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# Requirements concerning the provision of safety signs in the workplace<sup>1</sup>

Passed 30.11.1999 No. 75  
RTL 2000, 12, 117  
Entry into force 01.01.2000

Amended by the following acts

| Passed       | Published           | Entry into force |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 28.01.2004/9 | RTL 2004, 16, 246   | 16.02.2004       |
| 04.03.2015   | RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 | 01.06.2015       |

This Regulation is enacted on the basis of Section 4(4) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (RT I 1999, 60, 616).

## § 1. Scope

(1) These requirements are the minimum requirements for the provision of safety signs in the workplace.

(2) These requirements shall not apply to the labelling of hazardous substances, mixtures, products or equipment to be placed on the market, or to the regulation of land, water or air transport.  
[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

## § 2. Implementation of safety signs

(1) Depending on the circumstances, a safety sign may be a label, sign, colour, illuminated sign, acoustic signal, verbal communication or hand signal referring to a specific object, activity or situation and ensuring that the necessary safety-related information or instructions are provided.

(2) In accordance with an assessment of the risks in the working environment, employers shall provide safety signs at work if it is not possible to reduce the risk adequately using technical means for collective protection or measures for the organisation of work.

(3) Inside undertakings in which land, water or air transport is used, the necessary signs, road markings and illuminated signs regulating the transport shall be installed in the places where the transport takes place, without prejudice to Section 13(1)–(3) of this Regulation.

(4) Employers shall inform employees and working-environment representatives of all safety signs that are in use at work or that have been changed or introduced, and provide them with training on the meaning of the safety signs and the rules applicable to behaviour in the areas where those signs apply.

(5) In order to introduce a new safety sign, the employer must consult the employees and working-environment representatives and allow them to be involved in the process of resolving issues relating to the introduction of the safety sign.

## § 3. Types of safety sign

(1) Safety signs are divided into permanent and temporary safety signs.

(2) Permanent safety signs shall be used:

- 1) in the event of prohibitions, warnings and mandatory requirements;
- 2) to indicate escape routes and exits, first-aid and fire-fighting equipment, and their location;
- 3) to indicate containers and pipes;

4) to indicate obstacles, dangerous locations and traffic routes.

(3) Temporary safety signs shall be used where:

- 1) an illuminated sign, acoustic signal or verbal communication is used to inform employees of imminent danger, to direct their activities or to instruct them to evacuate the area of danger in the event of an emergency;
- 2) a verbal communication or hand signal is used to direct a person carrying out a dangerous load-moving operation or a dangerous manoeuvre.

#### § 4. Interchanging and combining safety signs

(1) The following safety signs may be used interchangeably if they are equally effective:

- 1) a safety colour or a safety sign to mark an obstacle or drop;
- 2) illuminated signs, acoustic signals or verbal communication;
- 3) verbal communication or hand signals.

(2) The following safety signs may be used together:

- 1) illuminated signs and acoustic signals;
- 2) illuminated signs and verbal communication;
- 3) verbal communication and hand signals.

#### § 5. Colours used in safety signs

| Colour           | Purpose                        | Instructions for behaviour   |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Red              | Prohibition sign               | Dangerous behaviour  |
|                  | Danger alarm                   | Stop, shutdown, emergency cutout devices<br>Order to evacuate the area of danger           |
|                  | Fire-fighting equipment        | Identification and location  |
| Yellow or orange | Warning sign                   | Be careful, take precautions, examine  |
| Blue             | Mandatory sign                 | Specific mandatory behaviour or action<br>Obligation to wear personal protective equipment |
| Green            | Evacuation and first-aid signs | Doors, routes and exits  |
|                  |                                | Identification and location of first-aid equipment   |
|                  | No danger                      | Return to normal   |

#### § 6. Ensuring the effectiveness of safety signs

(1) In order to ensure the effectiveness of safety signs, the following measures shall be taken:

- 1) to preserve intrinsic operating characteristics, safety signs and signalling devices should be maintained in working order, checked and cleaned regularly and, where necessary, repaired, painted or replaced;
- 2) the number and positioning of signs and signalling devices must correspond to the extent of the danger and the size of the area that could be affected;
- 3) light-signalling and acoustic signalling devices requiring power must have an emergency supply in addition to the main supply, unless the hazard passes when the power supply is cut;
- 4) the triggering of an illuminated sign or acoustic signal warns of the presence of a hazard or indicates when the required action should start. The sign or signal must be active for as long as the hazard exists. Once the need has passed, the illuminated sign or acoustic signal must be switched off without delay;
- 5) to ensure that they function correctly and effectively, devices transmitting illuminated signs and acoustic signals must be checked before they are put into service and subsequently at sufficiently frequent intervals;
- 6) if the hearing or sight of a worker required to comply with a signal is impaired, including a hearing or sight impairment caused by the wearing of personal protective equipment, measures must be taken to supplement or replace the signs concerned.

(2) The effectiveness of a safety sign must not be adversely affected by:

- 1) the presence of another source of light or noise of the same type which interferes with visibility and audibility. Therefore, it is prohibited to place several light-signalling or acoustic-signalling devices close together, to use at the same time two or more illuminated signs which are likely to be confused, to use an illuminated sign in the proximity of another similar source of light, to use two acoustic signals at the same time, and to use an acoustic signal if the level of ambient noise in the working environment is high;
- 2) poor design, insufficient number, incorrect positioning, poor state of repair or incorrect functioning of the sign.

## § 7. Features of safety signs

(1) A safety sign provides specific safety-related information by a combination of geometric shape, colours and symbols or a pictogram.

(2) Safety signs are divided in accordance with their purpose into prohibition signs, warning signs, mandatory signs, emergency escape and first-aid signs, and fire-fighting signs. Their shape and colour is described in Section 9(1)–(5) of this Regulation.

(3) Pictograms used on safety signs must be as simple as possible and contain only essential details. They may be slightly different from or more detailed than those shown in Section 9(1)–(5), provided that they do not change the meaning of the signs or make it harder to understand them.

(4) Safety signs shall be made of shock, weather and environment-resistant material.

(5) The dimensions, colours and lighting of safety signs shall ensure that they can easily be seen and understood.

## § 8. Use of safety signs

(1) If there are areas of general danger at a workplace, safety signs shall be positioned at the entrance to those areas. If there is one specific source of danger, a sign shall be positioned next to it.

(1<sup>1</sup>) Areas, rooms or enclosures used for the storage of hazardous substances or mixtures must be indicated by a suitable warning sign taken from Section 9(2) of this Regulation, or marked as provided in Section 10, unless the labelling of the individual packages or containers is adequate for this purpose. If there is no warning sign in Section 9(2) of this Regulation with which to alert people to hazardous substances or mixtures, the appropriate hazard pictogram set out in Annex V to Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1) ('the CLP Regulation') shall be used.  
[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

(2) In order to ensure visibility, safety signs shall be positioned in well-lit locations and at a height appropriate to the line of sight, ensuring that they are not hidden by constructions or objects. Phosphorescent colours, reflective materials or artificial lighting shall be used where the level of natural light is poor, having regard to the requirements concerning workplace lighting. Signs must be easily accessible for maintenance purposes.

(3) When positioning safety signs, account must be taken of the maximum distance from which they are recognisable, depending on their size:

| Prohibition and mandatory signs                     | Diameter (mm)             | Maximum distance from which they can be recognised (m) |
|---|---------------------------|--|
|   | 50                        | 2  |
|   | 100                       | 4  |
|   | 200                       | 8  |
|   | 315                       | 13   |
|   | 400                       | 16   |
| Warning signs                                       | Length of side (mm)       | Maximum distance from which they can be recognised (m) |
|   | 50                        | 2  |
|   | 100                       | 3  |
|   | 200                       | 7  |
|   | 315                       | 10   |
|   | 400                       | 13   |
| Evacuation and first-aid signs, fire-fighting signs | Lengths of sides a×b (mm) | Maximum distance from which they can be recognised (m) |
|   | 100 × 100                 | 10   |
|   | 100 × 200                 | 10   |
|   | 148 × 148                 | 15   |
|   | 148 × 297                 | 15   |
|   | 200 × 200                 | 20   |
|   | 200 × 400                 | 20   |
|   | 250 × 250                 | 25   |

(4) A safety sign shall be removed when the hazard to which it refers ceases to exist.

(5) A supplemental sign may be added to a safety sign. This expresses in words the meaning of the sign, provides additional information about the area in which the sign applies, or indicates the location of the room or device shown on the sign.

### § 9. Safety signs to be used

(1) Prohibition signs The intrinsic features of prohibition signs are a round shape, a black pictogram on a white background, red edging and a diagonal line. The red part takes up at least 35 % of the area of the sign.



No smoking



Smoking and  
naked flames  
forbidden



No access for  
pedestrians



Do not extinguish  
with water



Not drinkable



No access for  
unauthorised persons



No access for  
industrial vehicles



Do not touch

(2) Warning signs

The intrinsic features of warning signs are a triangular shape, a black pictogram on a yellow background with black edging. The yellow part takes up at least 50 % of the area of the sign.





Flammable material



Explosive material



Toxic material



Corrosive material



Radioactive material



Overhead load



Moving industrial vehicle



Electrical hazard



General danger \*



Laser beam



Oxidant material



Non-ionizing radiation



Strong magnetic field



Obstacle



Drop



Biological risk



Low temperature



Potentially explosive atmosphere

\* The 'General danger' warning sign shall not be used to warn about hazardous substances or mixtures, except for cases when the warning sign is used in accordance with the second sentence of Section 10(6) of this Regulation to indicate stores of hazardous substances or mixtures.

[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

(3) Mandatory signs

The intrinsic features of mandatory signs are a round shape and a white pictogram on a blue background. The blue part takes up at least 50 % of the area of the sign.



Eye protection  
must be worn



Safety helmet  
must be worn



Ear protection  
must be worn



Respiratory protective  
equipment must be worn



Safety boots  
must be worn



Safety gloves  
must be worn



Safety overalls  
must be worn



Face protection  
must be worn



Safety harness  
must be worn



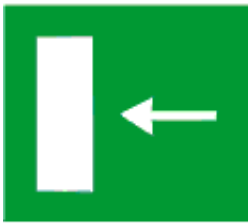
Footpath for  
pedestrians



General mandatory sign (to be accompanied  
where necessary by another sign)

(4) Evacuation and first-aid signs

The intrinsic features of these signs are a rectangular or square shape and a white pictogram on a green background. The green part takes up at least 50 % of the area of the sign.



Emergency exit or escape route



First aid



Stretcher



Safety shower



Eyewash



Emergency telephone



Here/below



On the left



On the right



In front/above

(5) Fire-fighting signs

The intrinsic features of fire-fighting signs are a rectangular or square shape and a white pictogram on a red background. The red part takes up at least 50 % of the area of the sign.





Fire hose



Fire escape ladder



Fire extinguisher



Emergency telephone



Here/below



On the left



On the right



In front/above

#### § 10. Signs on containers and pipes

(1) Containers for hazardous substances or mixtures, and containers with the visible pipes containing or transporting hazardous substances and mixtures, must be labelled with the relevant hazard pictograms in accordance with the CLP Regulation.

[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

(2) Subsection 1 of this Section does not apply to containers used at work for brief periods or to containers whose contents change frequently, provided that alternative measures guaranteeing the same level of protection are taken, in particular measures to inform and instruct workers.

[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

(3) The labels referred to in subsection 1 of this Section may:

- 1) be replaced by warning signs set out in Section 9(2) of this Regulation. If there is no equivalent warning sign, the relevant hazard pictogram set out in Annex V to the CLP Regulation shall be used;
- 2) be supplemented by additional information, such as the name or formula of the hazardous substance or mixture and the details of the hazard;

3) for the transporting of containers at the place of work, be supplemented or replaced by signs that are applicable in the European Union for the transport of hazardous substances or mixtures.

[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

(4) In addition to the requirements set out in subsection 1, pipes shall be labelled using permanent dye or a coloured sticker with an arrow showing the direction in which the substance is flowing, in accordance with the table below.

| Substance flowing through | Colour | Colour of arrow |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| water                     | green  | white           |
| vapour                    | red    | white           |
| air                       | grey   | black           |
| combustible gases         | yellow | red             |
| non-combustible gases     | black  | white           |
| acids                     | orange | black           |
| alkalines                 | violet | white           |
| combustible liquids       | brown  | red             |
| non-combustible liquids   | black  | white           |
| oxygen                    | blue   | white           |

(5) The labelling on containers and pipes must be positioned visibly and be weather and environment-resistant. The labelling on pipes shall be repeated at reasonable intervals and in the vicinity of the most dangerous points, such as valves and joints.

(6) If the labelling on the individual packages or containers of hazardous substances or mixtures is inadequate to guarantee safety, the rooms or areas used for their storage shall be indicated by a suitable warning sign from Section 9(2) or a label referred to in subsection 1 of this Section, having regard to the requirements set out in Sections 7(5) and 8(3) concerning the size of signs. Stores of a number of hazardous substances or mixtures may be indicated by the 'General danger' warning sign. The signs or labels referred to above must be positioned near the storage area or on the door leading into the storage room.  
[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 — entry into force 1 June 2015]

#### **§ 11. Marking of fire-fighting equipment**

The signs described in Section 9(5) shall be used for the identification and location of fire-fighting equipment.

#### **§ 12. Marking of obstacles and dangerous locations**

(1) Places where there is a risk of colliding with obstacles, of falling or of objects falling should be marked with alternating yellow and black or alternating red and white stripes in zones in the undertaking to which workers have access during their work.

(2) The extent of the markings must be commensurate with the scale of the obstacle or area of danger to be marked.

(3) The yellow and black or red and white stripes must be at an angle of approximately 45° and of equal size.

(4) Example of the marking:



#### **§ 13. Marking of traffic routes**

(1) Where necessary to ensure the safety of workers, traffic routes for vehicles in rooms must be clearly identified by continuous stripes. These stripes should preferably be white or yellow, taking account of the colour of the floor so as to achieve the necessary contrast.

(2) The stripes must be located so as to indicate the necessary safe distance between the means of transport and any objects or workers located at the edge of the traffic route.

(3) Permanent traffic routes on the territory of an undertaking must be marked in accordance with the requirements of subsections 1 and 2, unless they are provided with barriers or pavements.

#### **§ 14. Features of illuminated signs**

(1) Illuminated signs are signs produced by a device made of transparent or translucent materials. The device is illuminated from the inside or the rear in such a way that the symbol or pictogram on the surface becomes visible.

(2) Illuminated signs must produce a luminous contrast which is appropriate to its environment, without producing glare. The light emitted must be sufficient to ensure good visibility.

(3) Illuminated signs may be of a single colour or supplemented with a symbol or pictogram.

(4) The colour and meaning of illustrated signs of a single colour must correspond to the requirements set out in Section 5.

(5) Pictograms on illuminated signs must meet the requirements set out in Section 7(3) and (4).

#### **§ 15. Use of illuminated signs**

(1) If a device is intended to emit both continuous and intermittent signs, the intermittent sign should be used to indicate serious danger or an urgent need for action.

(2) The duration of each flash and the frequency of the flashes of an intermittent illuminated sign must be such as to ensure that the message is understood correctly and to avoid any confusion between different intermittent or continuous illuminated signs.

(3) If a flashing sign is used instead of or together with an acoustic signal, both should use the same length and frequency of signal.

(4) Devices for emitting flashing signs in the event of serious danger must be under special surveillance or be fitted with an auxiliary lamp.

#### **§ 16. Features of acoustic signals**

(1) An acoustic signal is a coded sound which is released and transmitted by a device designed for that purpose, without the use of a human or artificial voice.

(2) Acoustic signals must:

- 1) in order to ensure audibility, have a sound level which is considerably higher than the level of ambient noise, without being excessive or painful to the ear;
- 2) be easily recognisable, particularly in terms of pulse length and the interval between pulses or groups of pulses, and be clearly distinct from any other acoustic signals and ambient noises.

(3) If an acoustic signalling device is intended to emit an acoustic signal at both constant and variable frequencies, the variable frequency should be used to indicate a higher level of danger or a more urgent need for action.

(4) The acoustic signal for the evacuation of an area of danger in the event of serious and immediate danger must be continuous.

#### **§ 17. Features of verbal communication**

(1) Verbal communication is a predetermined spoken message communicated by a human or artificial voice.

(2) Verbal communication is given by the emitter of the message to one or more hearers either directly or in code in the form of short texts, phrases, groups of words or individual words.

(3) Verbal communication must be as short, simple and clear as possible.

#### **§ 18. Transmission of verbal communication**

(1) Verbal communication is broadcast either directly by a person or indirectly by means of a device that broadcasts a human or artificial voice.

(2) The emitter of verbal communication must be able to pronounce the message clearly and correctly. The recipient must be able to understand the message correctly and consequently act in a manner that guarantees safety.

(3) Commands such as the following shall be used as verbal communication (instead of or together with hand signals):

attention — draws attention to the fact that commands are about to be given;

stop — to interrupt or end a movement;

end — to stop an operation;

raise — to have a load raised;

lower — to have a load lowered;

forwards, backwards, right, left — to be used with a hand signal;

danger — to make an emergency stop;

quickly — to speed up a movement.

#### **§ 19. Features of hand signals**

(1) A hand signal is an agreed movement or position of the arms and/or hands for guiding a person who is carrying out a load-moving operation or vehicle manoeuvres which constitute a danger for workers.

(2) Hand signals must be precise, simple, expansive, easy to make and to understand, and clearly distinct from other such signals.

(3) When both arms/hands are used at the same time, they must be moved symmetrically. Only one signal may be given at a time.

(4) Provided that they fulfil the requirements of subsections 2 and 3, the signals used may vary slightly from or be more detailed than those shown in Section 21, although they must have the same meaning and be clearly comprehensible.

## § 20. Use of hand signals

(1) The person giving the hand signals ('the signaller') shall use arm/hand movements to give the person receiving the signals ('the operator') instructions for manoeuvring or for moving loads.

(2) The signaller must be able to safely monitor all manoeuvres and all load-moving operations. If this is not possible, one or more extra signallers should be deployed to repeat the signals being given.

(3) The signaller must not be given any further duties in addition to directing manoeuvres and load-moving operations and ensuring the safety of workers in the vicinity.




(4) The operator must interrupt the manoeuvre or load-moving operation and request further instructions either using hand signal No 1 as shown in Section 21(1) or in another predetermined manner if he or she is unable to carry out safely the order that has been given.

(5) Additional requirements for signallers:




- 1) the operator must be able to recognise the signaller without difficulty;
- 2) in order to distinguish himself or herself from other workers, the signaller must wear one or more brightly coloured item (item of clothing, helmet, sleeves or armbands). Items of the same colour should be preferred. Instead of those items, the signaller may carry a blue and white striped wand or a small blue flag. These features may be used only by signallers.

## § 21. Hand signals to be used



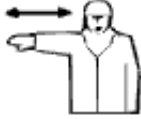
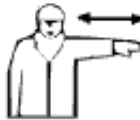

(1) General signals

| No | Meaning                                 | Description   | Illustration  |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1. | ATTENTION<br>I will give a command      | Both arms are extended horizontally with the palms facing forward |    |
| 2. | STOP<br>Interruption or end of movement | The right arm points upwards with the palm facing forwards        |   |
| 3. | END of the operation                    | Both hands are clasped at chest height                            |  |


(2) Signals directing vertical movements

| No | Meaning           | Description   | Illustration  |
|----|-------------------|---|---|
| 1. | RAISE             | The right arm points upwards with the palm facing forward and slowly makes a circle   |  |
| 2. | LOWER             | The right arm points downwards with the palm facing inwards and slowly makes a circle |  |
| 3. | VERTICAL DISTANCE | The hands indicate the relevant distance  |  |

(3) Signals directing horizontal movements

| No | Meaning                                  | Description  | Illustration  |
|----|--|--|---|
| 1. | MOVE FORWARDS                            | Both arms are bent with the palms facing upwards, and the forearms make slow movements towards the body                          |    |
| 2. | MOVE BACKWARDS                           | Both arms are bent with the palms facing downwards, and the forearms make slow movements away from the body                      |    |
| 3. | RIGHT from the signaller's point of view | The right arm is extended more or less horizontally with the palm facing downwards and slowly makes small movements to the right |    |
| 4. | LEFT from the signaller's point of view  | The left arm is extended more or less horizontally with the palm facing downwards and slowly makes small movements to the left   |    |
| 5. | HORIZONTAL DISTANCE                      | The hands indicate the relevant distance   |  |

(4) Signals in the event of danger

| No | Meaning | Description  | Illustration  |
|----|---------|--|---|
| 1. | DANGER  | Both arms point upwards with the palms facing forwards |  |
| 2. | QUICK   | All movements are repeated more quickly                |   |
| 3. | SLOW    | All movements are repeated more slowly                 |   |

**§ 22. Implementing provisions**

(1) This Regulation shall enter into force on 1 January 2000.

(2) Danger signs currently in use shall be brought into line with these requirements within two years of the entry into force of this Regulation.

<sup>1</sup>Council Directive 92/58/EEC on the minimum requirements for the provisions of safety and/or health signs at work (OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, p. 23), amended by Directive 2014/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 65, 5.3.2014, p. 1).  
[RT I, 12.03.2015, 8 - entry into force 01.06.2015]