

Safety Signs

Purpose

Signs

- Safety signs provide important information to make safe decisions
- Signs need to be:
 - Visible
 - Legible
 - Placed in the proper area (e.g., before the hazard is reached)
 - Accompanied by appropriate controls

Hazards

- Signs provide visual cues and are a reminder about hazards and precautions
- Signs are NOT intended to replace guarding or other forms of hazard elimination and risk control
- In addition to signs, training and routine communication are other ways to communicate hazardous conditions and safety requirements

Report Missing Controls

- If you see a sign, look for safety controls nearby
- Safety controls are physical barriers or devices designed to keep you safe
 - Guardrails
 - Fences
 - Locks
 - Doors
- If you see something wrong, such as an open manhole with a safety sign but no guardrails, fix it if you can and notify a qualified person
- Safety is everyone's responsibility

Meaning

Signs can vary from site to site. However, some characteristics are the same. The color and signal words have the same meaning even if the size, shape and arrangement are different. Risk drives the signal word and color selection.





Colors and words

- Danger – red
Contact with the hazard WILL CAUSE serious injury or even death
- Warning – orange
Hazardous situations that COULD cause serious injury or death
- Caution – yellow
Hazards nearby that could cause minor or moderate injuries (e.g., slippery when wet)
- Notice – blue
Information about things to keep you safe (e.g., keep the area clear, wear personal protective equipment or wash your hands)

- Safety Instructions – green
General safety information (e.g., where to find a first aid kit, where to take shelter during a storm, or reminder to fasten your seatbelt)

Pictures

- Symbols describe hazards and precautions needed
- Examples

	Safety glasses required
	Dangerous voltage
	Pinching hazard
	Hearing protection required

Best Practices

- Signs provide safety reminders in the work area. You can also find safety information in:
 - company policies and procedures manual
 - bulletin board postings
 - standard operating procedures
 - safety training
- Ask if you are unsure about the meaning of a sign
- Report and address issues to qualified personnel
- Sign placement and size should be based on the distance to the hazard and how long it will take someone to react
- Some signs, such as exit signs, are illuminated for visibility during an emergency
- Signs should ALWAYS be supported by controls

Supervisor Supplement

Safety Sign Inspections

Periodically, walk through the work area and look at the safety signs. Make sure each sign is visible, legible, placed in the proper area and accompanied by appropriate controls.

Workplace Safety Sign Tour

When workers start a new job, either because they are new hires or their responsibilities are changing, take time to give them a brief safety sign tour of their work area. During the tour point out safety signs, explain the controls associated with the signs, and ask the workers if they have any questions about what the signs mean or what they need to do.

Follow-up Questions to Ask Workers

After workers take the *Safety Signs* course, stop by to ask them if they have any questions about specific signs in their work areas or if they have noticed any problems with those signs. Remind workers to tell you if they see any problems, especially if signs are present without appropriate safety controls.

Worker Observation

After workers take the *Safety Signs* course, observe them to make sure they are noticing signs and acting accordingly. Remember to praise workers for doing a good job, not just point out when there is something wrong.

When you give feedback:

DO

- Explain your purpose (safety)
- Assume people don't know the risks
- Lead with the positive
- Be timely and specific
- Express concern
- Be personable
- Restate what they say to you
- Thank the person

DON'T

- Distract workers
- Assume they know what is wrong and how to fix it
- Make it personal
- Be vague/general
- Write while observing

Safety Signs: Know What They Mean

DANGER	WARNING	CAUTION	NOTICE	EMERGENCY
				
High Voltage Authorized Personnel Only	Buried Gas Pipeline Do Not Dig	Slippery When Wet Slip Resistant Footwear Required	Wash Hands Before Returning to Work	First Aid Supplies Report All Accidents
DANGER Indicates a hazardous situation with a high probability of death or serious injury.	WARNING Indicates a hazardous situation with some probability of serious injury or death.	CAUTION Indicates a hazardous situation that may result in minor or moderate injury.	NOTICE Indicates a company policy as it relates directly or indirectly to the safety of employees or protection of property.	EMERGENCY Indicates general instructions relative to safe work practices, procedural reminders and safety equipment locations.