







Guide to British Standards & UK Legislation.

British Standards

BS 5499-1 Safety signs, including fire safety signs Part 1 : Specification

This British Standard outlines:

- (1) How to use geometric shapes, colours and graphical symbols to create safety signs with specific meanings.

Geometric shape	Meaning	Safety colour	Contrast colour	Graphical symbol colour
 Circle with crossbar	Prohibition	Red	White	Black
 Circle	Mandatory action	Blue	White	White
 Equilateral triangle	Hazard identification: Danger Warning Caution	Yellow	Black	Black
 Square / Rectangle	Safe condition Escape route Safety equipment	Green	White	White
 Square / Rectangle	Fire-fighting	Red	White	White
 Square / Rectangle	Supplementary information	Colour of the safety sign	Relevant contrast colour	Relevant contrast colour

- (2) How to combine safety signs with supplementary text.
- (3) How to use signal words (see page 41 for more details).
- (4) How to use directional arrows.
- (5) How to calculate the size of safety sign you need:

Height of signs and maximum viewing distances		
Height of Sign (mm)	Recommended Max. Viewing Distance (m)	Approximate X Height of Supplementary Text Letters (mm)
60	7	5
80	9	6.6
120	14	10
180	21	15
240	28	20
480	57	40

BS 5499-4 Code of practice for escape route signs

This code of practice:

- (1) Outlines the objective of an escape route marking system.
- (2) Explains how to plan an effective escape route signing system.
- (3) Recommends the correct mounting position & location for signs.
- (4) Offers best advice on how to combine the BS 5499 running man with text and arrows to produce a well designed escape route sign.



UK Legislation

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations became law within the UK on 1st April 1996.

The Regulations implement the European Safety Signs Directive (92/58/EEC) which has been designed to standardise safety signage across Europe and ensure that with the free movement of labour, there is no risk of safety signs being misunderstood.

The Legislation:

- Requires employers to use a safety sign whenever there is a risk that cannot be controlled by any other means.
- Demands that all safety sign boards contain a pictogram as part of their intrinsic design features.
- Increases the number of safety symbols.
- Incorporates fire safety signs.



Use Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulation symbols designs when:

- You want your safety signs to look exactly like the illustration in the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
- You want your safety signs to reflect European designs currently in use.

The Fire Precautions (Workplace) (Amendment) Regulations 1999

The Amendment Regulations came into force 1st December 1999 and further reduce 'exempted workplaces' by extending the Scope of the Fire Precautions Regulations to include those workplaces where a fire certificate is in force or is pending.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the requirements of these regulations are complied with.

In practice this will require employers to conduct a fire risk assessment on a regular basis and to keep records of the findings and action taken.

For workplaces that are subject to a fire certification or licensing regime as well as the Fire Precautions Regulations, employers will need to consult with the local fire authority where their risk assessment conflicts with the existing certificate or license.

Tips for the Siting of Safety Signs

1. Safety signs should not be located in a place containing a number of other signs or objects of similar size and colour.
2. Safety signs should not be located in areas where colour contrast is poor.
3. Add supplementary text to safety signs to increase their length and further improve comprehensibility and legibility.
4. Train all staff, occupiers and visitors to the meaning of distinctive colour and geometric shape of safety signs as well as the detail of any graphical symbol signs used. Continue to reinforce this training and awareness.
5. For fire exit safety signs, it is preferable to use additional reinforcing directional signs rather than rely on one larger sign at a longer viewing distance.

Since Signs & Labels' policy is one of continued improvement, we reserve the right to alter our designs to comply with new British Standards, International Standards, UK and International legislation.