

Australian Standard[®]

**Safety signs for the occupational
environment**

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Australian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine
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Safety signs for the occupational environment

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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee on Industrial Warning Signs to supersede AS 1319—1983.

The two principal reasons for revising the Standard at this time are firstly to incorporate six new symbolic signs into the Standard, and secondly to alter the basic designs of signs with text messages to incorporate the colour and shape coding of symbolic signs.

The six new signs have been accepted as a result of successful comprehension testing in accordance with procedures similar to those now specified in AS 2342. The testing was carried out by Standards Australia with the financial and practical assistance of a number of large industrial employers in both public and commercial enterprises.

Signs whose function is to warn of hazards and danger have now been grouped under the general heading of hazard signs, and subdivided into DANGER signs and warning signs, the former to be used where the hazard is considered to be potentially life threatening. The term *warning* now replaces the term *caution* in previous editions, for consistency with road signs and water safety signs (neither term is now actually used on signs).

The shape coding for warning signs has been retained as a triangle, despite the use of the diamond as a warning shape for road signs and water safety signs. The Committee considered that the potential for confusion with certain signs in the Hazchem series (see AS 1216*), notably those for oxidizing agents, would render use of the yellow diamond shape undesirable for general warning signs in the industrial environment.

The text of this Standard has also been modified and expanded to provide more guidance on the design, manufacture and use of industrial safety signs.

The terms 'normative' and 'informative' have been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which they apply. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

* AS 1216, *Classification, hazard identification and information systems for dangerous goods*.

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FOREWORD

Symbols and symbolic signs are often regarded as a means of visual communication superior to words. With well designed graphics, a symbolic sign can have greater legibility than one with words, and provided the meaning is reasonably self-evident to the people for whom its message is intended, it can transcend language barriers. However, whether the meaning is sufficiently self-evident cannot be reliably assessed without comprehension testing in accordance with AS 2342. This Standard, therefore, requires that only the symbolic signs specified shall be used, except where a new symbol has been introduced after testing as set out in Clause 3.2.

The Standard also makes provision for combination word/symbol signs. These may be in the form of either a 'composite' sign, where the words are used to qualify or augment the message, or a 'hybrid' sign where the meaning of the symbol is merely repeated in words. Use of the latter is generally deprecated because, if the symbol performed satisfactorily in comprehension testing, it should not be necessary. The need to provide a hybrid sign is generally indicative of a symbol which does not convey its meaning adequately, and therefore, either needs further attention to its design, or should be abandoned in favour of words. However, if a symbol has been accepted entirely on the results of the *recall* test in AS 2342 after having failed the *comprehension* test, its use as a hybrid sign may need to be considered (see Clause 2.3.3(d) of this Standard).

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Australian Standard

Safety signs for the occupational environment

SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

1.1 SCOPE This Standard sets out requirements for the design and use of safety signs intended for use in the occupational environment to regulate and control safety related behaviour, to warn of hazards and to provide emergency information including fire protection information. It does not include EXIT signs of the type specified in AS 2293.1 for use inside buildings.

1.2 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS The following documents are referred to in the Standard:

AS

1742 Manual of uniform traffic control devices

1742.1 Part 1: General introduction and index of signs

1744 Standard alphabets for road signs

2293 Emergency evacuation lighting in buildings

2293.1 Part 1: Design and installation

2342 Development, testing and implementation of information and safety symbols and symbolic signs

2700 Colour standards for general purposes

AS/NZS

1906 Retroreflective materials and devices for road traffic control purposes

1906.1 Part 1: Retroreflective materials

BS

873 Road traffic signs and internally illuminated bollards

873.5 Part 5: Specification for internally illuminated signs and external lighting luminaires

1.3 DEFINITIONS For the purpose of this Standard the definitions below apply.

1.3.1 Background—that part of a sign that is behind the legend.

1.3.2 Combination signs—

(a) *Combination sign*—a sign which comprises both words and a symbol.

(b) *Composite sign*—a combination sign on which the words qualify or augment the symbol.

(c) *Hybrid sign*—a combination sign on which the words simply repeat the message given by the symbol.

1.3.3 Danger—applied in the context of safety signs to a situation which is likely to be life threatening if the message is ignored.

1.3.4 Enclosure—a coloured band that outlines and emphasizes the symbolic shape of a sign (sometimes referred to as the border).



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