INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 2603

Third edition
1998-11-15

Booths for simultaneous interpretation — General characteristics and equipment

Cabines d'interprétation simultanée — Caractéristiques générales et équipement

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Foreword

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Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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International Standard ISO 2603 was prepared by ISO/TC 43, *Acoustics*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Building acoustics*.

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This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 2603:1983).

ISO 2603 was first issued in 1974; it was revised in 1983 and extended in scope to cover facilities for more than six languages. It is based on facilities built since then and evaluated by the Technical Committee of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and the Joint Service Interpretation Conferences (JSIC) of the European Commission (EU). The present edition aims to bring the text into line with modern practice and technology as well as to clarify and simplify it for the user.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

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Printed in Switzerland

Introduction

Interpreters' booths are designed to meet three requirements:

a) acoustic separation between different languages spoken simultaneously, without mutual interference between languages interpreted or with the speaker in the hall;

b) efficient two-way communication between the booths and the conference hall;

c) a comfortable working environment enabling interpreters to maintain the intense effort of concentration required by their work.

Existing facilities, built in compliance with ISO 2603:1983, are still acceptable.

In addition to architects, project engineers, suppliers, etc., it is essential to consult conference interpreters experienced in technical consultancy, from the earliest stages of planning.

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Booths for simultaneous interpretation — General characteristics and equipment

1 Scope

This International Standard lays down basic specifications to be considered when initial plans are prepared for building or renovating built-in booths for simultaneous interpretation in new or existing buildings.

It is applicable to all types of built-in booths with built-in or portable equipment.

NOTE 1 Mobile booths for simultaneous interpretation are specified in ISO 4043.

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In designing new buildings, booths should be optimally integrated into the structure so that the conference room and the booths constitute a well-balanced unit. Design should also provide daylight for the conference hall and booths.

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The requirements of clauses 4 and 5 apply to booths with built-in equipment, as defined in 3.1, and booths with portable equipment, as defined in 3.2.

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The dimensional requirements apply equally to semi-permanent booths, as defined in 3.3, for which all other requirements should apply as far as is possible.

In addition to structural and design specifications, this International Standard specifies those components of typical conference facilities which form the interpreters working environment.

NOTE 2 Clause 12 gives indications concerning the use of public address systems in conjunction with simultaneous interpretation systems.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of curr valid International Standards.

ISO 140-4:1998, *Acoustics — Measurement of sound insulation in buildings and of building elements — Part 4: Field measurements of airborne sound insulation between rooms*.

ISO 3382:1997, *Acoustics — Measurement of the reverberation time of rooms with reference to other acoustical parameters*.

IEC 60914:1988, *Conference systems — Electrical and audio requirements*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following definitions apply.

3.1
booth with built-in equipment
booth intended for simultaneous interpretation containing built-in interpretation equipment

3.2
booth with portable equipment
booth intended for simultaneous interpretation, but not containing built-in interpretation equipment (see 3.4)

3.3
semi-permanent booth
booth not structurally integrated or which is intended to be moved within the building

3.4
interpreter's control panel
panel containing all controls for listening and speaking

NOTE The panel is normally a built-in fixture in the booth; if mounted on its own free-standing box, it is known as a console (the usual form for portable equipment).

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4 Structural and design requirements for booths

4.1 Siting in relation to the building

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Booths shall be located away from any outside sources of disturbance, such as kitchens, public passages, halls, etc. (see 4.4).

4.2 Siting in relation to the conference hall

4.2.1 General

Booths shall be located at the back and/or sides of the hall, making sure there is good visual contact between all booths and with the control booth. They shall be raised no further above the floor of the hall than is necessary for a clear view (see 4.7) of all proceedings in the hall, i.e. all participants, lecturers, the chairman, etc., as well as all visual aids (projection screen, etc.). The view from the booths into the hall shall not be obstructed by persons standing. Thus, the booth floor should be at least 1,00 m above the hall floor assuming a level floor. Steep viewing angles shall be avoided (particularly with regard to projection screens). In larger halls the furthest distance from booth to rostrum, projection screen, etc. shall not exceed 30 m (see 4.6).

The booths shall be grouped to facilitate visual contact (see 4.7) as well as cabling between them.

4.2.2 Sound control booth

The sound control booth shall be placed close to the interpreters' booths to facilitate access and visual communication between them and provide the operator with a clear view of all proceedings, speakers, projection screen, etc. The operator shall have safe, quick and easy access both to the booths and to the hall.

4.3 Doors

Doors shall provide satisfactory acoustic insulation (see 4.8) and operate silently. They shall not interconnect booths through side walls. An observation porthole (not less than 0,20 m x 0,22 m) in the booth door and/or a light outside the door, indicating an active microphone within, are recommended.

Assigned languages and channels should be indicated on or adjacent to doors.

Curtains or baffles shall not be used instead of doors.

4.4 Access

The booths shall have easy accessough a separate entrance from outside the hall, to avoid the interpreters disturbing the meeting when coming and going. The access corridor to the booths shall be at least 1,50 m wide to allow for safe and quick passage. Stairs, if any, shall be safe and easy to negotiate, bearing in mind emergencies, disabled persons, the need for quick distribution of documents (often on trolleys) and the transport of equipment. Emergency exits shall be readily accessible and escape routes clearly marked. There shall be rapid access from the booths to the hall.

4.5 Size of booths

4.5.1 General

Each booth shall be wide enough to accommodate the required number of interpreters seated comfortably side by side, each with sufficient table space to work conveniently on several documents spread alongside each other. The booth shall be high and deep enough to provide sufficient volume of air to enable adequate temperature control and draught-free air renewal (see 4.9) as well as sufficient space for the occupants to enter and leave without disturbing one another.

4.5.2 Minimum dimensions

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See figure 1.

The size of a booth is governed by the need to provide sufficient work space and air volume per interpreter. The minimum number of interpreters per booth being two, the following minimum dimensions are required:

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– width: 2,50 m
– depth: 2,40 m
– height: 2,30 m

NOTE 1 Where feasible, additional height can be an advantage for draught and temperature control.

For conference halls with up to six booths, one or more should be 3,20 m wide (to cover the need for the continuous presence of three interpreters).

For conference halls with more than six booths, all booths shall be at least 3,20 m wide.

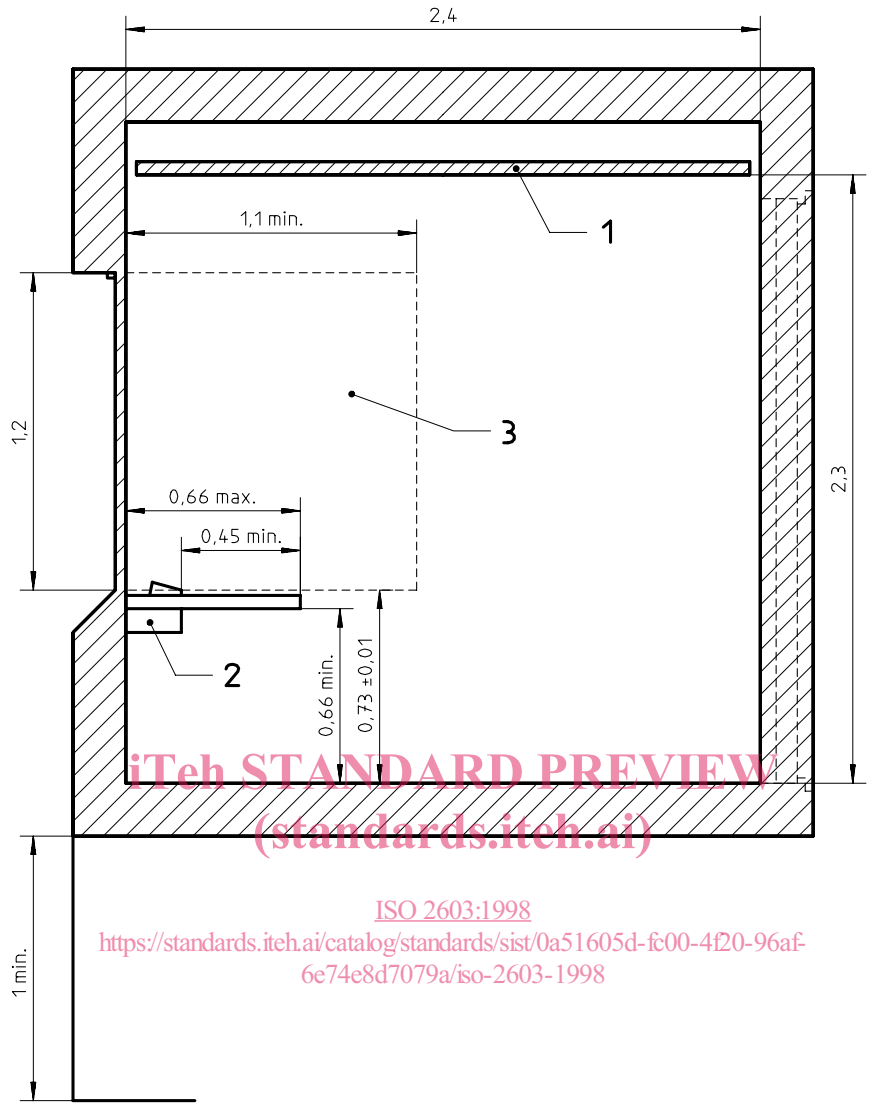
NOTE 2 There is a growing trend for conferences using six or more languages. For a number of languages, this means at least three interpreters working in a booth; hence the need for so many booths to be at least 3,20 m wide.

To avoid resonance effects, the three dimensions of the booth should be different from one another and, to avoid standing waves, the two side walls should not be exactly parallel.

4.6 Visibility

A direct view of the entire conference room, including the projection screen, is essential (see 4.2.1). In very large halls, where the rostrum or projection screen is more than 30 m away, visual support may be used, either in the form of one or more enlarged video display screen(s), or of video/data display panels in or immediately outside the booth.

Dimensions in metres



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Key

1 Air-conditioning suspended ceiling
2 Cabling
3 Side window

Figure 1 — Booth for simultaneous interpretation

4.7 Windows

Front windows shall be across the full width of the booth. The height of the pane shall be at least 1,20 m from the working surface upwards. Its lower edge shall be level with the working surface of the table, or lower (see figure 1).

Side windows, of at least the same height, shall be provided and shall extend from the front window for a length of 1,10 m along the partition between booths.

To ensure an unobstructed maximum range of view from the booths, vertical supports shall be avoided.

Front and side windows shall consist of untinted anti-glare glass satisfying the sound insulation requirements (see 4.8 and ISO 140-4). Panes shall be mounted in such a way as to avoid vibration, glare from hall lighting and mirror effects from inside the booth.

NOTE In the present state of glass technology, good results are obtained by using one vertical pane of laminated glass of adequate thickness in combination with work-lighting in the form of overhead spotlights.

Depending on the type of work lighting used (see 5.2), front panes may have to be slightly inclined.

4.8 Acoustics

The booths shall open onto an area not normally used by delegates, members of staff or the public. It shall not be adjacent to any noise source. Floors and walls in booths and corridors shall in any case be covered with sound-absorbent material.

NOTE Fabric, of sufficient thickness, on walls and perforated ceiling panels (see note in 4.9) have produced good results. It is recommended to use material with a weighted absorption coefficient (according to ISO 11654) of $\alpha_w \geqslant 0,6$.

Where flooring is hollow, care should be taken to prevent sounding-box effects from footsteps.

Particular attention shall be given to sound-proofing:

– between the interpreters' booths;

– between the interpreters' booths and the control booth;

– between the booths and the conference hall.

The following values shall apply (including air ducts, cable ducts, etc.):

– hall/booth $R'_w = 48$ dB
– booth/booth $R'_w = 43$ dB
– booth/corridor $R'_w = 41$ dB

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R'_w is defined in ISO 717-1; for measurement, see ISO 140-4.

Air ducts (see 4.9) shall be properly sound-proofed to prevent noise transmission from booth to booth. The A-weighted sound pressure level generated by the air-conditioning system (see 4.9), lighting (see 5.2) and other sound sources shall not exceed 35 dB.

Reverberation time (see ISO 3382) inside the booth shall be between 0,3 s and 0,5 s measured in the octave bands from 125 Hz to 4 000 Hz (booth unoccupied).

4.9 Air conditioning

As booths are occupied throughout the day, adequate ventilation is required.

The air supply should be 100 % fresh (i.e. not recycled). The air-conditioning system shall be independent from that of the rest of the building and of the conference hall.

Air renewal shall be seven times per hour and the carbon dioxide concentration shall not exceed 0,1 %. The temperature shall be controllable between 18 °C and 22 °C by means of an individual regulator in each booth. Relative humidity shall be between 45 % and 65 %.

Air velocity shall not exceed 0,2 m/s. Air inlets and outlets shall be placed in such a way that interpreters are not exposed to draughts.

NOTE Good results have been obtained by introducing the air through a perforated ceiling and extracting it through vents at the rear of the booth, in the floor or the rear wall.