

Health and Safety Signs

Why are they important?

Safety signs and signals are one of the main means of communicating health and safety information.

What does the law say?

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 require employers to provide specific safety signs whenever there is a risk that has not been avoided or controlled by other means, eg: by engineering controls and safe systems of work. Where a safety sign would not help to reduce that risk, or where the risk is not significant, there is no need to provide a sign.

There are specific requirements for the shape, colour and pattern of safety signs.

Any sign must contain a symbol or pictogram and be of a specified colour which clearly defines its meaning.

Supplementary text may also be used to aid understanding but text only signs are not permitted.

Where signs are used employers must ensure:

- Signs are maintained. Any defective or faded signs should be replaced.
- Explain unfamiliar signs to employees to ensure they understand the meaning and actions to be taken in connection with them.

The Regulations apply to all places and activities where people are employed.

Key Points

- Safety signs should be provided where necessary to warn of hazards, to prevent dangerous practices and to indicate safe exit routes and safe practices.
- Ensure all fire safety signs and other safety signs comply with current regulations.
- Ensure all text or word signs are replaced with pictogram signs (and text where necessary).

Ensure all employees understand the meaning of the signs displayed and the actions to be taken.





For more information on our range of health and safety signs, visit our website:

www.SafetyServicesDirect.com

or call us on:

08453 669933

Summary of sign types

Colour	Meaning or Purpose	Instruction & Information	Intrinsic Features	Example
RED	Prohibition/Danger alarm	Dangerous behaviour; stop; shutdown; emergency cut-out devices; evacuate	Round shape; black pictogram on white background; red edging and diagonal line; red part to be at least 35% of the area of the sign	
YELLOW or AMBER	Warning	Be careful; take precautions; examine	Triangular shape; black pictogram on yellow background with black edging; yellow part to be at least 50% of the area of the sign	 Dangerous chemicals
BLUE	Mandatory	Specific behaviour or action e.g. wear personal protective equipment	Round shape; white pictogram on blue background; blue part to be at least 50% of the area of the sign	
GREEN	Emergency escape; first aid. No danger	Doors; exits; escape routes equipment and facilities Return to normal	Rectangular or square shape; white pictogram on green background; green part to be at least 50% of the area of the sign	
RED (fire-fighting signs)	Fire fighting equipment	Identification & location	Rectangular or square shape; white pictogram on red background; red part to be at least 50% of the area of the sign	