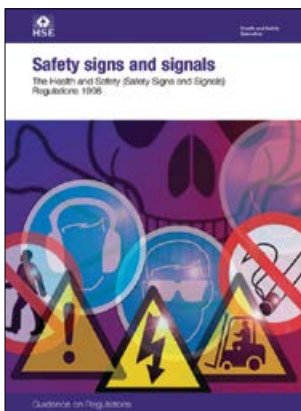


Safety signs and signals

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals)
Regulations 1996

Guidance on Regulations



L64 (Third edition)
Published 2015

This guidance is for employers and dutyholders, and others who have responsibility for the control of work sites and premises, or operating equipment requiring verbal and/or non-verbal communications.

This third edition provides practical advice on how to comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

It also updates references to legislation and standards and has been amended to accommodate the changes relating to the labelling and packaging of chemicals made by the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Chemicals (Amendments to Secondary Legislation) Regulations 2015.

Introduction

About this book

1 This guidance provides practical advice on how to comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 (the Regulations).

Who should read this book?

2 This book is for employers and dutyholders and others who have responsibility for the control of work sites and premises, or operating equipment requiring verbal and/or non-verbal communications. Throughout this book we have referred to the employer and others who have duties as 'you'. Where the guidance is addressed to some other dutyholder, for example a competent person, the text makes it clear who it is intended for.

Changes in this edition

3 The majority of changes in this edition have been to update references to legislation and Standards enacted or updated recently, eg the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and *Graphical symbols: Safety colours and safety signs. Registered safety signs* – BS EN ISO 7010:12+A5:2015 (referred to as BS EN ISO 7010 in this book). Details of relevant Standards and legislation appear in Further reading.

4 The document has also been amended to accommodate the changes resulting from the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Chemicals (Amendments to Secondary Legislation) Regulations 2015 (the CLP (Amendment) Regulations) relating to labelling and packaging of chemicals.

5 The signs appearing in Part 2 of this book are examples of appropriate signs. Some examples have been included from BS EN ISO 7010 to demonstrate the types of variations permitted. There will be others available as the Regulations permit variations and additional signs as long as they retain the intrinsic features described. Please note the change in the warning signs – the deletion of the 'Harmful or irritant material' warning sign – as a result of the CLP (Amendment) Regulations.

About the Regulations

6 The Regulations implement European Council Directive 92/58/EEC on minimum requirements for the provision of safety signs at work. They require employers to provide safety signs where other methods, properly considered, cannot deal satisfactorily with certain risks and where the use of a sign can further reduce that risk.

7 They cover traditional safety signs such as 'No entry' signs, and other means of communicating health and safety information such as hand signals, acoustic signals (eg warning sirens on machines) and verbal communications such as pre-recorded evacuation messages.

8 The Directive standardises safety signs throughout member states of the European Union (EU) so that wherever a particular safety sign is seen it provides the same message. The intention is that workers moving from site to site, such as service engineers, will not be faced with different signs at different workplaces.

9 The CLP (Amendment) Regulations, which came into force on 1 June 2015, made some amendments to these Regulations. These are reflected in this guidance and the Regulations in Part 4 have been revised to show the amended version.

10 Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 (the CLP Regulation) on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, adopts the United Nations' Globally Harmonised System on the classification and labelling of chemicals (GHS) across all EU countries, including the UK. As GHS is a voluntary agreement rather than a law, it has to be adopted through a suitable national or regional legal mechanism to ensure it becomes legally binding. That is what the CLP Regulation does. As GHS was heavily influenced by the old EU system, the CLP Regulation is very similar in many ways. The duties on suppliers are broadly the same: classification, labelling and packaging.

11 The CLP Regulation replaced the previous European legislation on classification, labelling and packaging of dangerous substances and preparations. As a result, a number of European Directives were amended to reflect the change to the law. Domestic legislation then also had to be amended, to implement the changes at European level. The CLP (Amendment) Regulations made those changes to domestic legislation, including to the Regulations.

About this guidance

12 This publication consists of:

- (a) guidance (Parts 1–3):
 - (i) Part 1 'About the Regulations' covers safety signs in general;
 - (ii) Part 2 'Using safety signs' contains advice on their selection, and explains the general requirements for the proper use of safety signs, including technical requirements (eg shape, colour etc) for different types of sign. The signs are also reproduced in full colour in Part 2;
 - (iii) Part 3 'Fire safety signs' covers similar details for fire safety signs;
- (b) the Regulations (Part 4).

Consulting employees

13 If you are an employer you have a legal duty to consult with your employees on matters relating to health and safety in the workplace. For further information see *Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law*.¹

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- (h) **hand signal** – a movement or position of the arms or hands giving a recognised signal and guiding people who are carrying out manoeuvres which are a hazard or danger to people;
- (i) **fire safety sign** – see Part 3.

Where and to whom do these Regulations apply?

Employers/employees

20 The Regulations place duties on employers in respect of risks to their employees with the principal duty being to ensure that safety signs are in place.

21 In some industries, for example offshore, many employees are employed by contractors who are not in control of the places in which their employees work. In practice, safety signs will normally be provided by the employer or person in charge of the workplace, usually the owner or operator of the installation. The Management Regulations are relevant in these cases, particularly regulation 12. This requires the 'host' employer (or self-employed person) to give information on risks and the associated precautions arising from that employer's activities to the employer of persons at work there. In these cases, the employer or contractor will usually be able to meet their obligations by relying on the arrangements made by the host (ie the owner or operator).

22 Contractors who are also employers will want to check that their employees are familiar with the meaning of safety signs likely to be encountered during the course of their work. They may also wish to make checks – where there is a 'host' employer – that appropriate signs are in place.

Application offshore

23 The Regulations apply to work activities carried out in British territorial waters and in designated areas of the UK Continental Shelf. The activities are those listed in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (Application outside Great Britain) Order 2013. This includes offshore installations, wells, pipeline works and activities connected with installations and wells such as construction, loading and unloading of supply vessels, and diving operations offshore. Note that for offshore installations the emergency warning arrangements, including the tones of acoustic signals and colours of illuminated signs, are covered in the Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response) Regulations 1995.³

Fire safety

24 The way these Regulations apply with respect to fire safety signs (eg fire exit signs and fire alarms) is described in Part 3. Further provisions for specific fire safety signs are required by other provisions such as Building Regulations and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

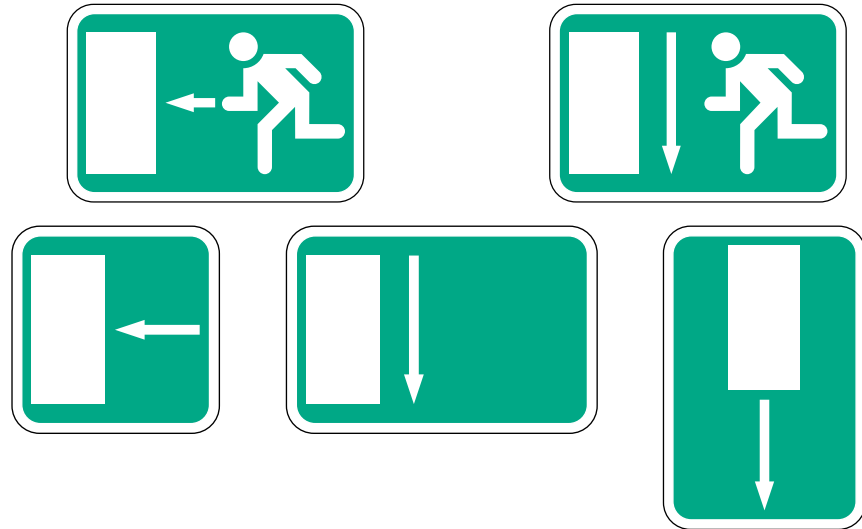
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Emergency escape or first-aid signs

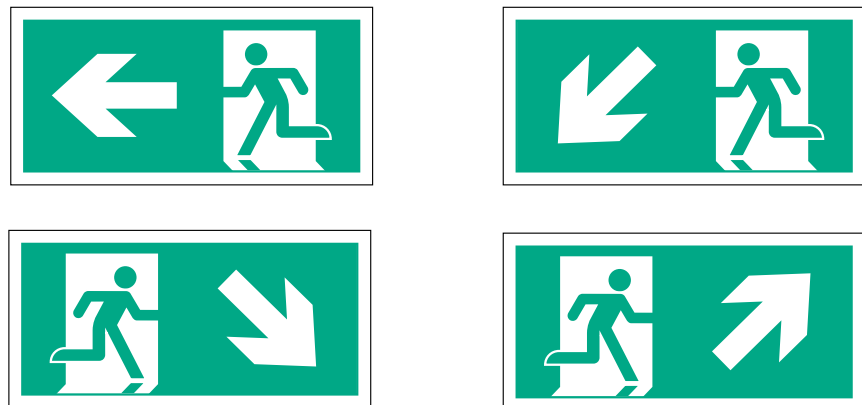
Intrinsic features:

- (a) rectangular or square shape;
- (b) white pictogram on a green background (the green part to take up at least 50% of the area of the sign).

Emergency exit/escape route signs



Examples from BS EN ISO 7010



Supplementary 'This way' signs for emergency exits/escape routes

49 For emergency exit signs for safe exit routes (*Safety signs. Code of practice for escape route signing* BS 5499-4:2013 applies) care should be taken that 'This way' arrows for emergency equipment location (red background direction arrows) are not in contradiction with escape direction.

