

OBLIGATORY SAFETY SIGNS

*Achieving a
Healthy
and Safe
Working Life
-Together*

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OBLIGATORY SAFETY SIGNS



Introduction

This guidance booklet describes the safety signs and signals which must be used at all workplaces when hazards cannot be avoided or adequately reduced. These requirements are set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Safety Signs) Regulations, 1995. These Regulations implement EC Directive 92/58/EEC which because of the increasing mobility of labour within the European Community, established a uniform system of signs and signals intended to be immediately understood by all whatever their linguistic backgrounds.

The system for signs and signal boards is based on the familiar “traffic light” colours – red for prohibition, yellow for caution, green for positive action. A fourth colour, blue, is used for mandatory signs and to convey information such as the location of a telephone. The shapes of the signs are also standardised: discs for prohibitions and instruction, triangles for warnings, squares and rectangles for emergency and informative signs.

The Regulations also have requirements governing signs on containers and pipes, on the identification and location of fire fighting equipment, signs for obstacles and dangerous locations and for governing marking traffic routes, illuminated and acoustic signs, verbal communications and loud signals. The Regulations should be checked for those details.

Employees must be provided with information and instruction on the meaning of safety signs and signals used and be consulted on the measures taken to comply with these Regulations.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE SYSTEM OF SAFETY SIGNS

1. General

- 1.1 The objective of the system of safety signs is to draw attention rapidly and unambiguously to objects and situations capable of causing specific hazards.
- 1.2 Under no circumstances is the system of safety signs a substitute for the requisite protective measures.
- 1.3 The system of safety signs may be used only to give information related to safety.
- 1.4 The effectiveness of the system of safety signs is dependent in particular on the provision of full and constantly repeated information to all persons likely to benefit therefrom.

2. Safety Colours and Contrasting Colours

2.1 Meaning of Safety Colours

— TABLE 1 —

Safety Colour	Meaning or Purpose	Examples of Use
Red	Stop Prohibition	Stop signs Emergency shutdown devices Prohibition signs
	This colour is also used to identify fire-fighting equipment	
Yellow	Caution ! Possible danger	Identification of dangers (fire, explosion, radiation, chemical hazards, etc.) Identification of steps, dangerous passages, obstacles
Green	No danger First aid	Identification of emergency routes and emergency exits Safety showers First aid stations and rescue points
Blue ⁽¹⁾	Mandatory signs Information	Obligation to wear individual safety equipment Location of telephone

(1) Counts as a safety colour only when used in conjunction with a symbol or words on a mandatory sign or information sign bearing instructions relating to technical prevention.




2.2 Contrasting colours and symbol colours

— TABLE 2 —

Safety Colour	Contrasting Colour	Symbol Colour
Red	White	Black
Yellow	Black	Black
Green	White	White
Blue	White	White




3. Geometrical Form and Meaning of Safety Signs

— TABLE 3 —

Geometrical form	Meaning
	Mandatory and prohibition signs
	Warning signs
	Emergency, information and additional signs

4. Combinations of Shapes and Colours and their Meanings for Signs

— TABLE 4 —

Shape Colour			
Red	Prohibition		Fire-fighting equipment
Yellow		Caution, possible danger	
Green			No danger Rescue Equipment
Blue	Mandatory		Information or instruction

SPECIAL SYSTEM OF SAFETY SIGNS

1 - PROHIBITION SIGNS

PART A



No smoking



Smoking and naked flames
forbidden



Pedestrians forbidden



Do not extinguish with water



Not drinkable

PART B



Do not extinguish with water



Not drinkable



No access for
unauthorised persons



No access for
industrial vehicles



Do not touch

2 - WARNING SIGNS

PART A



Flammable matter



Explosive matter



Toxic matter



Corrosive matter



Radioactive matter



Beware, overhead load



Beware, industrial trucks



Danger, electricity



General danger



Laser beam

PART B



Oxidant material



Non-ionising radiation



Strong magnetic field



Obstacles



Drop



Biological risk



Low temperature



Harmful or irritant material

3 – MANDATORY SIGNS

PART A



Eye protection must be worn



Safety helmet must be worn



Ear protection must be worn



Respiratory equipment must be used

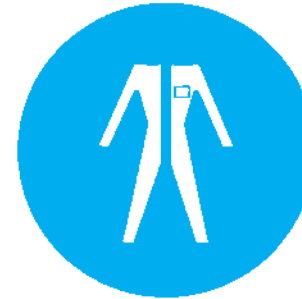


Safety boots must be worn

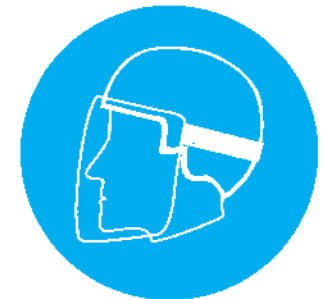


Safety gloves must be worn

PART B



Safety overalls must be worn



Face protection must be worn



Safety harness must be worn



Pedestrians must use this route



General mandatory sign
(to be accompanied where necessary by another sign)

4 - EMERGENCY SIGNS

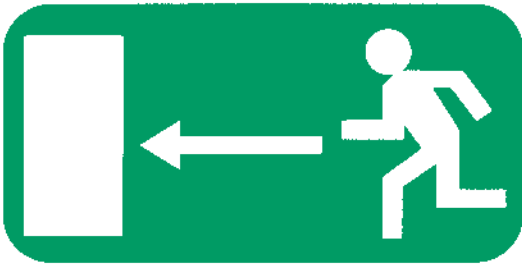
PART A



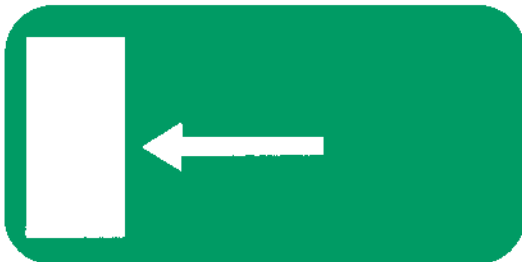
First aid post



This way -
(supplementary information)



Emergency exit/escape route



PART B



This way - (supplementary information)



Emergency exit/escape route



Stretcher



Safety shower



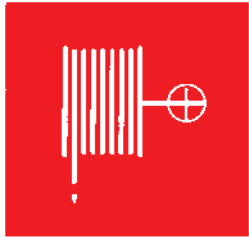
Eyewash



Emergency telephone for first-aid or escape

5 – FIRE FIGHTING SIGNS

PART A



Fire hose



Ladder



Fire
extinguisher



Emergency
fire telephone



This way – (supplementary information sign)

6. Design of Safety Signs

6.1 Prohibition Signs.

Background: white – Symbol or Wording: black. The safety colour red must appear around the edge and in a transverse bar and must cover at least 35% of the surface of the sign.

6.2 Warning, mandatory, emergency and information signs.

Background: safety colour – Symbol or Wording: contrasting colour.
A yellow triangle must have a black edge. The safety colour must cover at least 50% of the surface of the sign.

6.3 Additional signs.

Background: white – Wording: black

or

Background: safety colour – Wording: contrasting colour.

6.4 Symbols.

The design must be as simple as possible and details not comprehension must be left out.

7. Yellow/Black Danger Identification



(Proportion of safety colour
at least 50%)

Identification of permanent risk locations
such as:

- locations where there is a risk of collision, falling, stumbling or of falling loads.
- steps, holes in floors etc.