
Ergonomics principles in the design of work systems

Principes ergonomiques de la conception des systèmes de travail

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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).

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

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](#).

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 159, *Ergonomics*, Subcommittee SC 1, *General ergonomic principles*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 6385:2004), which has been technically revised with the following changes:

- terms were aligned with the terms given in ISO 26000;
- [3.2](#), [3.7](#) and [Clause 4](#) have been technically revised;
- life cycle of a work system was introduced in [3.2](#);
- principle of adjustment was added to [3.7](#) and validation replaced by verification;
- new subclause on conformity was added to [Clause 4](#);
- examples were added in several clauses.

Introduction

Technological, economic, organizational and human factors affect the work behaviour and well-being of people as part of a work system. Applying ergonomic knowledge in the light of practical experience in the design of a work system is intended to satisfy human requirements.

This International Standard provides a basic ergonomic framework for professionals and other people who deal with the issues of ergonomics, work systems and working situations. The provisions of this International Standard will also apply to the design of products for use in work systems.

Following the principles and requirements described in this International Standard will support management in making better decisions, for instance related to the sustainability of investments in work system innovation.

In the design of work systems in accordance with this International Standard, the body of knowledge in the field of ergonomics is taken into account. Ergonomic evaluations of existing or new work systems will show the need for, and encourage attention to, the role of the worker within those systems.

ISO 26800 provides a general starting point for thought on ergonomics and determines the essential general principles and concepts. This International Standard presents these in the context of the design and evaluation of work systems.

This International Standard is also valuable in the application of management systems such as OHSAS 18001. Besides guidelines for processes, it also offers guidance for achieving good human performance.

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Ergonomics principles in the design of work systems

1 Scope

This International Standard establishes the fundamental principles of ergonomics as basic guidelines for the design of work systems and defines relevant basic terms. It describes an integrated approach to the design of work systems, where ergonomists will cooperate with others involved in the design, with attention to the human, the social and the technical requirements in a balanced manner during the design process.

Users of this International Standard will include executives, managers, workers (and their representatives, when appropriate) and professionals, such as ergonomists, project managers and designers who are involved in the design or redesign of work systems. Those who use this International Standard can find a general knowledge of ergonomics (human factors), engineering, design, quality and project management helpful.

The term “work system” in this International Standard is used to indicate a large variety of working situations, including permanent and flexible work places. The intention of this International Standard is to assist in the improvement, (re)design or change of work systems. Work systems involve combinations of workers and equipment, within a given space and environment, and the interactions between these components within a work organization. Work systems vary in complexity and characteristics, for example, the use of temporary work systems. Some examples of work systems in different areas are the following:

- production, e.g. machine operator and machine, worker and assembly line;
- transportation, e.g. driver and car or lorry, personnel in an airport;
- support, e.g. maintenance technician with work equipment;
- commercial, e.g. office worker with workstation, mobile worker with a tablet computer, cook in a restaurant kitchen;
- other areas like health care, teaching and training.

The observance of ergonomic principles applies to all phases throughout the life cycle of the work system from conception through development, realization and implementation, utilization, maintenance and support to decommissioning.

The systems approach in this International Standard gives guidance to the users of this International Standard in existing and new situations.

The definitions and ergonomic principles specified in this International Standard apply to the design of optimal working conditions with regard to human well-being, safety and health, including the development of existing skills and the acquisition of new ones, while taking into account technological and economic effectiveness and efficiency.

The principles in this International Standard are applicable to many other human activities, e.g. in the design of products for domestic and leisure activities. A more general description of the principles in this International Standard can be found in ISO 26800.

NOTE 1 This International Standard is considered to be the core ergonomic standard for work systems from which many others on specific issues are derived.

Note 2 Although elements of the system can be the same, this International Standard is not intended to be applied to systems used in a non-work context (e.g. the use of a vehicle for private purposes).