

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTE

SAFETY SIGNS & NOTICES



NFU Mutual
Risk Management Services

INTRODUCTION

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations cover various means of communicating health and safety information. These include the use of illuminated signs, hand and acoustic signals (e.g. fire alarms), spoken communication and the marking of pipe-work containing dangerous substances. These are in addition to the traditional signboards such as prohibition and warning signs. Fire safety signs (e.g. signs for fire exits and fire-fighting equipment) are also covered.

TYPES OF SAFETY SIGNS

The Regulations require that safety signs conform to a standard system with regard to colours and shapes. There are four main categories of sign, each with its own distinctive shape and colour. These are:



MANDATORY SAFETY SIGNS – MUST DO
(e.g. eye protection must be worn)



PROHIBITION SAFETY SIGNS – DON'T DO
(e.g. no access for unauthorised persons)



WARNING SAFETY SIGNS – DANGER
(e.g. danger: electricity)



**A SIGN GIVING INFORMATION ON EMERGENCY
EXITS, FIRST AID, OR RESCUE FACILITIES**

If there are risks in connection with the movement of traffic (including risks to pedestrians) then the appropriate signs prescribed under The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 are to be used.

COMMON SAFETY SIGNS

The safety signs detailed below are some of the more common decals that may require display at your site. Please note that this not a complete list. NFU Mutual has developed an online ‘Design a Sign’ tool that can be used free of charge by all NFU Mutual clients. You can find the tool at:
www.nfumutual.co.uk/farming/insurance/guidance-and-tools/design-a-sign/

DESCRIPTION	
	Hearing protection sign should be displayed on, or near, noisy machinery, plant or equipment.
	Hard hats should be worn where this sign is displayed.
	Safe lifting techniques must be adopted.
	A hand washing sign should be displayed in toilet facilities.
	A no access to unauthorised persons should be displayed at entrances to any restricted areas.
	No smoking signs should be displayed near flammable sources.
	A general hazard sign (supported by additional warning text) can be used to warn of a wide variety of hazards. It is often used in conjunction with prohibition and mandatory signs.
	Electrical hazard sign should be displayed where there is potential for direct (or indirect) contact with electricity.
	A danger/warning fragile roof sign should be displayed on buildings where there is a fragile roof, e.g. asbestos cement sheeting.
	A danger/warning fork lift truck sign should be displayed to warn people/other vehicles of their presence.
	First aid sign should be displayed on any building/room where first aid materials are stored.
	Fire exit signs should lead people to the nearest emergency exits.

TIPS FOR THE SITING OF SAFETY SIGNS

The following advice on the siting of safety signs should help ensure their effectiveness:

- Safety signs should not be located in a place containing a number of other signs or objects of similar size and colour, as it may become confusing or important information may be overlooked.
- Safety signs should not be located in areas where colour contrast is poor.
- Pictograms used in signs need to be as simple as possible containing only necessary detail.
- Ensure that they are sufficiently large and clear so that they can be easily seen and understood. For example, the stretcher sign needs to show clearly where the equipment is.
- Signs also need to be durable, securely fastened and properly maintained (e.g. washed or resurfaced) to ensure they remain visible.
- It is important to mark those areas, rooms or enclosures used for the storage of significant quantities of dangerous substances or preparations by a suitable warning sign, unless the warning labels on individual containers are clearly visible from outside or nearby.
- Add supplementary text to safety signs where it may help to improve understanding.
- If a sign is no longer necessary (i.e. if the hazard no longer exists), it is important to ensure its removal so that misleading information is not displayed.

ILLUMINATED OR ACOUSTIC SIGNALS

In conditions of poor natural light it may be necessary to provide either artificial illumination or signs made of reflective material, or both. In some cases more than one type of safety sign may be necessary, for example, an illuminated warning sign indicating a specific risk combined with an acoustic alarm meaning 'general danger' to alert people. When using illuminated or acoustic signals, ensure at least the following is observed:

- When acoustic signals or illuminated signs need to be activated (either automatically or in line with other safety arrangements) it is important they remain so for as long as the danger exists or until receipt of any planned acknowledgement.
- The signals also need to be suitable for the working environment. For example, in an explosive atmosphere ensure they do not pose a risk of ignition.
- Illuminated signs must be bright enough to be seen, without causing glare.
- Acoustic signals need to be set at a level which is considerably higher in terms of frequency than the ambient noise, for example 10 dB above the level of ambient noise at that frequency. However, make sure the level is neither excessive nor painful.
- Acoustic signals and illuminated signs need to be checked at regular intervals to ensure that they are functioning correctly. The more hostile the environment, the more frequently they will need to be checked.

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Train all staff, contractors and visitors to understand the distinctive colour and geometric shape of safety signs as well as the detail of any graphical symbol signs used. Continue to reinforce this training and awareness. Staff should also have any unfamiliar signs explained to them by their employers.

It is important that workers are appropriately supervised. Effective supervision can help you monitor the effectiveness of the training that people have received, and whether employees have the necessary competence to do the job.

HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW POSTER

Employers have a legal duty under the Health and Safety Information for Employees Regulations 1989 to display the approved poster 'Health and Safety Law – What you should know' in a prominent position in each workplace. Alternatively a copy of the approved leaflet should be provided to each worker.



FURTHER GUIDANCE

- L61 Safety signs and signals. The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996. Guidance on Regulations – www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l64.pdf

This document is available to download free of charge from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/

SAFETY SIGN CHECKLIST

The following checklist with common safety sign requirements can help you to assess the signage needs around the site.

	Yes	No
Fire Risks		
Are all fire exits and assembly points clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If no fire exit is in the immediate vicinity, are there fire exit safety signs with arrows to indicate in which direction the exit lies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all fire doors correctly labelled (e.g. fire door keep shut, push bar to open etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the fire-fighting equipment including fire alarm call points properly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it clear what type of fire each extinguisher can be used on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are illuminated emergency signs powered by a source independent of the mains supply?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are electrical hazards, isolators and electrical switches clearly signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are no smoking areas clearly defined (including vehicles)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemical Risks	Yes	No
Are there hazardous substances on the premises that need marking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the hazardous substances require the use of personal protective equipment and therefore PPE safety signs to reinforce their use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If so, do points of entry to hazardous areas need signing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are highly technical hazards such as radiation, laser or biological hazards clearly signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all hot water / hot surfaces clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you require safety signs for harsh environments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machinery Risks	Yes	No
Do all machines with guards carry safety signs on guard use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do machines require the use of personal protective equipment and therefore PPE safety signs to reinforce their use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise Risk	Yes	No
Do you have any areas of high noise levels (where hearing protection is needed)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vehicle Movement Risks	Yes	No
Are all traffic routes clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do vehicles interface with pedestrians on the premises (e.g. forklifts, delivery vehicles etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a speed limit clearly indicated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor parking or loading / unloading areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pedestrian Movement Risks	Yes	No
Are all pedestrian routes clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are areas that are restricted to authorised personnel clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any slip, trip or fall hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SAFETY SIGN CHECKLIST

Overhead Risks

- Do you need to warn of an overhead crane or other construction related hazards?
- Do you have any low height hazards?
- Do you have any fragile roofs?
- Do any buildings contain asbestos containing materials?
- Are overhead power lines warnings in place?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Precautionary Signage

- Is the first aid box clearly marked?
- Is the emergency shower clearly identified?
- Is the eye-wash facility clearly identified?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Yes No

- Is the statutory Health and Safety Law, What you need to know poster displayed?
- Is the area where visitors or customers etc. are to report or go to clear?
- Is risk to third parties indicated e.g. razor wire, deep water, wet floor, mind your head, livestock etc.?
- Are there any other hazardous areas or activities for which safety signage could be a benefit e.g. abrasive wheels use, high visibility clothing, battery charging, welding in progress, LPG or other gas etc.?
- If yes, describe:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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