

International Patent Classification

Ninth Edition (2009)
Core Level

Volume 5
Guide



World Intellectual Property Organization

This publication of the eighth edition (2006) constitutes the core level of the authentic English version of the Classification provided for in the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification (of 1971). The version of the Classification contained in this edition represents the result of the revision of the previous seventh edition and the reform of the Classification which was carried out, from 1999 to 2005, by the Committee of Experts set up under the said Agreement. The eighth edition (2006) entered into force on January 1, 2006.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means (electronically, mechanically, by photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

WIPO PUBLICATION No. 560E5/8
ISBN 92-805-1442-3 (Vol. 5)

WIPO 2005

GUIDE

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs
I. FOREWORD	1 – 18
OBJECTIVES OF THE IPC	6 – 7
HISTORY OF THE IPC	8 – 10
REFORM OF THE IPC	11 – 14
ASSISTANCE IN THE USE OF THE CLASSIFICATION	15 – 18
II. LAYOUT OF CLASSIFICATION SYMBOLS	19 – 23
SECTION	19
CLASS	20
SUBCLASS	21
GROUP	22
COMPLETE CLASSIFICATION SYMBOL	23
III. HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE OF THE CLASSIFICATION	24 – 33
PRINCIPLE OF HIERARCHY	25 – 28
TWO LEVELS OF THE IPC	29 – 33
Core Level	30 – 31
Advanced Level	32 – 33
IV. PRESENTATION OF CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES	34 – 41
ORDER OF MAIN GROUPS	35
GUIDANCE HEADINGS	36
PRESENTATION OF TITLES	37
REFERENCES	38 – 40
Functions of References	39
Use and Interpretation of References	40
NOTES	41
V. USER INFORMATION	42 – 52
INDICATION OF CHANGES WITH RESPECT TO PREVIOUS EDITIONS	42 – 43
ELECTRONIC LAYER OF THE IPC	44 – 52
Classification Definitions	45 – 47
Informative References	48
Chemical Formulae and Graphic Illustrations	49 – 51
Presentation of Main Groups in a Standardised Sequence	52
VI. TERMINOLOGY	53 – 66
STANDARD EXPRESSIONS	53 – 65

“Covered” or “Provided for”	54
Expressions Used to Indicate Residual Subject Matter	55 – 57
Expressions Used to Indicate Combination Subject Matter	58
“i.e.”, “e.g.”	59 – 60
“A and B”, “A or B”, “Either A or B, but not Both”	61
“In General”, “Per se”, “Specially Adapted for”	62 – 64
“Or the Like”	65
GLOSSARY	66
VII. SCOPE OF PLACES	67 – 74
SUBCLASSES	69 – 70
MAIN GROUPS	71
SUBGROUPS	72 – 74
VIII. PRINCIPLES OF THE CLASSIFICATION	75 – 101
INVENTION INFORMATION	77 – 78
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	79 – 80
TECHNICAL SUBJECTS OF INVENTIONS	81 – 82
PLACES IN THE CLASSIFICATION FOR TECHNICAL SUBJECTS OF INVENTIONS	83 – 84
FUNCTION-ORIENTED AND APPLICATION-ORIENTED PLACES	85 – 87
CLASSIFICATION OF TECHNICAL SUBJECTS OF INVENTIONS	88 – 101
General Observations	88 – 91
Categories of Subject Matter not Explicitly Provided for in Classification	
Titles	92
Chemical Compounds	93
Chemical Mixtures or Compositions	94
Preparation or Treatment of Compounds	95
Apparatus or Processes	96
Articles of Manufacture	97
Multistep Processes, Industrial Plants	98
Details, Constructional Parts	99
General Chemical Formulae	100
Combinatorial Libraries	101
IX. MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATION; HYBRID SYSTEMS	102 – 114
MULTI-ASPECT CLASSIFICATION OF TECHNICAL SUBJECTS	105 – 106
SCHEMES FOR SECONDARY CLASSIFICATION	107
HYBRID SYSTEMS; INDEXING SCHEMES	108 – 112
APPLICATION OF INDEXING CODES	113 – 114
X. OBLIGATORY CLASSIFICATION; NON-OBLIGATORY CLASSIFICATION AND INDEXING	115 – 134
GENERAL APPROACH	115 – 119
Obligatory Classification	118
Non-obligatory Classification; Non-obligatory Indexing	119

CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR PATENT DOCUMENTS AT DIFFERENT PUBLICATION LEVELS	120 – 134
Classification of Patents Granted After Search and Examination	121 – 123
Classification of Searched but Unexamined Patent Documents, e.g., Patent Applications	124 – 126
Classification of Unsearched Patent Documents	127 – 130
General Observations	131 – 134
XI. RULES FOR SELECTING CLASSIFICATION PLACES	135 – 155
SELECTING A SUBCLASS	136 – 138
SELECTING A GROUP	139 – 140
COMMON RULE	141 – 145
PRIORITY RULES	146 – 154
First Place Priority Rule	147 – 150
Last Place Priority Rule	151 – 154
SPECIAL RULES	155
XII. PRESENTATION OF CLASSIFICATION SYMBOLS AND INDEXING CODES ON PATENT DOCUMENTS	156 – 161
XIII. SPECIAL CLASSIFICATION PLACES FOR SUBJECT MATTER NOT ADEQUATELY COVERED IN THE IPC	162 – 165
XIV. USE OF THE IPC FOR SEARCH PURPOSES	166 – 178
DIFFERENT KINDS OF SEARCH	166
PREPARING FOR A SEARCH	167
DEFINING A FIELD OF SEARCH	168 – 178
XV. MASTER CLASSIFICATION DATABASE	179 – 182
XVI. GLOSSARY	183 – 187
CLASSIFICATION TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS	183
TECHNICAL TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS USED IN THE CLASSIFICATION	184 – 187

