
Recommendations for
The presentation of
technical information about
products and services in the
construction industry

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The following BSI references relate to the work on this standard:
Committee reference OC/20/10/14. Draft for comment 71/80107

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The Documentation Standards Committee, under whose supervision these recommendations were prepared, consists of representatives from the following Government departments and scientific, technical and professional organizations:

- | | |
|---|--|
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| *Library Association | |

The Government departments and scientific, technical and professional organizations marked with an asterisk in the above list, together with the following, were directly represented on the committee entrusted with the preparation of these recommendations:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Agreement Board | London College of Printing |
| Association of Building Centres | Modular Society |
| British Association of Industrial Editors | National Building Agency |
| British Cartographic Society | National Building and Allied Hardware Manufacturers Federation |
| BSI Standards Associates Section | National Council of Building Material Producers |
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| Department of the Environment: Building Research Establishment | Society of Technical Publication Contractors |
| Institute of Linguists | |

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Recommendations for The presentation of technical information about products and services in the construction industry

Amendments issued since publication

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Foreword

The publication of these recommendations marks another stage in a long campaign to improve the presentation of product information in the construction industry. The campaign began many years ago with the introduction of standard paper sizes and has gradually been extended to presentation and content. In 1957 the Royal Institute of British Architects and The Building Centre sponsored the first of a series of competitions for technical literature for the construction industry. In 1970 the Department of the Environment, as part of its work on data co-ordination, commissioned a report on which these recommendations are based.

The need for standardization of certain aspects of presentation covered by these recommendations may be open to question. Recommendations which deal with such matters are cast in conditional terms ('should'). Imperative terms ('shall') are used for requirements which, in the opinion of the committee which prepared the recommendations, are essential if clear presentation is to be achieved.

Good technical literature provides potential purchasers and users of a product with full information about that product, clearly presented in a way which makes the information easy to file and retrieve. These recommendations give guidance to manufacturers and others concerned in the preparation of technical literature to help them to improve the quality of the information they provide. A standard arrangement enables architects, builders, designers and other users to compare similar products to decide which is the most suitable for particular requirements. Good presentation depends upon the quality of technical writing, illustrations, graphic design and knowledge of the product. The recommendations are not intended to create stereotyped literature or to restrict freedom of design, except where a certain arrangement is essential for clear presentation.

Although good technical information is a part of sales literature, it should be kept quite separate from advertising literature. This is in the manufacturer's interest because those who want to know more about a product may be irritated if advertising copy interrupts the continuity of technical information. Advertising copy and technical information should never, therefore, appear on the same sheet though they may, if the producer wishes, be put together in one folder.

To be effective, a plan of technical documentation must relate to the activities carried out by the people who use the information and these recommendations provide a framework for the achievement of this end. The full range of documents described here will not be required for every product; organizations should select those which are appropriate to the product being described.

Recommendations for

The presentation of technical information about products and services in the construction industry

1. Scope

This British Standard makes recommendations for the content and presentation of publications which give technical information about products and services for the construction industry. Although the recommendations apply specifically to printed documents, much of Clause 3 and the appendices can be used to organize information presented in other forms, e.g. magnetic tape, paper tape, microform. Microfiche is at present considered the most suitable of available microforms for information issued by manufacturers for library and desk-side use. Aperture cards are suitable for information issued as discrete units (e.g. application details and standard drawings) for easy replacement and for printing for use in contract documentation. Clause 4 gives guidance on the identification of microfiches and aperture cards.

NOTE. The titles of the British Standards and special publications referred to in this standard are given on the inside back cover.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard the following definitions apply:

- (1) *Aperture card*. A card, usually of a size suitable for use in data processing systems, with a rectangular hole or holes specifically designed to hold a frame or frames of microfilm.
- (2) *Book*. A document which has covers and a spine.
- (3) *Booklet*. A document which has covers but no spine.
- (4) *Document*. A self-contained publication, sufficiently complete to be comprehended on its own.
- (5) *Microfiche*. A transparent, flat, rectangular sheet of photographic film bearing a number of micro-images arranged in horizontal and vertical rows. The microfiche normally displays bibliographic information about the copied document in a size large enough to be read by the naked eye.
- (6) *Pamphlet*. A sheet or sheets without covers or spine.
- (7) *Product*. Any material or item of any complexity from raw material to a complete engineering system, which is offered for sale. The term includes services having no material content.
- (8) *Product group*. Products having either a similar form (e.g. tiles) or performing a similar function in use (e.g. floor finishes), irrespective of material. Products made from the same materials or produced by the same manufacturer should not be regarded as forming product groups unless they conform to this definition. Products form a product group when they can be grouped together under one classification only, from either Table 1 or Table 2 of the CI/SfB system (see 4.3.1).

3. Content

3.1 Types of document

The two basic types of document are Part Documents (see 3.5) and Main Documents (see 3.6). The former are intended for use when an organization wishes to provide only the information essential for a specific user activity (e.g. selection, repair). The latter are intended as comprehensive reference documents built up from collections of the data contained in Part Documents. Organizations need not produce a full range of documents but should select those which are appropriate to the product being described.

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3.2 Content of documents

Each document, except Product Lists and Selectors, should normally contain information relating to one product. A Main Document may however relate to several products if the Part Documents for each product are separately available, or if:

- (1) it is designed so that users can divide it into separate sections each covering only one product group;
- (2) it is designed so that Application Details, Sitework Instructions/Recommendations and Instructions/Recommendations to User can be transferred direct to project documentation.

3.3 Quality of data

The information given should be supported by quoting results of authoritative tests or by reference to examples in use.

3.4 Sequence of data

Specific data, including test results, should be grouped under the headings and appear in the sequence given in Appendix A. This is necessary for ease of reference and comparison.

3.5 Part Documents

Part Documents, with the exception of Product Data Sheets, provide information principally dealing with the subject matter of one master heading (see Appendix B). The following are the Part Documents which should be used. They shall comply with Appendix C, which sets out details of purpose, data, illustrations and form. The titles given below shall be used only for such documents:

- (1) Product List
- (2) Product Selector
- (3) Product Data Sheet
- (4) Range Lists
- (5) Samples and Facsimiles
- (6) Design Data
- (7) Application Details
- (8) Specification
- (9) Sitework Instructions/Recommendations
- (10) Instructions/Recommendations to User
- (11) Repair and Servicing Instructions/Recommendations
- (12) Price Lists
- (13) Supply Guide
- (14) Technical Services Guide
- (15) List of References

All Part Documents should begin with the data necessary to identify unequivocally the products described.

Attention is drawn to BS 4884 : Part 1, which describes further categories of information which may be particularly relevant in the case of mechanical and electrical plant.

3.6 Main Documents

A Main Document is a collection of data given in Part Documents, together with introductory material and indexes, and, if required, supplementary material, presented in the order given in Appendix A and Appendix C. Main Documents shall be either:

- (1) based on a collection of Part Documents,
- or (2) specially printed.

All Main Documents should begin with the data necessary to identify unequivocally the products described. They shall comply with Appendix C, which sets out details of purpose, data, illustrations and form. Additional information or Part Documents may be included. The titles given below shall be used only to describe documents

which comply with (1) or (2) above:

- Product Catalogue
- Product Handbook
- Product Compendium.

Where a Main Document is in the form of a book or booklet, price lists and lists of suppliers' addresses may, for ease of updating, be separate documents. In such cases provision should be made for retaining the lists within the covers of the Main Document.

3.7 Other documents

Other technical documents, e.g. case studies, reports, educational texts, may be issued for purposes different from those listed in 3.5 or 3.6. They need not form part of the Main Document but should conform to Clauses 4, 5 and 6 of this standard.

4. Identification

4.1 Organization

4.1.1 Name. The name of the organization (manufacturer, supplier, trade association) shall appear in a consistent position in the layout of all its documents. Front covers and headings may carry an abbreviated form of name, either in words, initials or as a logotype, with or without a symbol, providing the name of the organization appears in full at least once on each document.

4.1.2 Initials and abbreviations. Where the name of the organization is represented by initials, these may be explained on the inside front cover of books, booklets and binders, and at the foot of page 1 of pamphlets. If an abbreviated form of the name is used in the body of the text, the name should be spelt out in full on the first occasion that it occurs.

4.2 Product

4.2.1 Name. The brand name of the product should be given in full. Where several products share a brand name each individual product should be separately identified. The product name should appear in a consistent position in the layout.

4.2.2 Amplification of name. If the product name does not make the nature of the product clear, it should be followed on front covers and in headings by a concise descriptive phrase. The terms used in the description should be taken from appropriate British Standards and should not conflict with the CI/SfB classification printed on the document. The description may state size, material, form and purpose.

4.2.3 Other identification information. If a document does not deal with the whole of a product range, the types, grades and qualities dealt with should be given at the beginning of the text.

4.3 Product Classification and Indexing

4.3.1 CI/SfB Classification. All documents should carry a CI/SfB classification* reference, assigned in accordance with CI/SfB procedures. The reference should be printed in a special box (see Fig. 1) on the front cover of books and booklets (and binders where applicable) and in the heading zone of pamphlets. It should also be given on the spine of books (and binders where applicable) and on the back cover of booklets (see Fig. 2). An amplified classification may be printed on the inside front cover of books, booklets and binders, and in the left-hand margin of pamphlets, parallel with the margin, avoiding punch holes and reading from bottom to top (see Fig. 1).

4.3.2 Keywords. If keywords are given, they should be selected from the *Construction Industry Thesaurus*† and printed on the inside front cover of books, booklets and binders, and in the left-hand margin of pamphlets, parallel with the margin, avoiding punch holes and reading from bottom to top (see Fig. 1).

*Information on CI/SfB classification is available from the RIBA SfB Agency Reference Service, 86 Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3DE.

†Information about the *Construction Industry Thesaurus* is available from the Library, Faculty of Construction Technology and Design, Polytechnic of the South Bank, Ferndale Road, London SW4 7SB.

[illegible]

Full document details: BS 4940:1973

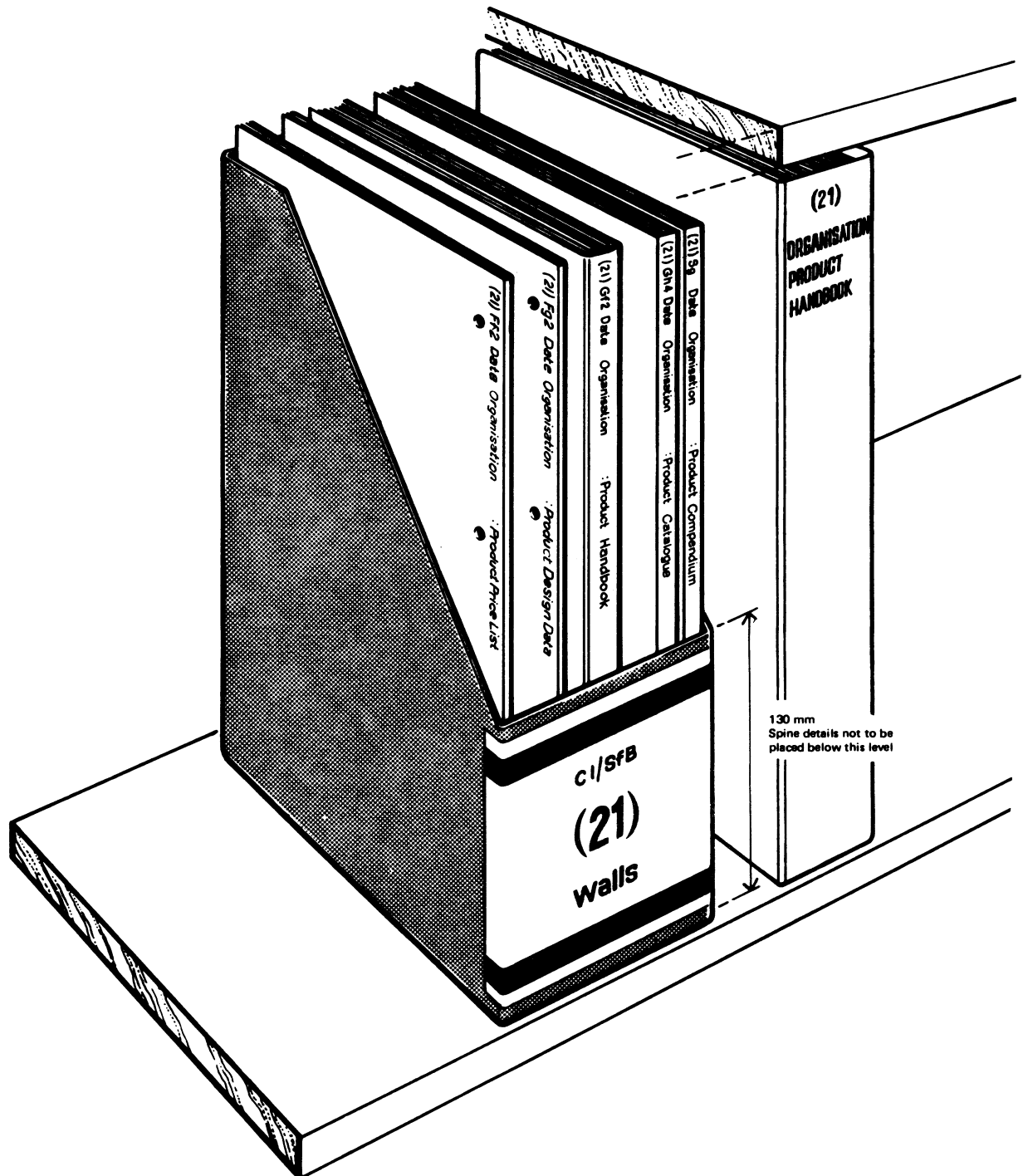


Fig. 2. Spine details