

## ISO 8601 - rule for defining weeknumbers

ISO is the International Organization for Standardization. ISO has not sanctioned an alternative to the Gregorian Calendar currently used by most of the world. But it has provided standard notations for recording Gregorian dates, one of which dispenses with months. The ISO dating notations can be found in the technical standard referred to as ISO 8601.

Dating by weeks is common in European countries; and it is becoming increasingly more common world-wide. All 52 or 53 weeks of the year receive a number, with days of the week numbered 1 through 7, beginning with Monday.

So a typical week date notation would look like this: 1995-W03-6. That notation indicates the sixth day of the third week of 1995. The "W" in the notation is optional. The "0" should precede week numbers less than 10, so all week numbers have two digits.

The difficulty in dating by weeks is fixing the number of the week at year ends and beginnings. Because years often begin in the middle of the week, a standard is needed to identify the first week of the year.

**The ISO 8601 rule is: The first week of the year is the week containing the first Thursday.**

In other words:

if January 1 falls on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, it is in week 1 of the current year  
if January 1 falls on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, it is in week 52 or 53 of the previous year

e.g.:

Week 1 of 2013 is the week that starts on 2012-12-31 and ends on 2013-01-06  
because January 3rd = 1st Thursday of 2013. (Year 2013 has 52 weeks)

Week 1 of 2014 is the week that starts on 2013-12-30 and ends on 2014-01-05  
because January 2nd = 1st Thursday of 2014. (Year 2014 has 52 weeks)

Week 1 of 2015 is the week that starts on 2014-12-29 and ends on 2015-01-04  
because January 1st = 1st Thursday of 2015. (Year 2015 has 53 weeks)

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