INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 21426

First edition
2018-11

Tourism and related services — Medical spas — Service requirements

Tourisme et services connexes — Spas médicaux — Exigences de service

Reference number
ISO 21426:2018(E)

ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

Published in Switzerland

Contents

Page

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).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, 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 www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Health tourism services are among the fastest growing sectors worldwide. While these services have so far been relatively unexplored, national tourism boards, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders consider health tourism as a sector with tremendous potential for growth and destination development.

There are large numbers of people around the world who choose health tourism services with the objective, for example, of escaping from the stress and rush of urban life, or of receiving healthcare abroad. These numbers have been increasing rapidly in recent years, hence it is necessary to identify the different products and services which can be offered in order to avoid confusion and meet the expectations of customers.

Regarding the use of natural resources in health tourism, there are already two standards which define the minimum requirements for quality services in both thalassotherapy centres (ISO 17680) and wellness centres (ISO 17679). These reflect the specificities of these two types of centres, considering in particular the different types of water used in each of them.

In order to complete the picture, this document will focus on the quality services at medical spas, taking into account their natural healing waters and their proven therapeutic and preventive benefits for health.

Tourism and related services — Medical spas — Service requirements

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements for the provision of quality services at medical spas which use natural healing waters (except sea water) and other natural resources.

This document does not cover decisions that correspond to the medical profession.

This document does not apply to thalassotherapy centres or wellness spa centres.

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 7001, *Graphical symbols — Public information symbols*

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 https://www.iso.org/obp

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

3.1
balneology
study of the therapeutic use of natural remedies (e.g. climate therapy, water treatments) from production to application

Note 1 to entry: This is an overarching term for the planning, development, operational and medical aspects of a medical spa.

3.2
care area
area assigned for carrying out health treatments

3.3
climate
composite or generally prevailing weather conditions of a region throughout the year, averaged over a series of years

Note 1 to entry: Weather conditions include temperature, air pressure, humidity, precipitation, sunshine, cloud and wind.

3.4
dry area
space within the care area where water is not used

Note 1 to entry: Examination rooms, gyms and relaxing areas are considered dry areas.

3.5
medical spa
legally recognised health establishment under medical supervision provided by a medical doctor, with natural healing waters and other specific natural resources such as the healing gases or the peloids used in health treatments

Note 1 to entry: In some countries the term "medical spa" is specifically recognized and regulated.

Note 2 to entry: Medical spa waters have been protected since the 19th century in order to avoid the negative impacts of potentially polluting human activities on the earth's surface, which could affect both the emergence or origin flows and chemical quality of the water.

3.6
mineral medicinal water
naturally or artificially rising mineral water with proven therapeutic effects

Note 1 to entry: Medicinal waters are classified as a medication in some countries.

Note 2 to entry: Mineral medicinal water contains, for example, sodium chloride, sodium sulfate or magnesium sulfate.

3.7
mineral water
natural spring water with specific mineralization produced by artesian means, spontaneously or through drilling, used in medical spas for healing purposes

Note 1 to entry: In some countries mineral water is regulated by legislation, which establishes the content of mineralisation to be considered as mineral water.

3.8
natural healing gases
gases dissolved in spring water or rising from pure gas springs based on medicinal knowledge and balneological experience

Note 1 to entry: Sulfur gases, radon, CO_2 (e.g. from mofettes) are examples of healing gases.

3.9
natural healing water
mineral medicinal water used locally (extracted and applied in the vicinity of the spring)

Note 1 to entry: Thermal waters, mineral waters and gas waters are considered natural healing waters.

3.10
natural resources
elements and raw materials such as peloids or other natural remedies, used for health treatments

3.11
peloid
inorganic or organic mixture produced in geological and/or biological processes which has a fine-grained consistency, either by nature (natural peloid) or because it has been crushed in a simple process

Note 1 to entry: For further information on different types of peloids, see Table 1.

Note 2 to entry: Mud and peat are two types of natural peloids, used for medicinal purposes.

Note 3 to entry: Peloids can contain water but also exist in dry form.

3.12
thermal water
water whose temperature at the emergence point is 4 °C above the average temperature of the place where this water emerges

3.13
treatment room
separated room where treatments are carried out, usually located in a treatment area

3.14
wet area
area using water, peloids and gas baths, located within the care area

Note 1 to entry: Treatment showers, baths, wraps and pools are considered wet areas.

4 Facilities and equipment

4.1 General requirements

All facilities and equipment shall be kept in good condition and well maintained. Safety aspects and conformity with related standards should be considered when using equipment, especially electrical equipment.

Facilities and equipment shall also be clean and disinfected, with good ventilation, lighting and temperature, and free of obstacles.

The medical spa shall have sanitary facilities and dressing rooms for the staff.

Adequate access and facilities for customers with disabilities should be considered.

NOTE For further information regarding accessibility, refer to ISO 21542.

4.2 Reception

The medical spa shall have a reception. The reception area shall conform with the following requirements:

— It shall be in a separated area, in accordance with the hosting capacity of the medical spa, and signposted.

— A list of services and prices shall be available.

— There shall be different means of customer registration.

— Accepted payment methods shall be displayed.

— Reception service shall be provided at least during the opening hours of the treatment area.

Electronic registration should be considered.

4.3 Dressing room and sanitary facilities

The medical spa shall have a dressing room and sanitary facilities. This area shall conform with the following requirements:

— For hygiene reasons, there shall be access to the dressing rooms from the reception and exit to the care area.

— The floor and walls shall be coated with washable non-slip and non-porous materials.

— Dressing rooms shall be close to showers, toilets and lavatories.

Dressing rooms design should provide access for people with disabilities.

4.4 Medical room

There shall be a medical room for providing medical advice to customers on their request or if needed, for example, in emergency situations.

The privacy of the customers shall be guaranteed.

There should be a waiting room close to the medical room with enough seats for customers. At peak hours, there shall be a mechanism for making appointments.

The medical room shall have a lavatory and sanitary facilities close to it.

4.5 Care area

4.5.1 General requirements

The care area includes a dry area and a wet area which shall be separated.

Undressing, care activities and dressing should preferably be carried out in the same room or in adjacent rooms.

The care area shall conform with the following requirements:

— Temperature shall not be lower than 18 °C.

— In case of non-natural lighting, lighting shall be indirect in order to reduce reflection on the water surface.

— The necessary set of instruments relating to the medical spa specialization to be used for examination of customers and hydrotherapy treatments shall be available.

— Telephone numbers for emergency calls shall be available.

— Treatment rooms shall have hand-washing and disinfection facilities.

— There shall be a first-aid kit containing clinical material (e.g. automatic or semiautomatic defibrillator) and necessary basic medicines. It should be easily available for trained staff.

4.5.2 Dry areas

Dry areas shall conform with the following requirements:

— A heated rest area shall be located in the dry area. It shall be equipped with sofas or beds for customers' relaxation after treatment sessions in the vicinity of care cabins.

— The temperature shall be kept between 18 °C and 25 °C, depending on the use.

— All equipment shall be washable and made of easy disinfected materials.

There should be a first-aid room for minor care operation.

4.5.3 Wet areas

For safety reasons, wet areas shall have handrails, especially near and in pools and jet showers. Ground and floor surfaces shall be slip resistant, and non porous end-to-end carpets, wooden flooring, wooden duckboards or other similar materials shall not be used except for wood treated to prevent slipping.

Pools can be located indoors or outdoors and can be therapeutic or non-therapeutic.

All pools used for treatments shall contain thermal or mineral water.

In all cases, pools shall be adapted to the services provided by the medical spa and shall operate according to the principle of reverse hydraulicity (water intake from the bottom and evacuation at the surface).

If the medical spa is also equipped with swimming pools for leisure, this shall be clearly indicated.

Whenever customers use therapeutic pools responsible staff shall be in attendance.

Showers equipped with hot and cold water shall be available at the entrance of the pool.

The maximum water height shall be 1,40 m or, if deeper, there shall be a professional viewing the customers having hydrotherapy. There shall be a sign indicating the depth and temperature of the water.

Swimming pool areas shall display all relevant information regarding security and preventive measures for customers. The information shall be displayed in a way that can be understood by the customer, such as using graphical symbols.

Pools should have ramps or stairs to accommodate persons with disabilities.

4.6 Equipment to treat waste water

The medical spa shall have specific equipment to treat waste water.

Reuse of waste water is not allowed.

Treated waste water should be discharged according to the environment protection considerations.

5 Staff

5.1 General requirements

The medical spa staff shall be identified. Furthermore, staff in contact with customers shall be identifiable by their name.

Staff shall know the services offered by the medical spa.

Considering the type of customers and the specialization of the medical spa, senior management shall define the profile of the staff who are usually in contact with customers. Certain tasks shall be developed by qualified and accredited staff.

The medical spa shall identify responsible people for at least the following posts:

- general manager;
- medical manager;
- other care area staff;
- maintenance;
- assisting manager;
- booking;
- sales;
- other service staff (e.g. laundry, cleaning, procurement).

Senior management shall establish an internal communication system so that all members of staff are always informed of the degree of customer satisfaction in their field of work. This system shall ensure that suggestions from the staff are analysed.

The recruitment of a new member of staff shall include a training period. To make this activity easier, the organization shall have a document explaining the basic aspects of the medical spa.

The medical spa shall design an annual training program for staff which includes, for example, items regarding hygiene and safety issues, IT skills, handling products of common use at the medical spa, environmental good practices, politeness rules, commonly used foreign languages, provision of customer service, and emergency and evacuation plan (considering in both cases customers with disabilities).

This training program shall include emergency training (e.g. first-aid, emergency and evacuation plan) and basic life support (BLS).

All staff should periodically have a medical check-up to ensure that they do not transmit diseases.

5.2 Care area staff

The medical spa shall have a medical manager, preferably a specialist in balneology, to monitor all treatment activities.

There shall be a medical doctor.

There should be qualified staff including a physiotherapist, a hydrotherapist, a hygiene specialist, a nurse, a nutrition/dietician and a sophrologist (psycologist), as well as specialized doctors in balneology or related treatments.

Reeducation in physiotherapy shall be carried out by a medical doctor or a physiotherapist.

All the staff involved in the care area shall be aware of the action plan in case of clinical emergencies.

5.3 Technical staff

The medical spa shall employ duly qualified staff for the maintenance operations, including water processing operations. Maintenance operations shall be supervised by a qualified professional engineer or technician.

Maintenance staff shall take appropriate measures as soon as any abnormality is detected.

There should always be someone on duty with the responsibility for evaluating any technical problem.

6 Natural resources

6.1 General requirements

The use of natural resources from several sources for human wellbeing is based on experience of the beneficial effects achieved with many illnesses over the years. These positive effects have been observed at medical spas for generations and can also be objectively measured by means of modern medical advances (including balneology and spa research).

Relevant natural resources for this document are:

a) natural healing waters:

   — mineral waters;

   — thermal waters;

   — gas waters.

b) healing gases;

c) peloids.

