

## Relevant Legislation

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

## General

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 require employers to ensure that safety signs are provided (or are in place) and maintained in circumstances where risks to health and safety have not been avoided by other means.

Even when measures have been taken there can often be a 'residual risk' about which employees need to be warned. They also need to be informed of any further measures that may be necessary. Safety signs are needed if they will help to reduce a residual risk which is significant.

## Provision of Signs




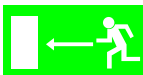
Under these regulations the following types of signs have been included:

- traditional safety signs, such as Prohibition, Warning, Mandatory and Information signs.
- acoustic signals, such as warning sirens.
- hand signals.
- verbal communications.

It is the intention of the regulations to make all signs easy to understand and communicate the same message in every workplace.

## Using Signs

All signs should be provided so that they communicate effectively in the given situation and maintained so that they are capable of performing the function for which they are intended.

Colour	Meaning or Purpose	Instruction and Information	Sign Example
Red	Prohibition sign Danger alarm	Dangerous behaviour; stop; shut-down; emergency cut-out devices; evacuate	
Yellow or Amber	Warning sign	Be careful; take precautions; examine	
Blue	Mandatory sign	Specific behaviour or action; such as wear Personal Protective Equipment	
Green	Emergency escape First aid sign	Doors; exits; escape routes; equipment & facilities	

Pictograms are listed in Schedule 1 of the regulations. If a particular hazard is to be identified the prescribed picture should always be used. If no suitable sign exists then a simple pictogram can be designed in accordance with the principles of the regulations. Signs can be supplemented by text if necessary. This should be done to complement the category of sign used both in colour and text.

## Marking of Obstacles, Dangerous Locations and Traffic Routes

In order to prevent falls from height or being struck by falling objects secure fencing or barriers will often be required. However, if the risk is low or protection is impractical by other means, marking the dangerous location may be necessary. For example, highlighting the edge of a raised platform could be achieved by using markings or tape consisting of a yellow and black (or red and white) stripe as shown below.



## Arrangements within Children's Services

All existing school signs should be assessed to ensure that they comply with the law. Any other requirement for additional safety signs should be highlighted and obtained as part of the general risk assessment process. The Fire Log Book should be used to complete a fire risk assessment in all school buildings and suitable signs should be provided as part of this assessment. Fire signs represent the vast majority of safety signs needed in schools and, accordingly, also present the greatest cost implication. Significant numbers of safety signs are also likely to be required for traffic management and in practical areas, such as Science laboratories and Design and Technology workshops.

Safety signs are a delegated school responsibility and there may be significant implications for the management of the school budget. It is important that schools prioritise the relative importance of each type of sign. For instance, it is important that signs indicating fire escape routes are purchased and displayed before the school considers purchasing fire equipment signs.