

FINAL VERSION



Medical electrical equipment – Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance

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**MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –
Part 1: General requirements for basic safety
and essential performance**

INTERPRETATION SHEET 1

This interpretation sheet has been prepared by SC 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice

The text of this interpretation sheet is based on the following documents:

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Subclause 1.1

This subclause is clarified by the following:

IEC 60601-1 does not apply to medical gas pipeline systems covered by ISO 7396-1, *Medical gas pipeline systems — Part 1: Pipeline systems for compressed medical gases and vacuum*.

NOTE Subclause 6.3 of ISO 7396-1 applies the requirement of IEC 60601-1-8 to certain monitoring and alarm signals.

This clarification will remain valid until a new version of IEC 60601-1 is published.

MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –

Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance

INTERPRETATION SHEET 2

This interpretation sheet has been prepared by subcommittee 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice, of IEC technical committee 62: Electrical equipment in medical practice.

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Subclause 11.3

This subclause is clarified by the following:

As stated in the rationale for this subclause, fire ENCLOSURES are intended to be used only where there is a significant likelihood of fire due to the presence of a source of ignition (as described in the subclause) *and* a significant source of fuel. Most materials used in the construction of ME EQUIPMENT are not considered to be such a source of fuel unless they are in the presence of an OXYGEN RICH ENVIRONMENT. MANUFACTURERS should determine, through analyses documented in the RISK MANAGEMENT FILE, whether the ME EQUIPMENT contains combustible materials (fuel) in sufficient quantities to support combustion in conjunction with ignition sources (capable of releasing greater than 900 J).

Subclause 13.1.2

This subclause is clarified by the following:

As stated in subclause 4.7, it is the MANUFACTURER'S RISK ANALYSIS that determines which components are subject to failure testing based on the associated RISK. Where the associated RISK of fire exceeds the MANUFACTURER'S criteria for RISK acceptability, the MANUFACTURER'S simulation analysis (such as FMEAs) should be accepted in lieu of physical testing. As also stated in 4.7, component reliability and ratings are to be considered in such failure simulation analyses. Common electronic components that have a history of use without causing equipment fires should not be considered a likely source of ignition.

Where the subclause identifies "emission of flames, molten metal, poisonous or ignitable substance in hazardous quantities;" as a hazardous situation, this refers to emissions from *the ENCLOSURE* not from components themselves. Where it identifies "exceeding the allowable values for 'other components and materials' identified in Table 22 times 1,5 minus 12,5 °C", this applies only where doing so would result in an unacceptable RISK (as identified in the MANUFACTURER'S RISK ANALYSIS according to 4.7). Typically, this would be cases where

ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE would not be maintained or where greater than 900 J of energy would be released in the presence of flammable materials that could sustain combustion.

The first exemption to fault analysis or testing identified in subclause 13.1.2 (“The construction or the supply circuit limits the power dissipation in SINGLE FAULT CONDITION to less than 15 W or the energy dissipation to less than 900 J.”) is intended to apply where the component design itself (“The construction”) or fusing (or other current limiting devices) in the supply circuit (“or the supply circuit”) assure the energy released during failures will not exceed the limits. For most common signal level components rated for operation below 5 Watts, the energy released by short-circuiting of outputs will not exceed the 900 J limit.

This clarification will remain valid until a new version of IEC 60601-1 is published.

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**MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –
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INTERPRETATION SHEET 3

This interpretation sheet has been prepared by subcommittee 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice, of IEC technical committee 62: Electrical equipment in medical practice.

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Subclause 13.1.2 fourth dash (Emissions, deformation or ENCLOSURE or exceeding maximum temperature)


This subclause states the following:

The following HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS shall not occur:

-
- temperatures of ME EQUIPMENT parts that are not APPLIED PARTS but are likely to be touched, exceeding the allowable values in Table 23 when measured and adjusted as described in 11.1.3;

This is clarified by the following:

The above requirement is regarded as fulfilled in accordance with Subclause 4.5 for temperatures at the surfaces of the enclosure, if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- The maximum allowed temperature on OPERATOR accessible surfaces in SINGLE FAULT CONDITION is 105 °C and
- the instructions for use contain a warning that, under some SINGLE FAULT CONDITIONS, the temperature of: (*indicate the surface of concern*) could get hot and there is a possible RISK of a burn if touched, and
- if the RISK ANALYSIS demonstrates a need for a warning symbol on the ENCLOSURE, safety sign ISO 7010-W018 () shall be used on or adjacent to the hot spot on the ENCLOSURE; and
- the RISK ASSESSMENT demonstrates that the temperature attained in the SINGLE FAULT CONDITION is acceptable, and
- the RISK ASSESSMENT demonstrates that applying the alternative RISK CONTROL measures in this Interpretation Sheet results in a RESIDUAL RISK that is comparable to the RESIDUAL RISK resulting from applying the requirement of the standard.

NOTE 1 This Interpretation Sheet is intended to be used with both Edition 3.0 and Edition 3.1 of IEC 60601-1.

NOTE 2 An example of an analysis that demonstrates an adequately low probability of occurrence of HARM is shown below.

Example RISK ASSESSMENT:

The sum failure rate for parts that could increase the surface temperature of parts of the enclosure of XYZ device touchable only by the OPERATOR to values above those of Table 23 calculates to be 60 FIT (1 FIT = 1E-9/h) according to the standard MIL-HDBK-217F where FIT stands for "failure in time". In case of such failures, the device would emit an odour and would no longer function properly. It is estimated, that only in one of 3 cases the device would not be switched off immediately and the hot surface would be resulting in a burn.

The resulting overall probability of such HARM where adequate warning is provided in the instructions for use in combination with warning sign ISO 7010 W018 would be: probability = $1/3 * 60 \text{ FIT} = 2 \text{ E-8/h} \approx 0,0002 \text{ per year}$.

In this example, the WXW Company's RISK acceptance criteria require that a HARM of that severity must have a probability of less than 0,0003 per year for the associated RISK to be considered acceptable. Based on that RISK acceptance criterion, the RISK associated with overtemperature of the ENCLOSURE caused by single faults in the circuitry is acceptable.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| FOREWORD..... | 11 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 14 |
| INTRODUCTION TO AMENDMENT 1..... | 16 |
| INTRODUCTION TO AMENDMENT 2..... | 16 |
| 1 Scope, object and related standards..... | 18 |
| 1.1 * Scope..... | 18 |
| 1.2 Object..... | 18 |
| 1.3 * Collateral standards..... | 18 |
| 1.4 * Particular standards..... | 18 |
| 2 * Normative references..... | 19 |
| 3 * Terminology and definitions..... | 22 |
| 4 General requirements..... | 44 |
| 4.1 * Conditions for application to ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEMS..... | 44 |
| 4.2 * RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS for ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEMS..... | 44 |
| 4.3 * ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE..... | 46 |
| 4.4 * EXPECTED SERVICE LIFE..... | 47 |
| 4.5 * Alternative RISK CONTROL measures or test methods for ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEMS..... | 47 |
| 4.6 * ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEM parts that contact the PATIENT..... | 47 |
| 4.7 * SINGLE FAULT CONDITION for ME EQUIPMENT..... | 48 |
| 4.8 * Components of ME EQUIPMENT..... | 48 |
| 4.9 * Use of COMPONENTS WITH HIGH-INTEGRITY CHARACTERISTICS in ME EQUIPMENT..... | 49 |
| 4.10 * Power supply..... | 50 |
| 4.11 Power input..... | 51 |
| 5 * General requirements for testing ME EQUIPMENT..... | 51 |
| 5.1 * TYPE TESTS..... | 51 |
| 5.2 * Number of samples..... | 52 |
| 5.3 Ambient temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure..... | 52 |
| 5.4 Other conditions..... | 52 |
| 5.5 Supply voltage, type of current, nature of supply, frequency..... | 52 |
| 5.6 Repairs and modifications..... | 53 |
| 5.7 * Humidity preconditioning treatment..... | 53 |
| 5.8 Sequence of tests..... | 54 |
| 5.9 * Determination of APPLIED PARTS and ACCESSIBLE PARTS..... | 54 |
| 6 * Classification of ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS..... | 57 |
| 6.1 General..... | 57 |
| 6.2 * Protection against electric shock..... | 57 |
| 6.3 Protection against harmful ingress of water or particulate matter..... | 57 |
| 6.4 Method(s) of sterilization..... | 57 |
| 6.5 Suitability for use in an OXYGEN RICH ENVIRONMENT..... | 57 |
| 6.6 * Mode of operation..... | 57 |
| 7 ME EQUIPMENT identification, marking and documents..... | 58 |
| 7.1 General..... | 58 |
| 7.2 Marking on the outside of ME EQUIPMENT or ME EQUIPMENT parts (see also Table C.1)..... | 59 |

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 7.3 | Marking on the inside of ME EQUIPMENT or ME EQUIPMENT parts (see also Table C.2) | 63 |
| 7.4 | Marking of controls and instruments (see also Table C.3)..... | 65 |
| 7.5 | SAFETY SIGNS | 67 |
| 7.6 | Symbols | 67 |
| 7.7 | Colours of the insulation of conductors | 68 |
| 7.8 | * Indicator lights and controls | 68 |
| 7.9 | ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS | 69 |
| 8 | * Protection against electrical HAZARDS from ME EQUIPMENT | 75 |
| 8.1 | Fundamental rule of protection against electric shock..... | 75 |
| 8.2 | Requirements related to power sources | 76 |
| 8.3 | Classification of APPLIED PARTS | 77 |
| 8.4 | Limitation of voltage, current or energy..... | 77 |
| 8.5 | Separation of parts..... | 80 |
| 8.6 | * Protective earthing, functional earthing and potential equalization of ME EQUIPMENT | 91 |
| 8.7 | LEAKAGE CURRENTS and PATIENT AUXILIARY CURRENTS | 94 |
| 8.8 | Insulation | 111 |
| 8.9 | * CREEPAGE DISTANCES and AIR CLEARANCES | 117 |
| 8.10 | Components and wiring | 132 |
| 8.11 | MAINS PARTS, components and layout | 133 |
| 9 | * Protection against MECHANICAL HAZARDS of ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS | 139 |
| 9.1 | MECHANICAL HAZARDS of ME EQUIPMENT | 139 |
| 9.2 | * MECHANICAL HAZARDS associated with moving parts..... | 139 |
| 9.3 | * MECHANICAL HAZARD associated with surfaces, corners and edges..... | 145 |
| 9.4 | * Instability HAZARDS | 145 |
| 9.5 | * Expelled parts HAZARD | 150 |
| 9.6 | Acoustic energy (including infra- and ultrasound) and vibration | 150 |
| 9.7 | * Pressure vessels and parts subject to pneumatic and hydraulic pressure..... | 151 |
| 9.8 | * MECHANICAL HAZARDS associated with support systems | 154 |
| 10 | * Protection against unwanted and excessive radiation HAZARDS | 159 |
| 10.1 | X-Radiation | 159 |
| 10.2 | Alpha, beta, gamma, neutron and other particle radiation | 160 |
| 10.3 | Microwave radiation | 160 |
| 10.4 | * Lasers..... | 161 |
| 10.5 | * Non-visible electromagnetic radiation | 161 |
| 10.6 | * Infrared radiation | 161 |
| 10.7 | * Ultraviolet radiation..... | 161 |
| 11 | Protection against excessive temperatures and other HAZARDS | 161 |
| 11.1 | * Excessive temperatures in ME EQUIPMENT..... | 161 |
| 11.2 | * Fire prevention..... | 165 |
| 11.3 | * Constructional requirements for fire ENCLOSURES of ME EQUIPMENT | 170 |
| 11.4 | * ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS intended for use with flammable anaesthetics | 173 |
| 11.5 | * ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS intended for use in conjunction with flammable agents | 173 |
| 11.6 | Overflow, spillage, leakage, ingress of water or particulate matter, cleaning, disinfection, sterilization and compatibility with substances used with the ME EQUIPMENT | 173 |

| | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| 11.7 | Biocompatibility of ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS | 175 |
| 11.8 | * Interruption of the power supply / SUPPLY MAINS to ME EQUIPMENT | 175 |
| 12 | * Accuracy of controls and instruments and protection against hazardous outputs | 176 |
| 12.1 | Accuracy of controls and instruments | 176 |
| 12.2 | USABILITY of ME EQUIPMENT | 176 |
| 12.3 | ALARM SYSTEMS | 176 |
| 12.4 | Protection against hazardous output..... | 176 |
| 13 | * HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS and fault conditions for ME EQUIPMENT | 177 |
| 13.1 | Specific HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS | 177 |
| 13.2 | SINGLE FAULT CONDITIONS | 179 |
| 14 | * PROGRAMMABLE ELECTRICAL MEDICAL SYSTEMS (PEMS) | 181 |
| 14.1 | * General..... | 184 |
| 14.2 | * Documentation..... | 185 |
| 14.3 | * RISK MANAGEMENT plan | 185 |
| 14.4 | * PEMS DEVELOPMENT LIFE-CYCLE | 185 |
| 14.5 | * Problem resolution..... | 185 |
| 14.6 | RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS..... | 186 |
| 14.7 | * Requirement specification..... | 186 |
| 14.8 | * Architecture | 186 |
| 14.9 | * Design and implementation..... | 187 |
| 14.10 | * VERIFICATION | 187 |
| 14.11 | * PEMS VALIDATION | 187 |
| 14.12 | * Modification | 188 |
| 14.13 | * PEMS intended to be incorporated into an IT-NETWORK | 188 |
| 15 | Construction of ME EQUIPMENT | 189 |
| 15.1 | * Arrangements of controls and indicators of ME EQUIPMENT..... | 189 |
| 15.2 | * Serviceability | 189 |
| 15.3 | Mechanical strength | 189 |
| 15.4 | ME EQUIPMENT components and general assembly..... | 193 |
| 15.5 | * MAINS SUPPLY TRANSFORMERS of ME EQUIPMENT and transformers providing separation in accordance with 8.5 | 198 |
| 16 | * ME SYSTEMS | 202 |
| 16.1 | * General requirements for the ME SYSTEMS | 202 |
| 16.2 | * ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS of an ME SYSTEM | 202 |
| 16.3 | * Power supply | 204 |
| 16.4 | ENCLOSURES | 204 |
| 16.5 | * SEPARATION DEVICES..... | 204 |
| 16.6 | * LEAKAGE CURRENTS..... | 204 |
| 16.7 | * Protection against MECHANICAL HAZARDS..... | 205 |
| 16.8 | Interruption of the power supply to parts of an ME SYSTEM | 206 |
| 16.9 | ME SYSTEM connections and wiring..... | 206 |
| 17 | * Electromagnetic compatibility of ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS | 208 |
| | Annex A (informative) General guidance and rationale..... | 209 |
| | Annex B (informative) Sequence of testing | 325 |
| | Annex C (informative) Guide to marking and labelling requirements for ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS..... | 329 |
| | Annex D (informative) Symbols on marking (see Clause 7) | 332 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Annex E (informative) Examples of the connection of the measuring device (MD) for measurement of the PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT and PATIENT AUXILIARY CURRENT (see 8.7)..... | 341 |
| Annex F (informative) Suitable measuring supply circuits..... | 343 |
| Annex G (normative) Protection against HAZARDS of ignition of flammable anaesthetic mixtures..... | 346 |
| Annex H (informative) PEMS structure, PEMS DEVELOPMENT LIFE-CYCLE and documentation..... | 361 |
| Annex I (informative) ME SYSTEMS aspects..... | 369 |
| Annex J (informative) Survey of insulation paths..... | 375 |
| Annex K (informative) Simplified PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT diagrams..... | 378 |
| Annex L (normative) Insulated winding wires for use without interleaved insulation..... | 381 |
| Annex M (normative) Reduction of pollution degrees..... | 384 |
| Bibliography..... | 385 |
| INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS..... | 390 |
| INDEX..... | 392 |
| | |
| Figure 1 – Detachable mains connection..... | 24 |
| Figure 2 – Example of the defined terminals and conductors..... | 25 |
| Figure 3 – Example of a CLASS I ME EQUIPMENT..... | 26 |
| Figure 4 – Example of a metal-enclosed CLASS II ME EQUIPMENT..... | 26 |
| Figure 5 – Schematic flow chart for component qualification (see 4.8)..... | 50 |
| Figure 6 – Standard test finger (see 5.9.2.1)..... | 55 |
| Figure 7 – Test hook (see 5.9.2.2)..... | 56 |
| Figure 8 – Test pin (see 8.4.2 d)..... | 79 |
| Figure 9 – Application of test voltage to bridged PATIENT CONNECTIONS for DEFIBRILLATION-PROOF APPLIED PARTS (see 8.5.5.1)..... | 88 |
| Figure 10 – Application of test voltage to individual PATIENT CONNECTIONS for DEFIBRILLATION-PROOF APPLIED PARTS (see 8.5.5.1)..... | 89 |
| Figure 11 – Application of test voltage to test the delivered defibrillation energy..... | 91 |
| Figure 12 – Example of a measuring device and its frequency characteristics..... | 96 |
| Figure 13 – Measuring circuit for EARTH LEAKAGE CURRENT of CLASS I ME EQUIPMENT, with or without APPLIED PART..... | 99 |
| Figure 14 – Measuring circuit for TOUCH CURRENT..... | 100 |
| Figure 15 – Measuring circuit for PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT from the PATIENT CONNECTION to earth..... | 101 |
| Figure 16 – Measuring circuit for PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT via the PATIENT CONNECTION(S) of an F-TYPE APPLIED PART to earth caused by an external voltage on the PATIENT CONNECTION(S)..... | 102 |
| Figure 17 – Measuring circuit for PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT from PATIENT CONNECTION(S) to earth caused by an external voltage on a SIGNAL INPUT/OUTPUT PART..... | 103 |
| Figure 18 – Measuring circuit for PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT from PATIENT CONNECTION(S) to earth caused by an external voltage on a metal ACCESSIBLE PART that is not PROTECTIVELY EARTHED..... | 104 |
| Figure 19 – Measuring circuit for PATIENT AUXILIARY CURRENT..... | 105 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 20 – Measuring circuit for total PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT with all PATIENT CONNECTIONS of all APPLIED PARTS of the same type (TYPE B APPLIED PARTS, TYPE BF APPLIED PARTS or TYPE CF APPLIED PARTS) connected together..... | 106 |
| Figure 21 – Ball-pressure test apparatus | 117 |
| Figure 22 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 1 | 129 |
| Figure 23 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 2 | 129 |
| Figure 24 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 3 | 129 |
| Figure 25 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 4 | 130 |
| Figure 26 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 5 | 130 |
| Figure 27 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 6 | 130 |
| Figure 28 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 7 | 130 |
| Figure 29 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 8 | 131 |
| Figure 30 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 9 | 131 |
| Figure 31 – CREEPAGE DISTANCE and AIR CLEARANCE – Example 10 | 131 |
| Figure 32 – Ratio between HYDRAULIC TEST PRESSURE and MAXIMUM EQUIPMENT PRESSURE..... | 153 |
| Figure 33 – Body upper-carriage module | 158 |
| Figure 34 – Spark ignition test apparatus..... | 167 |
| Figure 35 – Maximum allowable current I as a function of the maximum allowable voltage U measured in a purely resistive circuit in an OXYGEN RICH ENVIRONMENT | 168 |
| Figure 36 – Maximum allowable voltage U as a function of the capacitance C measured in a capacitive circuit used in an OXYGEN RICH ENVIRONMENT | 168 |
| Figure 37 – Maximum allowable current I as a function of the inductance L measured in an inductive circuit in an OXYGEN RICH ENVIRONMENT..... | 169 |
| Figure 38 – Baffle | 172 |
| Figure 39 – Area of the bottom of an ENCLOSURE as specified in 11.3 b) 1) | 173 |
| Figure 40 – Identification of MEANS OF PATIENT PROTECTION and MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION..... | 81 |
| Figure 41 – WORKING VOLTAGE measurement | 86 |
| Figure A.1 – Identification of ME EQUIPMENT, APPLIED PARTS and PATIENT CONNECTIONS in an ECG monitor | 214 |
| Figure A.2 – Example of the insulation of an F-TYPE APPLIED PART with the insulation incorporated in the ME EQUIPMENT | 215 |
| Figure A.3 – Identification of ME EQUIPMENT, APPLIED PARTS and PATIENT CONNECTIONS in a PATIENT monitor with invasive pressure monitoring facility | 215 |
| Figure A.4 – Identification of ME EQUIPMENT, APPLIED PARTS and PATIENT CONNECTIONS in a multifunction PATIENT monitor with invasive pressure monitoring facilities..... | 216 |
| Figure A.5 – Identification of APPLIED PARTS and PATIENT CONNECTIONS in an X-ray ME SYSTEM | 217 |
| Figure A.6 – Identification of ME EQUIPMENT, APPLIED PARTS and PATIENT CONNECTIONS in a transcutaneous electronic nerve stimulator (TENS) intended to be worn on the PATIENT’S belt and connected to electrodes applied to the PATIENT’S upper arm..... | 218 |
| Figure A.7 – Identification of ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEM, APPLIED PARTS and PATIENT CONNECTIONS in a personal computer with an ECG module | 219 |
| Figure A.8 – Illustration of the relationship of HAZARD, sequence of events, HAZARDOUS SITUATION and HARM | 222 |
| Figure A.9 – Example of PATIENT ENVIRONMENT..... | 227 |
| Figure A.10 – Floating circuit | 247 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure A.11 – Interruption of a power-carrying conductor between ME EQUIPMENT parts in separate ENCLOSURES..... | 249 |
| Figure A.13 – Allowable protective earth impedance where the fault current is limited | 264 |
| Figure A.14 – Probability of ventricular fibrillation | 270 |
| Figure A.15 – Example of a measuring circuit for the PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENT from a PATIENT CONNECTION to earth for ME EQUIPMENT with multiple PATIENT CONNECTIONS | 275 |
| Figure A.16 – Instability test conditions..... | 288 |
| Figure A.17 – Example of determining TENSILE SAFETY FACTOR using Table 21 | 294 |
| Figure A.18 – Example of determining design and test loads | 295 |
| Figure A.19 – Example of human body mass distribution | 295 |
| Figure A.20 – Relationship of the terms used to describe equipment, ACCESSORIES or equipment parts..... | 224 |
| Figure A.21 – Example of ME EQUIPMENT having two different functions on one common APPLIED PART circuit..... | 262 |
| Figure A.22 – Maximum allowable temperature for surfaces and APPLIED PARTS at higher altitudes | 300 |
| Figure A.23 – Example of the needed MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION between the terminals of an INTERNAL ELECTRICAL POWER SOURCE and a subsequent protective device..... | 317 |
| Figure A.24 – Example of Scenario 1 | 252 |
| Figure A.25 – Example of Scenario 2 | 253 |
| Figure A.26 – Procedure for determination of AIR CLEARANCE requirements IEC TR 62368-2:2019 [77], 5.4.2.1 (modified)..... | 257 |
| Figure E.1 – TYPE B APPLIED PART | 341 |
| Figure E.2 – TYPE BF APPLIED PART | 341 |
| Figure E.3 – TYPE CF APPLIED PART | 342 |
| Figure E.4 – PATIENT AUXILIARY CURRENT | 342 |
| Figure E.5 – Loading of the PATIENT CONNECTIONS if specified by the MANUFACTURER | 342 |
| Figure F.1 – Measuring supply circuit with one side of the SUPPLY MAINS at approximately earth potential..... | 343 |
| Figure F.2 – Measuring supply circuit with SUPPLY MAINS approximately symmetrical to earth potential..... | 343 |
| Figure F.3 – Measuring supply circuit for polyphase ME EQUIPMENT specified for connection to a polyphase SUPPLY MAINS | 344 |
| Figure F.4 – Measuring supply circuit for single-phase ME EQUIPMENT specified for connection to a polyphase SUPPLY MAINS | 344 |
| Figure F.5 – Measuring supply circuit for ME EQUIPMENT having a separate power supply unit or intended to receive its power from another equipment in an ME SYSTEM..... | 345 |
| Figure G.1– Maximum allowable current I_{ZR} as a function of the maximum allowable voltage U_{ZR} measured in a purely resistive circuit with the most flammable mixture of ether vapour with air | 352 |
| Figure G.2 – Maximum allowable voltage U_{ZC} as a function of the capacitance C_{max} measured in a capacitive circuit with the most flammable mixture of ether vapour with air..... | 353 |
| Figure G.3 – Maximum allowable current I_{ZL} as a function of the inductance L_{max} measured in an inductive circuit with the most flammable mixture of ether vapour with air..... | 353 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure G.4 – Maximum allowable current I_{ZR} as a function of the maximum allowable voltage U_{ZR} measured in a purely resistive circuit with the most flammable mixture of ether vapour with oxygen | 357 |
| Figure G.5 – Maximum allowable voltage U_{ZC} as a function of the capacitance C_{max} measured in a capacitive circuit with the most flammable mixture of ether vapour with oxygen..... | 358 |
| Figure G.6 – Maximum allowable current I_{ZL} as a function of the inductance L_{max} measured in an inductive circuit with the most flammable mixture of ether vapour with oxygen..... | 359 |
| Figure G.7 – Test apparatus | 360 |
| Figure H.1 – Examples of PEMS/ PESS structures | 362 |
| Figure H.2 – A PEMS DEVELOPMENT LIFE-CYCLE model | 363 |
| Figure H.3 – Not used..... | 365 |
| Figure H.4 – Example of potential parameters required to be specified for an IT-NETWORK..... | 368 |
| Figure I.1 – Example of the construction of a MULTIPLE SOCKET-OUTLET (MSO)..... | 373 |
| Figure I.2 – Examples of application of MULTIPLE SOCKET-OUTLETS (MSO)..... | 374 |
| Figure J.1 – Insulation example 1 | 375 |
| Figure J.2 – Insulation example 2 | 375 |
| Figure J.3 – Insulation example 3 | 375 |
| Figure J.4 – Insulation example 4 | 376 |
| Figure J.5 – Insulation example 5 | 376 |
| Figure J.6 – Insulation example 6 | 377 |
| Figure J.7 – Insulation example 7 | 377 |
| Figure K.1 – ME EQUIPMENT with an ENCLOSURE made of insulating material..... | 378 |
| Figure K.2 – ME EQUIPMENT with an F-TYPE APPLIED PART..... | 378 |
| Figure K.3 – ME EQUIPMENT with an APPLIED PART and a SIGNAL INPUT/OUTPUT PART | 379 |
| Figure K.4 – ME EQUIPMENT with a PATIENT CONNECTION of a TYPE B APPLIED PART that is not PROTECTIVELY EARTHED..... | 379 |
| Figure K.5 – ME EQUIPMENT with a PATIENT CONNECTION of a TYPE BF APPLIED PART that is not PROTECTIVELY EARTHED | 380 |
| | |
| Table 1 – Units outside the SI units system that may be used on ME EQUIPMENT | 66 |
| Table 2 – Colours and meanings of indicator lights and alarm indicator lights for ME EQUIPMENT | 69 |
| Table 3 – * Allowable values of PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENTS and PATIENT AUXILIARY CURRENTS under NORMAL CONDITION and SINGLE FAULT CONDITION..... | 97 |
| Table 4 – * Allowable values of PATIENT LEAKAGE CURRENTS under the special test conditions identified in 8.7.4.7 | 98 |
| Table 5 – Legends of symbols for Figure 9 to Figure 11, Figure 13 to Figure 20, Figure A.15, Annexes E and F | 107 |
| Table 6 – Test voltages for solid insulation forming a MEANS OF PROTECTION | 114 |
| Table 7 – Test voltages for MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION..... | 115 |
| Table 8 – Multiplication factors for AIR CLEARANCES for altitudes up to 5 000 m..... | 118 |
| Table 9 – Material group classification | 119 |
| Table 10 – MAINS TRANSIENT VOLTAGE..... | 120 |
| Table 11 – Not used | 121 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 12 – Minimum CREEPAGE DISTANCES and AIR CLEARANCES providing MEANS OF PATIENT PROTECTION | 122 |
| Table 13 – Minimum AIR CLEARANCES providing MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION from the MAINS PART | 123 |
| Table 14 – Additional AIR CLEARANCES for insulation in MAINS PARTS with PEAK WORKING VOLTAGES exceeding the peak value of the NOMINAL MAINS VOLTAGE ^a | 124 |
| Table 15 – Minimum AIR CLEARANCES for MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION in SECONDARY CIRCUITS..... | 125 |
| Table 16 – Minimum CREEPAGE DISTANCES providing MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION ^a | 126 |
| Table 17 – NOMINAL cross-sectional area of conductors of a POWER SUPPLY CORD | 135 |
| Table 18 – Testing of cord anchorages | 136 |
| Table 19 – MECHANICAL HAZARDS covered by this clause | 139 |
| Table 20 – Acceptable gaps ^a | 141 |
| Table 21 – Determination of TENSILE SAFETY FACTOR | 154 |
| Table 22 – Allowable maximum temperatures of parts..... | 162 |
| Table 23 – Allowable maximum temperatures for ACCESSIBLE PARTS that are likely to be touched | 162 |
| Table 24 – Allowable maximum temperatures for skin contact with ME EQUIPMENT APPLIED PARTS | 163 |
| Table 25 – Acceptable perforation of the bottom of an ENCLOSURE | 172 |
| Table 26 – * Temperature limits of motor windings | 182 |
| Table 27 – Maximum motor winding steady-state temperature | 184 |
| Table 28 – Mechanical strength test applicability | 190 |
| Table 29 – Drop height | 191 |
| Table 30 – Test torques for rotating controls..... | 197 |
| Table 31 – Maximum allowable temperatures of transformer windings under overload and short-circuit conditions at 25 °C (± 5 °C) ambient temperature | 199 |
| Table 32 – Test current for transformers | 200 |
| Table 33 – Test conditions for overtravel end stop test | 144 |
| Table 34 – Allowable maximum temperatures for ACCESSIBLE PARTS that are likely to be touched, but not intended to be touched to operate the ME EQUIPMENT | 178 |
| Table A.1 – Values of AIR CLEARANCE and CREEPAGE DISTANCE derived from Table 7 of IEC 61010-1:2001 and Table 12 | 279 |
| Table A.2 – CREEPAGE DISTANCES to avoid failure due to tracking from IEC 60664-1 | 280 |
| Table A.3 – Instability test conditions..... | 287 |
| Table A.4 – Allowable time exposure for level of acceleration | 290 |
| Table A.5 – Guidance on surface temperatures for ME EQUIPMENT that creates low temperatures (cools) for therapeutic purposes or as part of its operation | 299 |
| Table A.6 – Typical scenarios for the use of equipment complying with IEC 62368-1:2018 in ME EQUIPMENT | 252 |
| Table C.1– Marking on the outside of ME EQUIPMENT, ME SYSTEMS or their parts | 329 |
| Table C.2 – Marking on the inside of ME EQUIPMENT, ME SYSTEMS or their parts | 330 |
| Table C.3 – Marking of controls and instruments..... | 330 |
| Table C.4 – ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS, general..... | 330 |
| Table C.5 – ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS, instructions for use..... | 331 |
| Table D.1 – General symbols | 333 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table D.2 – SAFETY SIGNS | 338 |
| Table D.3 – General codes | 340 |
| Table G.1 – Gas-tightness of cord inlets | 355 |
| Table H.1 – Not used | 367 |
| Table I.1 – Some examples of ME SYSTEMS for illustration | 371 |
| Table L.1– Mandrel diameter | 382 |
| Table L.2 – Oven temperature | 382 |
| Table M.1 – Reduction of the pollution degree of internal environment through the use of additional protection | 384 |

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –

**Part 1: General requirements for basic safety
and essential performance**

FOREWORD

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This consolidated version of the official IEC Standard and its amendments has been prepared for user convenience.

IEC 60601-1 edition 3.2 contains the third edition (2005-12) [documents 62A/505A/FDIS and 62A/512/RVD], its amendment 1 (2012-07) [documents 62A/805/FDIS and 62A/820/RVD] and its amendment 2 (2020-08) [documents 62A/1389/FDIS and 62A/1404/RVD].

This Consolidated version includes the contents of the corrigenda 1 (2006-12) and 2 (2007-12), the contents of the corrigendum to Amendment 1 (2014-07), as well as the interpretation sheets 1 (2008-04), 2 (2009-01) and 3 (2013-05).

This Final version does not show where the technical content is modified by amendment 1. A separate Redline version with all changes highlighted is available in this publication.

International Standard IEC 60601-1 has been prepared by subcommittee 62A: Common aspects of electrical equipment used in medical practice, of IEC technical committee 62: Electrical equipment in medical practice.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition published in 1988, its Amendment 1 (1991) and Amendment 2 (1995), the second edition of IEC 60601-1-1 published in 2000 and the first edition of IEC 60601-1-4 published in 1996 and its Amendment 1 (1999). This edition constitutes a technical revision. This edition has been significantly restructured. Requirements in the electrical section have been further aligned with those for information technology equipment covered by IEC 60950-1 and a requirement for including a RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS has been added. For an expanded description of this revision, see Annex A.3.

This publication has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

In this standard the following print types are used:

- Requirements and definitions: in roman type.
- *Test specifications: in italic type.*
- Informative material appearing outside of tables, such as notes, examples and references: in smaller type. Normative text of tables is also in a smaller type.
- TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THIS STANDARD THAT HAVE BEEN DEFINED IN CLAUSE 3 AND ALSO GIVEN IN THE INDEX: IN SMALL CAPITALS.

In referring to the structure of this standard, the term

- “clause” means one of the seventeen numbered divisions within the table of contents, inclusive of all subdivisions (e.g. Clause 7 includes subclauses 7.1, 7.2, etc.);
- “subclause” means a numbered subdivision of a clause (e.g. 7.1, 7.2 and 7.2.1 are all subclauses of Clause 7).

References to clauses within this standard are preceded by the term “Clause” followed by the clause number. References to subclauses within this standard are by number only.

In this standard, the conjunctive “or” is used as an “inclusive or” so a statement is true if any combination of the conditions is true.

The verbal forms used in this standard conform to usage described in Annex G of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2. For the purposes of this standard, the auxiliary verb:

- “shall” means that compliance with a requirement or a test is mandatory for compliance with this standard;
- “should” means that compliance with a requirement or a test is recommended but is not mandatory for compliance with this standard;
- “may” is used to describe a permissible way to achieve compliance with a requirement or test.

An asterisk (*) as the first character of a title or at the beginning of a paragraph or table title indicates that there is guidance or rationale related to that item in Annex A.

The committee has decided that the contents of the base publication and its amendments will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC web site under "<http://webstore.iec.ch>" in the data related to the specific publication. At this date, the publication will be

- reconfirmed,
- withdrawn,
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

NOTE The attention of National Committees is drawn to the fact that equipment manufacturers and testing organizations may need a transitional period following publication of a new, amended or revised IEC or ISO publication in which to make products in accordance with the new requirements and to equip themselves for conducting new or revised tests. It is the recommendation of the committee that the content of this publication be adopted for mandatory implementation nationally not earlier than 3 years from the date of publication.

IMPORTANT – The “colour inside” logo on the cover page of this publication indicates that it contains colours which are considered to be useful for the correct understanding of its contents. Users should therefore print this publication using a colour printer.

INTRODUCTION

In 1976, IEC subcommittee 62A published the first edition of IEC/TR 60513, *Basic aspects of the safety philosophy for electrical equipment used in medical practice*. The first edition of IEC/TR 60513 provided the basis for developing:

- the first edition of IEC 60601-1 (the parent safety standard for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT);
- the IEC 60601-1-xx series of collateral standards for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT;
- the IEC 60601-2-xx series of particular standards for particular types of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT; and
- the IEC 60601-3-xx series of performance standards for particular types of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.

Aware of the need and the urgency for a standard covering electrical equipment used in medical practice, the majority of National Committees voted in 1977 in favour of the first edition of IEC 60601-1, based on a draft that at the time represented a first approach to the problem. The extent of the scope, the complexity of the equipment concerned, and the specific nature of some of the protective measures and the corresponding tests for verifying them, required years of effort in order to prepare this first standard, which can now be said to have served as a universal reference since its publication.

However, the frequent application of the first edition revealed room for improvement. These improvements were all the more desirable in view of the considerable success that this standard has enjoyed since its publication.

The careful work of revision subsequently undertaken and continued over a number of years resulted in the publication of the second edition in 1988. This edition incorporated all the improvements that could be reasonably expected up to that time. Further developments remained under constant study. The second edition was amended in 1991 and then again in 1995.

The original IEC approach was to prepare separate BASIC SAFETY and performance standards for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. This was a natural extension of the historical approach taken at the national and international level with other electrical equipment standards (e.g. those for domestic equipment), where BASIC SAFETY is regulated through mandatory standards but other performance specifications are regulated by market pressure. In this context, it has been said that, “The ability of an electric kettle to boil water is not critical to its safe use!”

It is now recognized that this is not the situation with many items of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, and RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS have to depend on standards to ensure ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE as well as BASIC SAFETY. Such areas include the accuracy with which the equipment controls the delivery of energy or therapeutic substances to the PATIENT, or processes and displays physiological data that will affect PATIENT management.

This recognition means that separating BASIC SAFETY and performance is somewhat inappropriate in addressing the HAZARDS that result from inadequate design of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. Many particular standards in the IEC 60601-2-xx series address a range of ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE requirements that cannot be directly evaluated by the RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION without applying such standards. (However, the current IEC 60601 series includes fewer requirements for ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE than for BASIC SAFETY).

In anticipation of a third edition of IEC 60601-1, IEC subcommittee 62A prepared a second edition of IEC/TR 60513 [12]¹⁾ in 1994. It was intended that the second edition of IEC/TR 60513 would provide guidance for developing this edition of IEC 60601-1, and for the further development of the IEC 60601-1-xx and IEC 60601-2-xx series.

In order to achieve consistency in international standards, address present expectations in the health care community and align with developments in IEC 60601-2-xx, the second edition of IEC/TR 60513 includes two major new principles:

- the first change is that the concept of “SAFETY” has been broadened from the BASIC SAFETY considerations in the first and second editions of IEC 60601-1 to include ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE matters, (e.g. the accuracy of physiological monitoring equipment). Application of this principle leads to the change of the title of this publication from “Medical electrical equipment, Part 1: General requirements for safety” in the second edition, to “Medical electrical equipment, Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance”;
- the second change is that, in specifying minimum safety requirements, provision is made for assessing the adequacy of the design PROCESS when this is the only practical method of assessing the safety of certain technologies such as programmable electronic systems. Application of this principle is one of the factors leading to introduction of a general requirement to carry out a RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS. In parallel with the development of the third edition of IEC 60601-1, a joint project with ISO/TC 210 resulted in the publication of a general standard for RISK MANAGEMENT of medical devices. Compliance with this edition of IEC 60601-1 requires that the MANUFACTURER have in place a RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS complying with parts of ISO 14971 (see 4.2).

This standard contains requirements concerning BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE that are generally applicable to MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. For certain types of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, these requirements are either supplemented or modified by the special requirements of a collateral or particular standard. Where particular standards exist, this standard should not be used alone.

Amendment 1 to this standard is intended to address:

- issues identified by National Committees and other interested parties since the publication of IEC 60601-1:2005;
- the way in which RISK MANAGEMENT has been introduced into IEC 60601-1:2005; and
- the way the concept of ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE is used in IEC 60601-1:2005.

Throughout this document, there are many references to, and requirements incorporated from IEC 60950-1. Some of these requirements are derived from IEC 60950-1. For example, the requirements for spaces filled by insulating compound in 8.9.3. In other cases, the requirements are incorporated by a normative reference to IEC 60950-1:2005. For example, the requirements for solid insulation forming a MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION in 8.5.1.3. The requirements incorporated by reference are primarily found in Clause 8 of this document, including many of the tables used to determine the requirements for MEANS OF PROTECTION, primarily MEANS OF OPERATOR PROTECTION and INSULATION CO-ORDINATION. The requirements incorporated by reference are addressed in Amendment 2. The derived requirements will be addressed during the development of the fourth edition of this document.

1) Figures in square brackets refer to the Bibliography.

INTRODUCTION TO AMENDMENT 1

The third edition of IEC 60601-1 was published in 2005. At the time of publication, there were 94 National Committee comments on the 2nd CDV and the FDIS that were deferred to a future amendment/revision. Each of their deferred comments was captured in an Issue Sheet by the SC 62A secretariat. By the time of the Auckland meeting in April 2008, the Subcommittees had developed two Interpretation Sheets and the SC 62A secretariat has received an additional 15 issues from National Committees and other interested parties.

At the Auckland meeting, IEC/TC 62 approved a project to develop the 1st amendment to IEC 60601-1:2005 based on the issues outstanding at the time. The TC approved developing the 1st amendment with a view to addressing outstanding issues, including but not limited to:

- those listed in 62A/593/DC and 62A/602/INF;
- the way in which risk management has been introduced into IEC 60601-1:2005; and
- the way the concept of essential performance is used in IEC 60601-1:2005.

Since the Auckland meeting, the secretariat has received 73 additional issues from National Committees or other interested parties for a total of 182 Issues Sheets. This amendment is intended to address those issues.

INTRODUCTION TO AMENDMENT 2

The third edition of IEC 60601-1 was published in 2005 and amended in 2012. Since the publication of IEC 60601-1:2005/AMD1:2012, the IEC Subcommittee (SC) 62A Secretariat has been collecting issues from a variety of sources including comments from National Committees and questions submitted to IEC/SC 62A/Working Group (WG) 14. At the November 2015 meeting of IEC/SC 62A in Kobe, Japan, the subcommittee initiated a process to identify high-priority issues that need to be considered in Amendment 2 and should not wait until the fourth edition of IEC 60601-1, which is presently targeted for publication sometime after 2024.

Those issues selected for inclusion on the final "short list" to be addressed in Amendment 2 were those approved by a 2/3 majority of the National Committees present and voting at the Frankfurt meeting of SC 62A. At the meeting held on 10 October 2016, 109 items were presented to the National Committees present. A total of 78 items received the required 2/3 majority of the National Committees present and voting and were included in the "short list" for consideration in preparing Amendment 2. All remaining issues have been placed on a "long list" for consideration in the fourth edition of IEC 60601-1.

The "short list" of issues was documented in the design specification for Amendment 2. The responsible expert groups were directed to consider each issue assigned to it in Clause 6 of the design specification and develop an appropriate solution for the identified problem. That final solution in this amendment can encompass any technical solution proposed by the author of the issue or it can involve a different solution developed by the expert group. The expert group can also have recommended that no change to the standard was justified by the problem statement.

Because this is an amendment to the 2005 edition of IEC 60601-1, the style in force at the time of publication of IEC 60601-1 has been applied to this amendment. The style specified in ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2:2018 has only been applied when implementing the new style guidance would not result in additional editorial changes. For example, notes to definitions are designated as "NOTE" rather than "Note to entry" in Clause 3.

Users of this document should note that when constructing the dated references to specific elements in a standard, such as definitions, amendments are only referenced if they modified

the text being cited. For example, if a reference is made to a definition that has not been modified by an amendment, then the reference to the amendment is not included in the dated reference.

MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT –

Part 1: General requirements for basic safety and essential performance

1 Scope, object and related standards

1.1 * Scope

This International Standard applies to the BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE of MEDICAL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT and MEDICAL ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS, hereafter referred to as ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS.

If a clause or subclause is specifically intended to be applicable to ME EQUIPMENT only, or to ME SYSTEMS only, the title and content of that clause or subclause will say so. If that is not the case, the clause or subclause applies both to ME EQUIPMENT and to ME SYSTEMS, as relevant.

HAZARDS inherent in the intended physiological function of ME EQUIPMENT or ME SYSTEMS within the scope of this standard are not covered by specific requirements in this standard except in 7.2.13 and 8.4.1.

NOTE 1 See also 4.2.

The IEC 60601 series does not apply to:

- in vitro diagnostic equipment that does not fall within the definition of ME EQUIPMENT, which is covered by the IEC 61010 series [61];
- implantable parts of active implantable medical devices covered by the ISO 14708 series [69]; or
- medical gas pipeline systems covered by ISO 7396-1 [68].

NOTE 2 ISO 7396-1 applies the requirement of IEC 60601-1-8 to certain monitoring and ALARM SIGNALS.

1.2 Object

The object of this standard is to specify general requirements and to serve as the basis for particular standards.

1.3 * Collateral standards

In the IEC 60601 series, collateral standards specify general requirements for BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE applicable to:

- a subgroup of ME EQUIPMENT (e.g. radiological equipment);
- a specific characteristic of all ME EQUIPMENT not fully addressed in this standard.

Applicable collateral standards shall apply together with this standard.

NOTE 1 When evaluating compliance with IEC 60601-1, it is permissible to independently assess compliance with the collateral standards.

NOTE 2 When declaring compliance with IEC 60601-1, the declarer should specifically list the collateral standards that have been applied. This allows the reader of the declaration to understand which collateral standards were part of the evaluation.

NOTE 3 Collateral standards in the IEC 60601 family are numbered IEC 60601-1-xx. The IEC maintains a catalogue of valid International Standards. Users of this standard should consult this catalogue at "<http://webstore.iec.ch>" to determine which collateral standards have been published.

1.4 * Particular standards

In the IEC 60601 series, particular standards specify BASIC SAFETY and ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCE requirements for the particular ME EQUIPMENT and ME SYSTEMS. Particular standards may modify, replace or delete requirements contained in this standard and