

Safety and Health Signs

Information Sheet

Feb 2012

This Information Sheet provides brief guidance on the requirements for signs as set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007. The Guidelines (but NOT the Regulations) were amended in October 2009. This Information Sheet does not generally deal with acoustic signs, verbal communication, hand signals, signs for dangerous substances and preparations, products or equipment or signs regulating road, rail, inland waterway, sea or air transport.

This Information Sheet is not a legal interpretation of the legislation.

Provision and Use of Signs:

Signs are the last line of defence against hazards and should only be used where hazards cannot be avoided or adequately reduced.

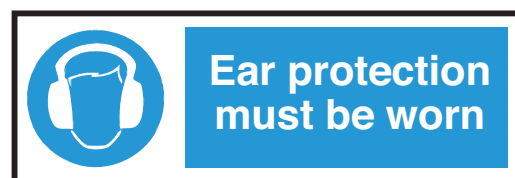
The risk assessment and safety statement should identify necessary signs. In some cases signs are specifically required, e.g.

- Fragile roofs and ceilings
- Emergency routes and exits
- Fire detection and fire fighting
- Work-at-height danger areas
- Places with obstacles, falling risk or risk of falling objects
- Workplace traffic routes
- Exposure to noise above 85dB(A)
- Explosive hazard zones

Employees must be provided with information and instruction on measures to be taken and the meaning of signs. Effectiveness of a sign must not be adversely affected by poor design, insufficient number, incorrect positioning, poor state of repair or incorrect functioning.

Use of Text

Text should not be used if the meaning is clear by use of a pictogram or symbol alone. If a text explanation is necessary (e.g. where doubt could exist as to the meaning of a symbol) a supplementary signboard containing appropriate text should be provided. This supplementary signboard can be on the same "carrier".



Combined Signboards










Graphical symbols should not be combined to convey more than one safety message. For example, a mandatory safety helmet and safety goggles instruction should not be combined as one graphical symbol.



Two safety messages should be shown by two separate signboards (with supplementary signboards as necessary) or the two signboards and supplementary signboards can be combined on one carrier.



Requirements for Signboards

Sign Type	Meaning and Information	Shapes and Colours		Example	Note
Prohibition	Danger alarm - Stop, shut-down, emergency cut-out devices Evacuate	Shape	Round		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.
		Background	White		
		Symbol / pictogram	Black		
Fire Fighting	Fire fighting equipment - Identification and location	Shape	Rectangular or square		Signboards or a safety colour (or both) shall be used to mark permanently the location and identification of fire-fighting equipment.
		Background	Red		
		Symbol / pictogram	White		
Warning	Warning sign - Be careful, take precautions Examine	Shape	Triangular		A yellow triangle must have a black edge. The safety colour yellow must cover at least 50% of the surface of the sign.
		Background	Yellow with black edging		
		Symbol / pictogram	Black		
Mandatory	Mandatory sign - Specific behaviour or action Wear personal protective equipment	Shape	Round		The safety colour blue must cover at least 50% of the surface of the sign.
		Background	Blue		
		Symbol / pictogram	White		
Emergency Escape/ First Aid	Emergency Escape/ First Aid - Doors, exits, routes, equipment, facilities	Shape	Rectangular or square		The safety colour green must cover at least 50% of the surface of the sign.
		Background	Green		
		Symbol / pictogram	White		
No Danger	No Danger, Rescue Equipment - Return to normal	Background	Green		
Supplementary Signs	Used with signboard for supplementary information, includes information in writing	Background	White		Should not be used if the meaning is clear by use of a pictogram or symbol alone
		Symbol / pictogram	Black		
		Background	Safety colour		
		Symbol / pictogram	Contrasting colour		
Obstacles, dangerous locations	Risk of colliding with obstacles, of falling or of objects falling	Background	Yellow and black or red and white stripes at ~45° angle and more or less equal size		Places with a risk of colliding with obstacles or of falling shall be permanently marked with a safety colour or with signboards (or both).
Traffic routes	Traffic routes for vehicles	Background	Continuous white or yellow lines where required to protect persons		Where required for the protection of persons, traffic routes for vehicles shall be clearly identified by continuous stripes in a clearly visible colour.

For Further Information

Contact the Health and Safety Authority at wcu@hsa.ie, Lo Call 1890 289 389 or visit www.hsa.ie for further information on this and a wide range of workplace safety, health and welfare topics.

