

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

**ISO**  
**8439**

First edition  
1990-10-15

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## **Forms design — Basic layout**

*Conception des formulaires — Disposition de base*



Reference number  
ISO 8439:1990(E)

## 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.

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.

International Standard ISO 8439 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 154, *Documents and data elements in administration, commerce and industry*, in collaboration with the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

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International Organization for Standardization  
Case Postale 56 • CH-1211 Genève 20 • Switzerland

Printed in Switzerland

## **Introduction**

This International Standard aims at the creation of uniformity in the design of forms in order to facilitate completion and information retrieval.

The principles established in this International Standard will form the basis for future application standards.

## Forms design — Basic layout

### 1 Scope

This International Standard specifies overall sizes, image areas, their division and data fields for forms intended for use within administration, commerce and industry.

### 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 currently valid International Standards.

ISO 216: 1975, *Writing paper and certain classes of printed matter — Trimmed sizes — A and B series*.

ISO 353: 1975, *Processed writing paper and certain classes of printed matter — Method of expression of dimensions*.

ISO 3535: 1977, *Forms design sheet and layout chart*.

ISO 4882: 1979, *Office machines and data processing equipment — Line spacings and character spacings*.

ISO 6422: 1985, *Layout key for trade documents*.

### 3 Definitions

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

**3.1 basic depth spacing; bds:** The preferred line spacing of 4,233 mm (1/6 in) in accordance with ISO 4882.

**3.2 basic width spacing; bws:** The preferred character spacing of 2,54 mm (1/10 in) in accordance with ISO 4882.

**3.3 data field:** Specified area used for a particular category of data.

**3.4 form:** Data carrier designed to carry a visible record of data entries.

**3.5 image area:** A predetermined area within which information can be entered for subsequent reproduction, storage or transmission.

**3.6 issuer (of a document):** Institution, enterprise or person having issued a document and, by signing or otherwise, takes responsibility for the contents of the document.

**3.7 margin:** Space between an edge of the form and its adjacent image area.

### 4 Overall sizes, margins and image areas

The primary overall sizes of this International Standard are A4 and A5L in accordance with ISO 216 and ISO 353. In conformity with annex A of ISO 3535 the following measurements apply:

Left-hand margin 20 mm  $\pm$  1,0 mm

Top margin 10 mm  $\pm$  1,0 mm

Image area for A4 size 183 mm  $\times$  280 mm

Image area for A5L size 183 mm  $\times$  131 mm

NOTE 1 When applicable, this standard may also be used with other A-sizes contained in ISO 216 or with commonly used non-ISO standardized sizes.

When document contents are to be exchanged between partners using different paper sizes, care should be taken that no information be placed outside the image area common to the paper sizes used.

## 5 Division of image area

### 5.1 Vertical division

The image area is divided into strips. The division and the numbering of the strips shall be in accordance with annexes A and B of ISO 3535.

### 5.2 Horizontal division

The image area is divided into columns in accordance with annex A of ISO 3535, which depicts an A4 image area, divided into 72 basic columns.

## 6 Data fields

The image area is commonly divided into data fields, of which Issuer field, Reference field and Address field occur frequently.

**6.1 Issuer field** is an area for the identification of the issuer of a document (name, logotype, etc.) and, if required, department of attending officer.

Further issuer particulars (postal address, telephone number, telex and telefax addresses, etc.) which cannot be provided in the main field should be placed in an additional issuer field, preferably at the bottom of the form.

**6.2 Reference field** is an area for document identifier (document name), document code, dates and other references.

**6.3 Address field** is an area reserved for one or two addresses.

## 7 Examples

### 7.1 Figure 1

For reference and to facilitate a standard tabulation, the width of the image area may be subdivided. Image areas having a width of 72 bws (183 mm) may be divided into 8 columns, each 9 bws wide. This is shown in figure 1, where the column rules are designated C0 to C8.

### 7.2 Figure 2

Figure 2 shows an example of the upper part of a form having an image area width of 72 bws (183 mm) and containing Issuer field, Reference field and Address field. In this example, the strips marked 9 to 17 constitute the Address field. Strip no. 09 is reserved for the heading of the address. In documents designed to be placed in window envelopes, strips nos. 16 and 17 are left blank.

NOTE 2 In the United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents (ISO 6422) only strips 10 to 14 are used for address particulars.

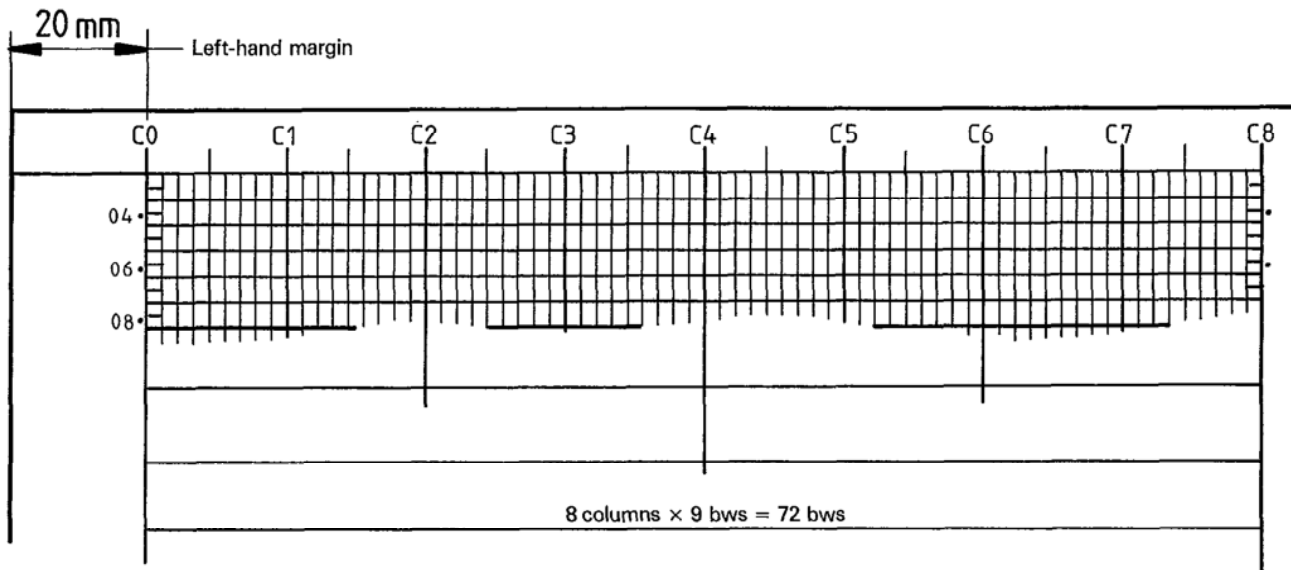


Figure 1 — Example of horizontal division of image area — Column rules and their designations — Size reduction, approximately 80 %

Dimensions in millimetres

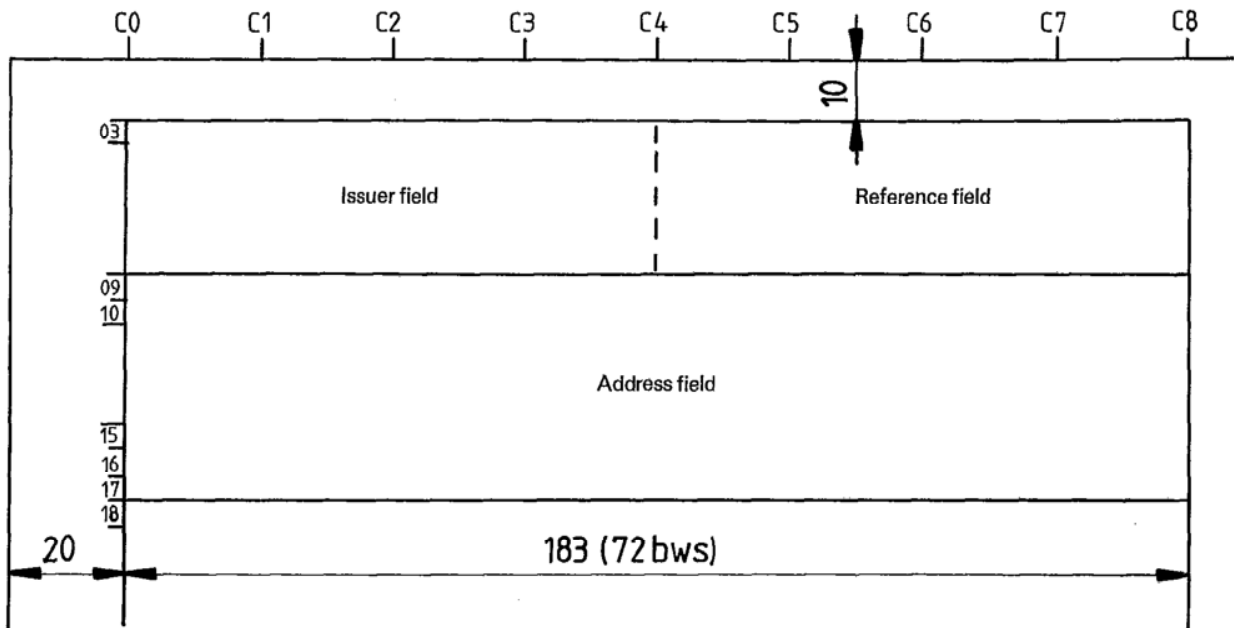


Figure 2 — Example of layout of data fields — Size reduction, approximately 80 %

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**UDC 651.71**

**Descriptors:** documentation, forms (paper), specifications, dimensions, design.

Price based on 3 pages

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