



BSI Standards Publication

**Photovoltaic (PV) modules through the life cycle  
– Environmental health and safety (EH&S) risk  
assessment – General principles and nomenclature**

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**Photovoltaic (PV) modules through the life cycle – Environmental health and safety (EH&S) risk assessment – General principles and nomenclature**

INTERNATIONAL  
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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

**PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) MODULES THROUGH THE LIFE CYCLE –  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (EH&S) RISK ASSESSMENT –****General principles and nomenclature****FOREWORD**

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IEC TS 62994, which is a technical specification, has been prepared by IEC technical committee 82: Solar photovoltaic energy systems.

The text of this technical specification is based on the following documents:

Enquiry draft	Report on voting
82/1370/DTS	82/1504/RVDTS

Full information on the voting for the approval of this technical specification can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

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

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

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## INTRODUCTION

This Technical Specification establishes definitions of terms of environmental health and safety (EH&S) risk assessment and also basic principles and general methods for the EH&S risk assessment for the PV module through its life cycle.

EH&S risk assessment is a method to characterize and evaluate potential adverse impacts to human health or environment in order to develop policies to control and reduce them. Although PV technologies have environmental advantages over conventional energy technologies, PV modules can contain some hazardous materials. Therefore, EH&S risk assessment of PV modules is very important for the safe and sustainable manufacture, use, and end-of-life treatment of PV modules.

Though there are many standards relating to EH&S and risk assessment, there is no published IEC standard for the EH&S risk assessment of the PV module at present.

This technical specification was developed in cooperation with IEA PVPS task 12 (PV Environmental, Health and Safety Activities). The objectives of the task are to 'quantify the environmental profile of PV in comparison to other energy technologies' and 'to define and address EH&S and sustainability issues that are important for PV market growth'. IEA PVPS task 12 and IEC TS 62994 Project team had joint meetings and established a liaison officer to work on this technical specification on the EH&S for the PV.

# **PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) MODULES THROUGH THE LIFE CYCLE – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (EH&S) RISK ASSESSMENT –**

## **General principles and nomenclature**

### **1 Scope**

This document specifies definitions of terms and introduces evaluation methods for EH&S risk assessment for the PV module over the product life cycle. Environmental health and safety (EH&S) risk assessment is a method to characterize and evaluate potential adverse impacts to human health or environment and make it possible to take measures to reduce them. EH&S risk assessment of PV modules is very important for the safe and sustainable manufacture, use, and end of life treatment of PV modules. The definition of terms can be applied to the EH&S risk assessment through the life cycle of PV modules. Generally, evaluation methods for the EH&S risk assessment can be divided in two cases:

- ordinary foreseen routine operation, in which life cycle assessment method is applied;
- abnormal non-routine operation, in which risk assessment method is applied.

The scope of the two general cases is described below.

When assessing the environmental impacts of routine operation of PV electricity production with life cycle assessment, the product system includes the manufacturing phase, the use phase and the end of life phase (see Figure 1). Electronic installation, mounting structure and power conversion equipment (such as inverters) are included as part of the PV system to be analysed.

When assessing the risk of non-routine operation of PV modules, the system analysed is limited to the PV module, its supply chain, operation and end of life treatment, and its direct electrical and mechanical interfaces with the balance of system, i.e. the electric installation, mounting structure and inverters.