

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Safety signs and symbols are used as one of a variety of methods of communicating health and safety information. Safety signs are not a substitute for other means of controlling risks in the workplace. Their use must be considered as part of the hierarchy of risk control measures and shall be used where applicable in all work areas. Safety signs are to warn of any remaining significant risk or to instruct staff and others of the measures they must take in relation to these risks.
- 1.2 Signs are designed to allow recognition of significant risks through a combination of shape, colour or pictogram and may be accompanied by supplementary text. Where the occasion requires, hand signals or spoken messages are to be used to guide people carrying out hazardous or dangerous manoeuvres – hand signals or spoken messages shall only be carried out by trained and competent persons i.e. Banksman or Signaller. A competent person will be qualified, current and experienced in the activity.
- 1.3 Signs and labels used in connection with the supply of substances, products and equipment or the transport of dangerous goods are not covered in this guidance note. More detailed information on the usage of health and safety signage can be found in the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This guidance note applies to all staff employed by the Trust, either directly or indirectly, and to any other person or organisation which uses Trust services or premises for any purpose and sets out the roles and responsibilities and arrangements for safety signs and symbols. It will also apply to bank, temporary staff, volunteers, young workers, staff working from home and contractors working on Trust business. The principles of this policy shall apply to all Trust work activities, regardless of who has or who is supplying or providing them.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Executive Lead (Director of Estates, Facilities & Sustainability)**

- 3.1.1 To act as the executive lead and has the responsibility, accountability and ownership for this guidance note together with its implementation.

### **3.2 Senior Estates Manager**

- 3.2.1 To ensure that adequate and visible signage is provided and maintained to inform or warn all staff and visitors of significant risks throughout the hospital premises.

### **3.3 CMG Head of Operations**

- 3.3.1 Ensuring that the services in their areas of responsibility implement and comply with this guidance note and that all reasonable steps are taken to maintain and where necessary, improve health and safety standards.
- 3.3.2 Ensuring adequate resources are made available to meet that requirement.

### **3.4 Line Managers/Supervisors**

Line Managers are responsible for:






- 3.4.1 The implementation of this guidance note within their area of control and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to maintain and where necessary, improve health and safety standards.
- 3.4.2 Take into account the risk assessments conducted for their area, on the hazard itself when determining the need to display safety signs locally. Where a significant risk remains following implementation of control measures, appropriate safety signs must be displayed in a prominent location and in accordance with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations, where they apply.
- 3.4.3 Where a safety sign would not help to reduce the risk, or where the risk is not significant, there is no need to provide a sign. Managers must ensure that all safety signs within their area of responsibility are properly maintained, not obstructed from view, and that all personnel receive suitable and adequate information, instruction and training in the meaning of safety signs and the measures to be taken in connection with them. Although most safety signs are self-explanatory, staff and visitors, including contractors (particularly new ones) may be unfamiliar with the meaning of some of the less commonly used signs. It is therefore important that the meaning of any unfamiliar sign is clearly explained, and that personnel and visitors are aware of the consequences of not following the warning or instruction given by the sign.

### **3.5 Employees – All Staff Must:**

- 3.5.1 Familiarise themselves with this guidance note and co-operate with the arrangements put in place locally and throughout the hospital premises.
- 3.5.2 Must ensure that they understand the meanings of safety signs and comply with the instruction; e.g. compliance with a prohibition or mandatory safety sign. Staff or visitors who are unfamiliar with the meaning of the sign, should first ask their manager for an explanation, rather than proceed at risk.
- 3.5.3 All staff should bring to their manager's attention any concerns that they may have about any workplace health and safety issues; e.g. damaged, missing or obscured signage.

## 4. Sign Format and Placement

4.1 Safety signs have specific meanings dependent on their shape and colour. The table below shows examples of the acceptable format for safety signs.

Meaning or Purpose	Colour	Shape	Instruction and Information	Example
Mandatory sign	White pictogram on a blue background	Round	Must do; specific behaviour or action, e.g. wear personal protective equipment.	
Safe condition	White pictogram on a green background.	Rectangle or square	Identifies a safe route; location of safety equipment; safe condition e.g. escape routes; first aid equipment.	
Fire Safety	White pictogram on a red background	Rectangle or square	Fire-fighting equipment or facilities	
Prohibition	Black pictogram on a white background with a red border  May have text on as well	Circular	Prohibiting behaviour likely to increase or cause danger. E.G – No access for unauthorised persons	
Warning sign	Yellow/black  May have text on as well	Triangular	Gives a warning of a hazard or danger	

The size of pictograms and text should be sufficient to allow easy recognition at normal working distances. The following table provides guidance on minimum text sizes; however, sizes may need to be increased to ensure readability e.g. where people may have visual impairments.

Viewing distance (mm)	Height in mm
501-900	5
901-1800	9
1801-3600	18
3601-6000	30

Care should also be taken to ensure the intended audience are not overwhelmed by too many signs, which can result in sign or sign cluster blindness. If you have several signs covering a common risk control such as use of protective work wear, consider consolidating them on to a single sign. Over familiarity or sign blindness can occur when a worker sees a sign every day, and because they are so familiar with the sign there is a danger of confusion or of important information being overlooked or they may choose to ignore its message. This can be mitigated with regular verbal reinforcement of the sign's message.

Signage may also be used to mark obstacles, dangerous locations and traffic routes. Highlighting the edge of a raised platform or area where objects may fall using markings consisting of continuous yellow and black, or red and white stripes.



## **5. Supporting References**

5.1 This guidance note is supported by the processes/procedures/standards found in the associated documents as detailed below, and which must be used in conjunction with this guidance note.

- Health & Safety at Work etc, Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996

- Safety Signs and Signals – HSE guidance L64.
- Health and Safety Policy A17/2002

## **6. Process for Version Control, Document Archiving and Review**

- 6.1 This document will be uploaded onto SharePoint and available for access by Staff through INsite. It will be stored and archived through this system.
- 6.2 The UHL Health and Safety Committee through the Health and Safety Team are responsible for keeping this policy up to date.