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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**1996 No. 341**

**The Health and Safety (Safety Signs  
and Signals) Regulations 1996**

**Citation and commencement**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and shall come into force on 1st April 1996.

**Interpretation**

2.—(1) In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires—

“the 1974 Act” means the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;

“acoustic signal” means a coded sound signal which is released and transmitted by a device designed for that purpose, without the use of a human or artificial voice;

“dangerous goods” has the meaning assigned to it by regulation 2(1) of the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail (Classification, Packaging and Labelling) Regulations 1994(1);

“emergency escape or first-aid sign” means a sign giving information on escape routes or emergency exits or first-aid or rescue facilities;

“fire safety sign” means a sign (including an illuminated sign or an acoustic signal) which—

- (i) provides information on escape routes and emergency exits in case of fire;
- (ii) provides information on the identification or location of fire-fighting equipment; or
- (iii) gives warning in case of fire;

“hand signal” means a movement or position of the arms or hands or a combination thereof, in coded form, for guiding persons who are carrying out manoeuvres which create a risk to the health or safety of persons at work;

“illuminated sign” means a sign produced by a device made of transparent or translucent materials which are illuminated from the inside or the rear in such a way as to give the appearance of a luminous surface;

“mandatory sign” means a sign prescribing behaviour;

“prohibition sign” means a sign prohibiting behaviour likely to cause a risk to health or safety;

“safety colour” means a colour to which a meaning is assigned;

“safety sign” means a sign referring to a specific object, activity or situation and providing information or instruction about health or safety at work by means of a signboard, a safety colour, an illuminated sign, an acoustic signal, a verbal communication or a hand signal;

“signboard” means a sign which provides information or instructions by a combination of geometric shape, colour and a symbol or pictogram and which is rendered visible by lighting of sufficient intensity;

“symbol or pictogram” means a figure which describes a situation or prescribes behaviour and which is used on a signboard or illuminated surface;

“verbal communication” means a predetermined spoken message communicated by a human or artificial voice;

“warning sign” means a sign giving a warning of a risk to health or safety.

(2) Any reference in these Regulations to a sign providing instructions includes a mandatory sign, a prohibition sign and a warning sign.

(3) In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires—

- (a) a reference to a numbered regulation or Schedule is a reference to the regulation or Schedule in these Regulations so numbered; and
- (b) a reference to a numbered paragraph is a reference to the paragraph so numbered in the regulation or Schedule in which that reference occurs.

### **Application**

3.—(1) These Regulations shall not apply—

- (a) to signs used in connection with the supply of any dangerous substance, preparation, product or equipment except to the extent that any enactment (whether in an Act or instrument) which requires such signs makes reference to these Regulations;
- (b) to dangerous goods during the course of their transport by road, rail, inland waterway, sea or air;
- (c) subject to paragraph (6) of regulation 4, to signs used for regulating road, rail, inland waterway, sea or air traffic; or
- (d) to or in relation to the master or crew of a sea-going ship or to the employer of such persons in respect of normal ship-board activities of a ship’s crew under the direction of the master.

(2) These Regulations shall apply—

- (a) in Great Britain; and
- (b) to and in relation to the premises and activities outside Great Britain to which sections 1 to 59 and 80 to 82 of the 1974 Act apply by virtue of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (Application Outside Great Britain) Order 1995(2) as they apply within Great Britain.

(3) These Regulations shall not extend to Northern Ireland.

### **Provision and maintenance of safety signs**

4.—(1) Paragraph (4) shall apply if the risk assessment made under paragraph (1) of regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992(3) indicates that the employer concerned, having adopted all appropriate techniques for collective protection, and measures, methods or procedures used in the organisation of work, cannot avoid or adequately reduce risks to employees except by the provision of appropriate safety signs to warn or instruct, or both, of the nature of those risks and the measures to be taken to protect against them.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1), risks shall only be treated as having been adequately reduced if, having adopted the appropriate techniques, measures, methods or procedures referred to in that paragraph, there is no longer a significant risk of harm having regard to the magnitude and nature of the risks arising from the work concerned.

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(2) S.I. 1995/263.

(3) S.I. 1992/2051.

(3) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph (4) shall also apply in relation to fire safety signs where they are required to comply with the provisions of any enactment (whether in an Act or instrument).

(4) Where this paragraph applies, the employer shall (without prejudice to the requirements as to the signs contained in regulation 11(2) of the Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response) Regulations 1995(4))—

- (a) in accordance with the requirements set out in Parts I to VII of Schedule 1, provide and maintain any appropriate safety sign (other than a hand signal or verbal communication) described in those Parts, or ensure such sign is in place; and
- (b) subject to paragraph (5), in accordance with the requirements of Parts I, VIII and IX of Schedule 1, ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that any appropriate hand signal or verbal communication described in those Parts is used; and
- (c) provide and maintain any safety sign provided in pursuance of paragraph (6) or ensure such sign is in place.

(5) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph (4), the appropriate hand signal described in the documents specified in Schedule 2 shall be an alternative to the corresponding hand signal described in paragraph 3 of Part IX of Schedule 1.

(6) Where it is appropriate to provide safety signs in accordance with paragraph (1) because at a place of work there is a risk to the health or safety of any employee in connection with the presence or movement of traffic (including pedestrians in relation to such traffic) and there is an appropriate sign in that connection prescribed under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984(5), that sign shall be used whether or not that Act applies to that place of work.

### **Information, instruction and training**

5.—(1) Every employer shall ensure that comprehensible and relevant information on the measures to be taken in connection with safety signs is provided to each of his employees.

(2) Every employer shall ensure that each of his employees receives suitable and sufficient instruction and training in the meaning of safety signs and the measures to be taken in connection with safety signs.

### **Transitional provisions**

6. These Regulations shall not have effect in relation to any fire safety signs lawfully in use immediately before the coming into force of these Regulations until 24 December 1998.

### **Enforcement**

7. Notwithstanding regulation 3 of the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1989(6), the enforcing authority in relation to fire safety signs provided in pursuance of regulation 4(4) as applied by regulation 4(3) (signs provided to comply with the provisions of any enactment) shall be—

- (a) the Health and Safety Executive, in the case of—
    - (i) premises where the Fire Certificates (Special Premises) Regulations 1976(7) apply;
- or

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(4) S.I. 1995/743.

(5) 1984 c. 27.

(6) S.I. 1989/1903.

(7) S.I. 1976/2003, amended by S.I. 1985/1333, S.I. 1987/37 and S.I. 1992/1811.

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- (ii) premises and activities to which these Regulations apply by virtue of paragraph (2) (b) of regulation 3;
- (b) in any other case, the authority or class of authorities responsible for enforcing the relevant provision of the enactment which applies to the case.

**Revocations and amendments**

8.—(1) The instruments referred to in column 1 of Part I of Schedule 3 shall be revoked to the extent specified in column 3 of that Part.

(2) The instruments referred to in Part II of Schedule 3 shall be modified to the extent specified in that Part.

16th February 1996.

*John Selwyn Gummer*  
Secretary of State for the Environment.

18th February 1996.

*Michael Howard*  
Secretary of State for the Home  
Department