

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

These regulations state that every employer and self-employed person has a legal obligation to regularly carry out a risk assessment relating to the health and safety of his employees. If any risks found cannot be avoided or eliminated, employers must use a safety sign on the premises, even if it is a temporary risk or hazard, to inform staff, contractors or visitors of the hazard on your premises.

Your risk assessment should include:

Emergency escape routes and identification of fire-fighting equipment

To assess these you should start from the centre of the site or building, or point farthest from a fire exit and work towards the exit, noting changes in direction and levels. At these points a fire exit sign should be placed as well as at regular points along the route i.e you should always be able to see a fire exit sign indicating the direction you should take. Upon exiting the building the assembly point or points should be signed.

Fire Exit doors should have a sign explaining opening methods and fire doors a sign explaining if they should be kept shut and/or kept clear as appropriate. The location of all fire-fighting equipment should be clearly marked with a sign. This includes extinguishers, hose reels and call points.

Building site entrances and general areas

At the entrances to sites and areas within sites where more general safety policies apply, signs should be used.

For example -

'No Smoking' or 'this is a safety helmet area'. First aid equipment and facilities should also be adequately signed.

Machinery hazards

Signs to warn of hazards and actions to be taken, such as ensuring guards are in place and identifying emergency stop buttons, must be placed on the machine, or if this is not possible close to the machine, or its control panel. Signs regarding protective clothing, equipment and action to be taken must be placed on or close to the machine.

Obstacles and dangerous locations

A risk assessment of places where there is a risk of colliding with obstacles i.e columns, posts, low headroom, someone tripping or falling, or of objects falling, needs to be made. Where risks exist they must be marked with appropriate safety signs.

Pedestrian and traffic routes

Traffic routes for vehicles must be clearly identified to ensure the protection of employees, contractors and visitors. Signs must be used to indicate whether it is a pedestrian or vehicle route.