that the staff can maintain the agreed levels in the service provision.

The top management shall ensure that staff are treated fairly and should provide an environment in which they are continually prepared and motivated to provide proper service to clients.

The top management shall establish an internal communication system, so that all members of the staff are always informed of the result of the services and the degree of client satisfaction in their area of work. This system shall ensure that all suggestions and comments from members of the staff are analysed and responded to by the top management.

When defining the tasks of the staff, their versatility shall be considered based on the levels of occupation and the characteristics of the wellness spa.

5.2 Wellness spa manager

The top management of the wellness spa shall appoint a wellness spa manager responsible for the daily operation and strategic planning for the wellness spa, and in particular, for the following:

- a) getting the procedures manual established and updated regularly to ensure that all treatments offered are delivered in full compliance with it;
- b) ensuring that the wellness spa (see 3.6) fulfils the service requirements described in this document;
- c) ensuring the commercialization and marketing of the wellness spa;
- d) ensuring the maintenance of the facilities and equipment;
- e) having an effective system for collecting client feedback and for handling guest complaints. This system shall include a means of documentation to monitor corrective action, avoid repetition and allow for improvement in the services offered;
- f) ensuring the health and safety of staff and clients.

In relation to this, the wellness spa manager shall

- assess the risk of injury or illness in the wellness spa and take the necessary steps to minimize those risks (the conclusions of the risk assessment shall be recorded and documented: the risk assessment entails a careful evaluation of all the aspects of the wellness spa that could cause harm to staff and to clients, in order to determine whether sufficient precautions are being taken to minimize the risks or whether more measures are needed to be put in place);
- provide information and thorough training to the entire staff, and
- ensure that the wellness spa has, at minimum, one first aid-trained staff on duty at any given time to be able to respond to an emergency.

5.3 Wellness spa therapist

A wellness spa therapist (see 3.7) shall be briefed and given a copy of the policy and procedures manual.

Wellness spa therapists shall comply with the following requirements:

- a) they shall be appropriately trained and act in compliance with the wellness spa procedures manual and/or the product and equipment instructions;
- b) their qualifications shall comply with applicable international, national or local regulations, as appropriate, with regard to licensing, registration and appropriate certification;

- c) they shall keep clients' privacy by not disclosing information or matters seen or heard from them.

6 Hygiene good practices

6.1 General requirements

The wellness spa shall have staff responsible for the maintenance of the facilities.

The wellness spa shall ensure that its wellness facilities and equipment are to be supervised by staff on a regular basis and kept hygienically and visually clean at all times.

Between each wellness treatment, all components of the facility that may have been in direct contact with the previous client shall undergo disinfection according to a suitable procedure.

Textiles that have been in direct contact with the client shall be changed for each client.

Taps or water outlets shall be cleaned and disinfected daily (after each day of use).

After each use, tubs shall be drained, cleaned and disinfected. Internal hoses of whirlpool baths shall be drained completely, rinsed and sanitized.

Shower heads shall be removable for cleaning, and their internal components shall be accessible for descaling and disinfecting.

Floor drains shall be disassembled, cleaned and disinfected at least once a week.

The floor shall be cleaned and disinfected as soon as necessary and at least daily (after each day of spa operation).

The storage and use of products used for maintenance and hygiene facilities and equipment shall comply strictly with regulations on hazardous materials (pool products, disinfectants, descaling products, etc.).

Tubs, pools and whirlpools shall be well-maintained.

6.2 Maintenance

6.2.1 Stock

There shall be a stock control system to ensure that products are well-kept, and a procedure to manage the stock of consumable materials.

The requirements regarding the storage and stock control, order, cleanliness and stock taking shall be established.

6.2.2 Preventive maintenance

6.2.2.1 Preventive maintenance plan

The wellness spa shall have an approved preventive maintenance plan that shall include, at least, all inspection activities relating to the condition and running of facilities and the replacement of elements or spares by normal wear and tear in order to avoid damage or cause any inconvenience to clients.

The top management shall appoint a person responsible for the preventive maintenance plan who shall be in charge of the following:

- a) check plan and inspections;
- b) check that the maintenance tasks are carried out accordingly;
- c) check periodically (at least annually) facilities and equipment.