



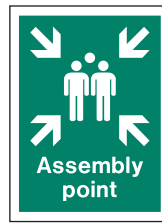
THE HSSA SIGN GUIDE

Developing an Effective Safety Management Policy:

The use of health and safety signs makes a major contribution across all the following disciplines of fire and safety management:



① Risk identification and control



④ Emergency planning and incident control



② Prevention, protection and procedure



⑤ Process control and maintenance



③ Communication, awareness and instruction



⑥ Education and training

STAGE 1 - Risk Assessment

The first stage in initiating towards an effective safety management policy is for any manager, owner, occupier and/or nominated contractor to undertake a formal risk assessment.

Risk assessments, including risk management and audits are the fundamental requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The display of relevant signs in conjunction with a risk assessment indicates a compliance with these requirements.

The purpose of a formal risk assessment is to:

- Identify the nature of risk that may cause harm to employees and/or visitors within your premises.
- Qualify the likelihood or possibility of any occurrence or incident likely to cause injury or harm to employees or visitors within the confines of your premises.
- Assess the possibility of any consequential injury or harm likely to be caused by any event or incident.
- Define the measures, steps or actions needed to be taken to prevent the possibility of any occurrence likely to cause injury or harm to employees or visitors. Liaise with emergency services and create an emergency plan.

A good way to approach risk assessment is to:

1. Compile a list of hazards that may be present within your workplace/premises.

In small premises, a practical way to do this is to stand in the middle of the room that you are assessing, fix your attention on a point on the perimeter of the room, then turn slowly through 360 degrees making a note of the obvious hazards you can see.

In larger premises, a team approach to identify hazards may be more effective especially if you draft in an expert for advice.



For an effective application strategy:

- Don't forget to check your accident book, it may contain invaluable information on hazards that are actually affecting people.
- Don't get too preoccupied in any one area. Remember, you are trying to spot a hazard, not trying to resolve problems all at the same time.
- Remember the basic principles of Stage 1 as you go.
- Remember, hazards are everyday things around us that have the potential to cause harm.
- Risk is the probable rate of occurrence of the hazard causing harm and the degree of severity of the harm.

2. Concede that occurrence is possible.

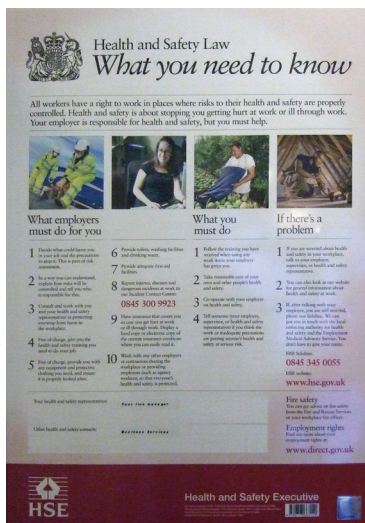
Identify and put into practice all possible measures to prevent the occurrence from causing injury or harm. Monitor the effectiveness of all measures on a regular basis noting and correcting all potential occurrences that, for whatever reason, are not adequately controlled.

NOTE - Measures will depend on the hazards identified and the judgment of risk and as such, are unique to every premise. Expert advice on risk elimination can be sought through specialist consultants if necessary.

3. Communication, Education and Training

Communicate, educate and train employees and visitors in the actions they need to take to prevent injury or harm to themselves or others in accordance with the health and safety management system.

STAGE 2 - Safety Education and Training



Legal Requirement

The Health and Safety law poster is now the only poster having legal obligation to be displayed. It explains both the employers and employees duties under The Health and Safety Information for Employees Regulations 1989 and is applicable to all workplaces in the UK.

1.1 The Health and Safety Law Poster

STAGE 3 - Application, Use, Siting and Maintenance of Safety Sign and Statutory Notices

A standardised method of safety signing in the work environment will assist in the process of education on the meaning of safety signs. It is therefore important that you have an application strategy before siting signs in a building.

Factors to consider when drawing up an application strategy:

- What is the building to be used for?
- Where are the hazards on the premises that cannot be controlled by any other means?
- What legislation to meet and which Standards apply to this building. British or International Standards?
- What requirements, if any, will the authorities enforce?
- What is the evacuation strategy for the premises?
- What are the security issues?
- How familiar will the occupants be with the building?
- Are there any fire detection and warning systems to consider?



For an effective application strategy,

- Safety signs should not be surrounded by other signs of a similar size and colour.
- Safety signs should be located in areas where colour contrast is good.
- Add supplementary text to safety signs to improve comprehensibility and legibility.
- Consider whether lighting conditions are good enough to see the safety signs clearly at a distance and time required.
- Inform all employees, occupiers and visitors of the meaning of the distinctive colour and geometric shape of safety signs as well as the meaning of graphical symbols used - continue to reinforce this training and awareness by using training aids or guides, for example wall charts, pocket guides or leaflets.
- Make sure the safety signs used give the complete message and are unambiguous.

Once your safety signs are in place, it is important that they are cleaned and visually inspected regularly. Actions should be taken to remedy defects immediately. See examples below of safety signs that should have been replaced.



Safety sign is fading and peeling.



Safety sign has broken, splitting corners.



Where the safety sign is made of thin flexible material and will not stay flat.

Classification of Safety Signs

Safety signs use a combination of colours and geometric shapes to give meaning and to communicate the safety message effectively to the end user.

Prohibition Safety Signs

Meaning:

- You must not
- Do not do
- Stop

Symbol:

- Background colour is white
- Circular band and crossbar is red
- The symbol is black and is placed centrally on the background and should not obliterate the crossbar
- The safety colour red shall cover at least 35% of the area of the safety sign
- Border is white

Supplementary Text Box:

- Background colour is red
- Text colour is white

Symbol Shape and Colour:





Examples of Prohibition Safety Signs:

Symbols only:



Symbols with Supplementary Text Box:



Hazard Safety Signs

Meaning:

- Risk of Danger
- Warning
- Caution

Symbol:

- Background colour is yellow
- Triangular band is black
- The symbol is black and is placed centrally on the background
- The safety colour yellow should cover at least 50% of the area of the safety sign
- Border is white

Supplementary Text Box:

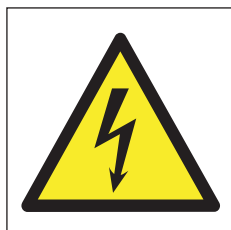
- Background colour is yellow
- Text colour is black

Symbol Shape and Colour:



Examples of Hazard Safety Signs:

Symbols only:





Symbols with Supplementary Text Box:



Mandatory Safety Signs

Meaning:

- You must carry out the action given by the sign.

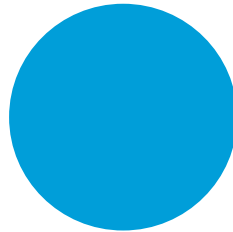
Symbol:

- Background colour is blue
- The symbol is white and is placed centrally on the background
- The safety colour blue shall cover at least 50% of the area of the safety sign
- Border is white

Supplementary Text Box:

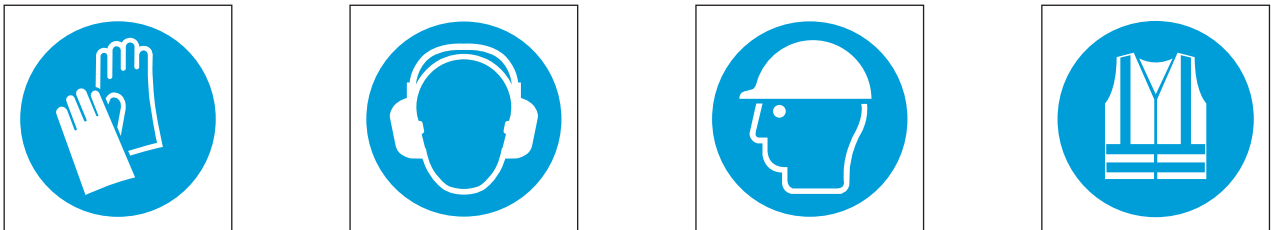
- Background colour is blue
- Text colour is white

Symbol Shape and Colour:



Examples of Mandatory Safety Signs:

Symbols only:



Symbols with Supplementary Text Box:





Safe Condition Safety Signs

Meaning:

- The safe way
- Where to go in an emergency
- Includes first aid signs
- Includes escape route safety signs (Fire exit signs)

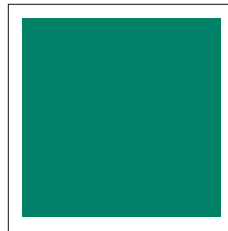
Symbol:

- Background colour is green
- The symbol is white and is placed centrally on the background
- The safety colour green shall cover at least 50% of the area of the safety signs
- Border is white

Supplementary Text Box:

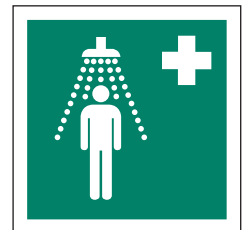
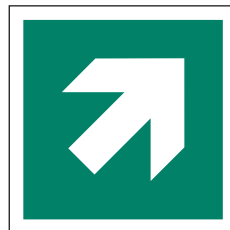
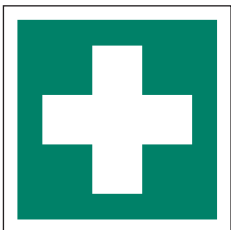
- Background colour is green
- Text colour is white

Symbol Shape and Colour:



Examples of Safe Condition Safety Signs:

Symbols only:



Symbols with Supplementary Text Box:





Safe Condition Safety Signs

Meaning:

- The location and identification of fire fighting equipment

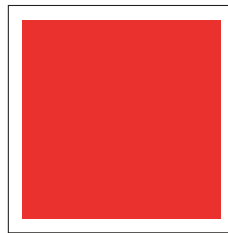
Symbol:

- Background colour is red
- The shape of the sign is oblong or square as necessary to accommodate the symbol or text
- The symbol should be white in colour
- The safety colour red, shall cover at least 50% of the area of the safety sign
- Border is white

Supplementary Text Box:

- Background colour is red
- Text colour is white

Symbol Shape and Colour:



Examples of Fire Fighting Safety Signs:

Symbols only:



Symbols with Supplementary Text Box:





Combination Safety Signs

Combination safety signs are required when two or more safety signs, symbols and associated supplementary texts are shown on the same safety sign.

Principle 1:

Any text or supplementary sign associated with or as part of a safety sign, should be restricted to that safety sign's category, i.e. prohibition, hazard, mandatory, safe condition and fire signs should not include text relating to any other category.

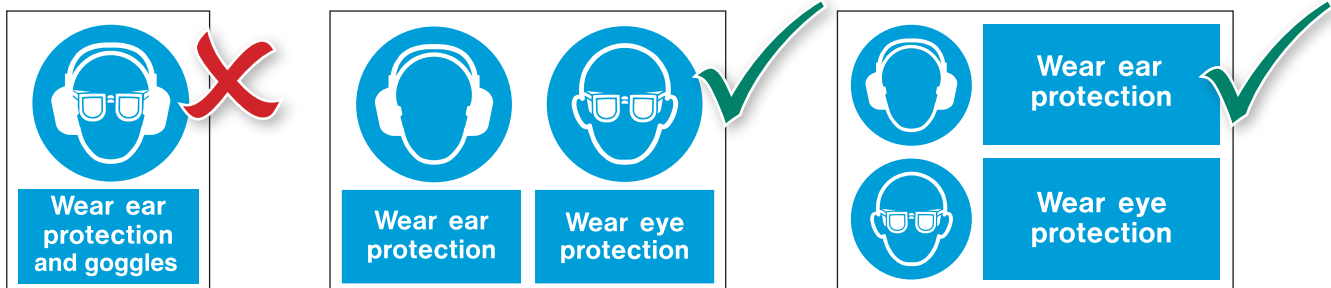
Example



Principle 2:

Composite signs should not be used.

Example



Principle 3:

Different safety sign categories can be placed together vertically or horizontally on the same safety sign.

Example



Handy Hints

- Place signs where they will not be obstructed.
- Clean and maintain signs on a regular basis.
- Regularly review your safety policy.



Choosing the Right Materials

Having established the need for the application of a safety sign, consideration should be given to the substrate from which the sign is made to ensure its suitability for the environment where it is to be displayed.

Every substrate has its own unique characteristics and most manufacturers can provide a varied choice of these to suit any particular environment. The following are some of the more popular substrates used for safety signs.

Self-Adhesive Vinyl

A flexible PVC with a high or low tack adhesive backing. Most modern vinyls are suitable for both interior and exterior applications but care should be taken to ensure that the surface to which the sign is to be adhered is smooth and non-porous. Conformity to the flammability rating Class 1 (BS 476 Part 7) is advised.

Rigid PVC Plastic

Available in various thickness, suitable for both interior and exterior use and is non-corrosive. A wide range of plastic substrates exist with a great variation in quality. Conformity to Class 1 (BS 476 Part 7) is advised.

Polycarbonate

A very durable plastic material, transparent in appearance with text and pictorial symbols screen printed on the underside of the material to give protection from surface damage. An ideal substrate for using in areas susceptible to vandalism and other harsh treatments. Conformity to Class 1 (BS 476 Part 7) is advised.

Aluminium

Suitable for both interior and exterior use. Aluminium is a durable material, particularly when it has lacquered and stoved finish. It is also the preferred substrate for traffic signs and other heavy duty sign applications. Anti-corrosion protection treatments to the material prior to the sign manufacture, have greatly enhanced the longevity of these safety signs, making them one of the most suitable types of sign for normal environmental conditions.

Phosphorescent (Photoluminescent) in Vinyl, Rigid PVC and other materials

Phosphorescent materials are charged by ambient light and immediately illuminate in sudden darkness. The illumination of these materials is classified as luminance performance which, should at least satisfy the minimum of DIN 67510 Part 4 and The Photoluminescent Safety Products Association (PSPA) Class A performance criteria. In addition to luminance performance a Class 1 BS 476 Part 7 spread of flame rating should be achieved.

Other Substrates

Retro-reflective, fluorescent finishes are, in most cases, used as laminates in conjunction with the main substrates described above. They have special qualities pertaining to certain fields of application.

Use of Arrows

Arrows should only be used with escape route signs to indicate the direction of travel towards a place of safety.

It is important that arrows are not used in situations where they could be subjected to misinterpretation.

Design and appropriate colour features of arrows can be found in BS 5499 Part 1 :2002

Guidance on recommended use of arrows can be found in BS 5499 Part 4:2000

When it is necessary to use an arrow, the following principles should apply:

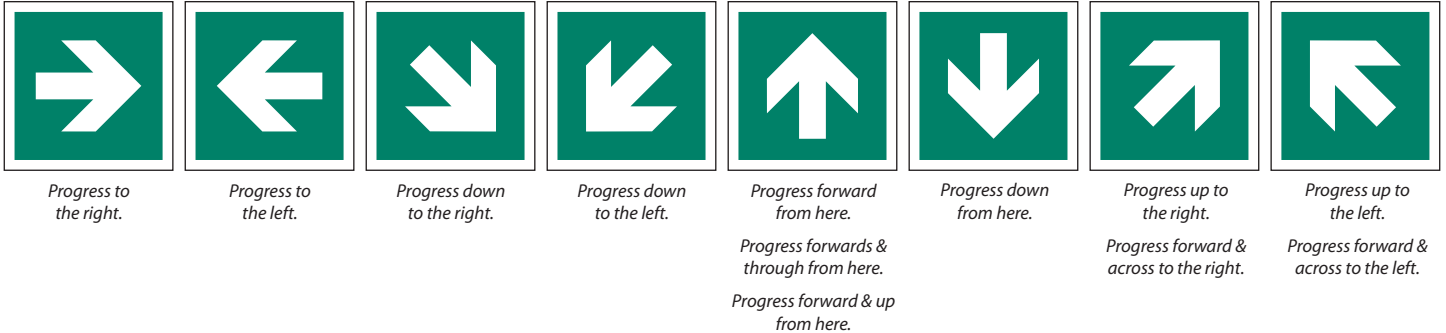
1. An arrow should not be used on its own.
2. Arrows should be correctly orientated.
3. Arrows should be used to indicate a change in direction or a change in level.
4. Arrows should be in the recommended contrasting colour to the safety colour.
5. An arrow should be used wherever confusion might otherwise occur.

Definitions

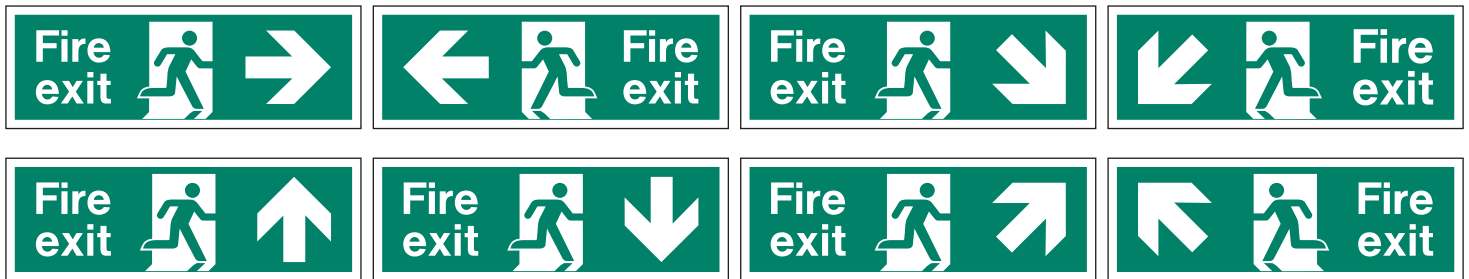
Sign to indicate direction of travel towards a place of safety.



Example of Arrows and meaning:



Example of Signs with its Use of Arrows:



Safety Way Guidance Systems

An effective safety way guidance system (SWGS) encourages uniformity of application of safety signs and other safety products in order to improve evacuation times and efficient egress of evacuees throughout the means of escape in unfamiliar environments even in the event of total power failure and darkness.

The uniformity of application of such systems, in particular, consistent and appropriate use of escape route signing is sought to ensure that familiarity and recognition of the system is rapidly acquired.

An objective risk assessment will determine when and where safety way guidance systems are required together with consultation with the relevant property management and enforcement authority.

Notwithstanding the above, research into human behaviour has shown conclusively that time of evacuation is critical. Delays caused by uncertainty of a danger situation or reaction to the alarm inevitably lead to a reduction of exit choice.

Safety way guidance systems which provide continuous and unambiguous directional and orientation information throughout the designated escape route will obviously enforce the fire safety management of the building management.

A good safety way guidance system will incorporate all the following features:

1. Instant illumination in the event of a power loss e.g. daylight charged phosphorescent materials or electrical systems.
2. Escape route identification.
3. Directional information at change of level, elevation or turn.
4. Hazard and obstacle identification and location.
5. First aid and fire fighting equipment identification and location.
6. Handrail and stairnosing illumination e.g. daylight, charged phosphorescent or electrical systems.
7. Emergency exit and escape equipment illumination and operating procedure identification.
8. Visual orientation cues and emergency instruction.

Whilst some of the above can be achieved through good emergency lighting systems, a good safety way guidance system would complement the illumination with low proximity supplementary components.