

Non-binding Guidelines Regarding Directive 92/58/EEC

Safety and/or health signs at work



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Foreword

In December 2017, the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH) adopted its Opinion on the modernisation of six OSH directives to ensure healthier and safer work for all (¹). In this document, the ACSH confirmed the need to update the six directives, including Directive 92/58/EEC, as identified by the European Commission in its Communication on safer and healthier work for all – modernisation of the EU occupational safety and health legislation and policy (²). The ACSH recommended that the Commission consider, among other things, clarifying the relationship between the directive and the current ISO standard, and that this could be accomplished by non-binding guidelines.

On 30 May 2018, the ACSH set up a working party to prepare an opinion on non-binding guidelines to clarify certain issues regarding the practical application of Directive 92/58/EEC (³) and the interrelationship between Directive 92/58/EEC and ISO standards, in order to ensure a greater harmonisation of safety signs across the EU. With regard to this issue, the ACSH opinion states that, despite the existence of the international instruments on safety signs, the directive takes precedence over those instruments and is an important element of the common protective measures in place in the EU.

On 5 November 2020, the working party finalised work on the draft guidelines and the draft opinion, which were subsequently adopted by the plenary of the ACSH on 10 December 2020.

The guidelines consist of four parts. Section 1 describes certain legal aspects of the directive and explains the concept of minimum requirements. Section 2 describes in detail a selection of safety signs as laid down by the abovementioned directive and compares them with ISO signs. Annex I provides a list of references and/or practices for further reading. Finally, in Annex II, Table 1 presents different variations of relevant safety signs.

It should be highlighted that the guidelines explain the minimum requirements as laid down by Directive 92/58/EEC, whereas Member States are allowed to maintain or adopt stricter requirements. In other words, a degree of freedom is left to Member States to decide which solutions are best in specific national situations, provided that the minimum requirements at EU level are met. Therefore, users in Members States are advised to first check national provisions which implement Directive 92/58/EEC in their national legal systems.

⁽¹) The Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work, Opinion on the modernisation of six OSH directives to ensure healthier and safer work for all, Doc.1718/2017, adopted on 6.12.2017.

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Safer and healthier work for all – modernisation of the EU occupational safety and health legislation and policy, COM(2017) 12 final of 10 January 2017 (http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16874&langId=en).

⁽³⁾ OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, p. 23, as amended.

1. Legal context at EU level

1.1. Directive 89/391/EEC and Directive 92/58/EEC

1.1.1. Summary of the provisions of Directive 89/391/EEC and Directive 92/58/EEC

Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (framework directive) (4) lays down, among other things, the general principles concerning the prevention of risks, the protection of safety and health of workers at the workplace and general guidelines for the implementation of these principles. It also establishes a number of obligations for the employer. It applies to all sectors, both public and private, and covers all risks.

The EU legal act in force that specifically regulates the provision of safety and/or health signs at work is <u>Directive 92/58/EEC</u>. The objective of the individual Directive 92/58/EEC (5) is to supplement the framework directive by introducing specific minimum requirements on installing safety and/or health signs at work.

Directive 92/58/EEC sets out minimum requirements, which means that Member States are allowed to maintain or adopt more stringent requirements regarding the use of safety signs.

The directive consists of nine annexes in total. **Annex I** sets out the general minimum requirements concerning safety and/or health signs at work. **Annex II** lays down the minimum general requirements regarding signboards. **Annex III** provides information on the minimum requirements governing signs on containers and pipes, and **Annex IV** addresses the minimum requirements for the identification and location of firefighting equipment. **Annex V** sets out the minimum requirements governing signs used for obstacles and dangerous locations, and for marking traffic routes. **Annexes VI, VII, VIII and IX** address the minimum requirements for illuminated signs, acoustic signs, verbal communication and hand signals, respectively.

1.1.2. Scope of application

Directive 92/58/EEC applies to all sectors of activity covered by the framework directive and to all hazards that workers are exposed to which cannot be avoided or adequately reduced by other means.

Directive 92/58/EEC excludes signs for the placing on the market of dangerous substances and preparations, products and/or equipment and does not apply to signs

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p.1, as amended.

⁽⁵⁾ As subsequently amended.

used for regulating road, rail, inland waterway, sea or air transport. It also provides for some other exceptions in Article 6 (6).

1.1.3. Employers' obligations

Employers shall provide safety and/or health signs, as laid down in Directive 92/58/EEC where hazards cannot be avoided or adequately reduced by techniques for collective protection or measures, methods or procedures used in the organisation of work, or ensure that such signs are in place.

First of all, an employer shall apply the general principles of prevention: avoid risks, evaluate those which cannot be avoided, combat the risks at the source, adapt the work to the individual, replace the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous, give priority to collective protective measures over individual protective measures and give appropriate instructions to the workers.

When applying Directive 92/58/EEC, employers shall take into account the risk assessment made in accordance with Framework Directive 89/391/EEC, as well as the resulting preventive and protective measures.

Workers and/or their representatives shall be informed of all the measures to be taken concerning the safety and/or health signs used at work. Workers must be given suitable instruction, in particular in the form of specific information concerning the safety and/or health signs used at work (see for example Annex I – European Construction Industry Federation training module for workers – prevention of asbestos risks).

1.1.4. General minimum requirements

Annex II to Directive 92/58/EEC establishes the minimum general requirements concerning signboards. It describes their intrinsic features (Section 1) (7) and conditions of use (Section 2) and provides an overview of signboards that should be used to provide information or instructions about safety and/or health at work (Section 3). The signboards to be used are divided into five different types, and Section 3 provides details on the specific intrinsic features of each type (colour and shape).

'1. Taking account of the types of activity and/or size of the undertakings concerned, Member States may specify categories of undertakings allowed to replace totally, partially or temporarily the illuminated signs, and/or acoustic signals provided for in this Directive by alternative measures which afford the same level of protection.

⁽⁶⁾ Article 6 (Exemptions):

^{2.} Member States may derogate, after consulting both sides of industry, from the application of Annex VIII, section 2 and/or Annex IX, section 3, whilst laying down alternative measures guaranteeing the same level of protection.

^{3.} Member States shall consult, in accordance with national laws and/or practice, employers' and workers' organizations when implementing paragraph 1.'

⁽⁷⁾ Annex I, point 1.1:

^{&#}x27;Where health and/or safety signs are required by the general rule in Article 3 of the Directive, they must conform to the specific requirements in Annexes II to IX.'

1.1.5. Flexibility clause

Section 3 of Annex II to Directive 92/58/EEC sets out the signboards that should be used at the workplace. However, as established by Section 1 (point 1.3) of Annex II to the directive, the pictograms used by Member States may be slightly different to or more detailed than those shown in Section 3 of the annex, provided that they convey the same meaning and that no difference or adaptation obscures the meaning. In other words, small differences from the signboards depicted in Annex II to the directive are acceptable as long as the resultant sign still has the relevant intrinsic features.

The flexibility clause gives employers some level of discretion as to the signage system to be used. It permits the use of other signs as possible ways to achieve compliance with Directive 92/58/EEC, provided they convey the same meaning as the directive (Annex II, point 1.3).

1.2. European and international standards

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) (8) bring together the national standards bodies and national electrotechnical committees of 34 countries. A standard can be developed by CEN or by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) under a joint agreement and then published by CEN and ISO and prefixed by 'EN ISO'. When a standard is developed by ISO, it is prefixed by 'ISO'.

EN ISO 7010 (currently EN ISO 7010:2020-03) was developed with the aim of defining a standard for safety signs. The main goals are language independence and easy recognition.

Access to ISO and CEN standards is subject to charges and covered by copyrights.

1.3. Interrelationship between Directive 92/58/EC and international standards

The two systems of signage created by Directive 92/58/EEC (binding minimum requirements, which shall be transposed into national laws) and EN/ISO standards (voluntary systems that evolve to adapt to developments in a changing environment) are not mutually exclusive if the standards do not contradict the binding minimum requirements of the directive.

The flexibility clause laid down in point 1.3 of Annex II allows signs (9) of the EN ISO 7010 standard to comply with the requirements of the directive as long as they provide

⁽⁸⁾ CEN and CENELEC (https://www.cencenelec.eu).

⁽⁹⁾ Signs not provided for in Directive 92/58/EEC.

the same meaning as the directive and no difference or adaptation obscures the meaning.

1.4. Where to find the signage systems

The full text of Directive 92/58/EC in 24 languages, including the signs, can be found here free of charge: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:01992L0058-20190726&from=EN

The safety signs registered in EN ISO 7010 are available on the ISO Online Browsing Platform (http://www.iso.org/obp/ui). The safety signs can be found on this platform through the search form. As mentioned above, the use of ISO and CEN standards is subject to charges and covered by copyrights.

2. Types of safety signs

2.1. Categories of signs

Directive 92/58/EEC defines, in Annex II, point 3, five main categories of signs:

- prohibitory signs (signalling prohibition);
- mandatory signs (signalling an obligation to do something);
- warning signs (warning of hazards);
- emergency escape or first aid signs (indicating safety exits, locations and equipment); and
- firefighting signs (serving fire protection).

First aid signs and firefighting signs may be combined with supplementary information signs, showing direction ('this way'). For emergency escape signs, directional information is already included in the pictogram.

As a point of precision, Directive 92/58/EEC does not only set out minimum requirements for signboards; Annexes VI, VII, VIII and IX present the minimum requirements for other ways of conveying a message. They encompass illuminated signs and hand signals, but also non-visual methods of communication, such as acoustic signs and verbal communication. They may be applied as occasional signs, according to point 2.2 of Annex I to the directive. Such other means may be used in combination with or as alternatives to each other, if equally effective and if applied in accordance with point 3 of Annex I to the directive.

As for signboards, similarly to Directive 92/58/EEC, there are five categories of signs in EN ISO 7010. They encompass the following applications and each sign in each category is marked by a distinctive code. The categories have the following meanings and sign codes:

prohibition signs: 'P',mandatory signs: 'M',warning signs: 'W',

• safe condition signs: 'E', and

fire safety signs: 'F'.

The signs use colours as defined in ISO 3864, which specifies safety identification colours and design principles for safety signs and safety markings in workplaces. As a point of precision, ISO 3864 specifies standards for safety signs and markings. ISO 3864-1:2011 establishes safety identification colours and design principles for safety signs and safety markings. ISO 3864-2:2016 establishes additional principles to ISO 3864-1 for the design of safety labels for products. ISO 3864-3:2012 gives principles, criteria and guidance for the design of graphical symbols in the two aforementioned norms. ISO 3864-4:2011 establishes the colorimetric and photometric requirements and test methods for the colours of safety signs.

2.2. EN ISO 7010 signs in comparison with Directive 92/58/EEC

There are a number of signs contained in EN ISO 7010 which are similar to signs in Directive 92/58/EEC both in meaning and general appearance. Table 1 contains some examples of such signs.

Table 1.

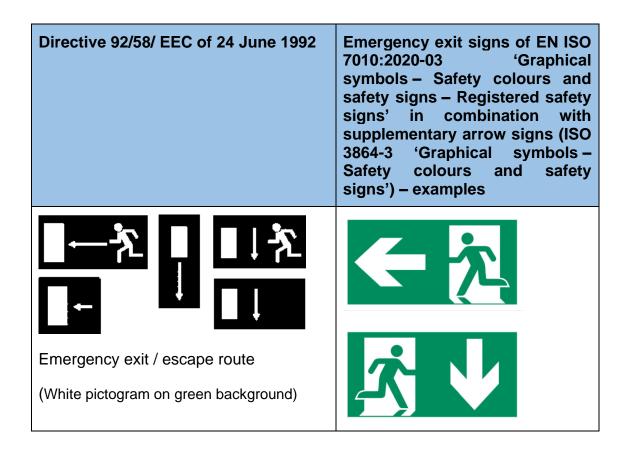
Category	Directive 92/58/EEC of 24 June 1992	EN ISO 7010:2020-03 'Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs'	
prohibitory signs	(Black pictogram on white background, red edging and diagonal line)	P002 No Smoking	

Category	Directive 92/58/EEC of 24 June 1992	EN ISO 7010:2020-03 'Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs'	
	Smoking and nake flames forbidden (Black pictogram white background red edging and diagonal line)	No open flame;	
y signs	Safety helmet mube worn (White pictogram on blue background)	Wear	
mandatory signs	Ear protection mode be worn (White pictogram on blue background)	Wear ear	
warning signs	Danger: electricit (Black pictogram yellow backgroun	on Warning;	

Category	Directive 92/58/EEC of 24 June 1992	EN ISO 7010:2020-03 'Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs'	
	(Black pictogram on yellow background)	W002 Warning; Explosive material	
first aid signs	(White pictogram on green background)	E003 First aid	
first	Stretcher (White pictogram on green background)	E013 Stretcher	
firefighting signs	Fire extinguisher (White pictogram on red background)	F001 Fire extinguish er	
firefight	Fire hose (White pictogram on red background)	F002 Fire hose reel	

Emergency exit signs require the combination of an EN ISO 7010 sign – for example, E001 'emergency exit (left hand)' or E002 'emergency exit (right hand)' – with an arrow sign (ISO 3864-3), indicating direction (see ISO 16069:2019 'Graphical symbols – Safety signs – Safety way guidance systems (SWGS)'). Directive 92/58/EEC contains signs for emergency exits / escape routes that already include directional arrows. However, the combination of a directional arrow (ISO 3864-3) with the emergency exit signs of ISO 7010 can be considered equivalent in meaning to the emergency exit / escape route signs in Directive 92/58/EEC if details and variations in its application do not obscure the meaning of the signs. For example, the directional arrow used must show the same direction as the corresponding sign of Directive 92/58/EEC. Table 2 contains a selection of emergency exit signs.

Table 2.



2.3. Other relevant safety signs

Since the introduction of Directive 92/58/EEC, developments in business and technology have made new occupational safety and health risks relevant. The corresponding safety signs of EN ISO 7010:2020-03 may prove useful in many workplaces. Some examples of these signs are given in Table 3.

Table 3.

No.	EN ISO 7010:2020-03 Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs	Description, function and usage recommendations
1.		P001 General prohibition sign Function: to signify a prohibited action. Hazard: risk to people as specified by a supplementary sign. There is a general safety sign for each category of safety signs. It is used in combination with a supplementary sign whenever a standardised safety sign is not available.
2.		P013 No activated mobile phones Function: to prohibit activated mobile phones. Hazard: electromagnetic field.
3.		P020 Do not use lift in the event of fire Function: to prohibit the use of a lift in the event of fire. Hazard: being trapped in a lift during a fire.

No.	EN ISO 7010:2020-03 Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs	Description, function and usage recommendations
4.	<u>\$555</u>	W017 Warning; Hot surface Function: to warn of a hot surface. Hazard: hot surface.
5.		M015 Wear high-visibility clothing Function: to signify that high-visibility clothing must be worn. Hazard: moving vehicles or equipment.
6.		Fire alarm call point Function: to indicate the location of a fire alarm call point. Hazard: not being able to locate a fire alarm call point.
7.		F004 Collection of firefighting equipment Function: to indicate the location of firefighting equipment. Hazard: not being able to locate firefighting equipment.

2.4. Safety signs and new technologies

New technology can be usefully combined with safety signs, bearing in mind that all new digital solutions need to be in compliance with Directive 92/58/EEC.

New technologies can help to improve knowledge of safety signs. Certain phone applications make it possible to take a photo of a safety sign and obtain its meaning immediately. An application has been developed by the Austrian Social Insurance for Occupational Risks (as presented on the OSHwiki website) and is included in the reference section of this guidance document. It should be noted that the application is not fully operational for all signs.

Digital signs may be displayed publicly and can provide additional information on different parameters. Using digital technology makes it possible to combine a conventional sign with customised symbols, for example a traditional security sign accompanied by a digital screen that presents more specific information. The message displayed on the screen may convey the meaning of the safety sign. It may also indicate a number corresponding to a technical parameter such as a temperature, as well as the risk level. For example, a safety panel can include a conventional sign with regard to the risk of exposure to noise and a numerical indication of the ambient noise with a colour symbolising the risk level. The digital message can be quickly updated, which is very important in certain circumstances. Additionally, this combination makes it possible to again draw workers' attention to the message conveyed.

For further reading: http://www.inrs.fr/risques/travail-isole/dispositif-alarme-travailleur-isole-DATI.html

Annex I: References and/or examples of practices for further reading

These examples were provided by the ACSH working party. This list is non-exhaustive.

This annex contains links to various Member State resources regarding safety signs. Some serve as extensive guidelines whereas others focus on specific sectors or issues.

Germany (in German):

Technische Arbeitsstätten – ASR A1.3 'Sicherheits-Regel für und Gesundheitsschutzkennzeichnung' Ausgabe: Februar 2013 (GMBI 2013, S. 334, zuletzt geändert GMBI 2017, S. 398), (https://www.baua.de/DE/Angebote/Rechtstexteund-Technische-Regeln/Regelwerk/ASR/ASR-A1-3.html). This document is a national clarification of the EU directive and its national transposition, adding information and presenting the EU directive and its national transposition in practical terms. It consists of a set of technical rules on signs. If employers implement one of these technical rules, they can assume that they are complying with the provisions of the applicable law (presumption of conformity). It includes signs from EN ISO 7010:2020-03 and German national standard DIN 4844-2:2012-12 (see below), along with descriptions of design principles and necessary planning steps for equipping workplaces with safety signs, and information on permanent and temporary sign usage.

DGUV Information 211-041 'Sicherheits- und Gesundheitsschutzkennzeichnung', April 2016 (https://publikationen.dguv.de/widgets/pdf/download/article/3058). This document presents non-binding informational guidelines on signs, issued by the German social accident insurance institutions and aimed at the prevention of accidents, supporting the actual implementation within companies. These guidelines present the directive and its national transposition more clearly by using concise language. They are accompanied by illustrative examples about sign meanings and offer explanations and guidance for an effective use of safety signs, including background information on the design principles of safety signs and examples of their effective operational use.

Berufsgenossenschaft Holz und Metall (BGHM): 'Sicherheitszeichen' (https://www.bghm.de/arbeitsschuetzer/praxishilfen/sicherheitszeichen/). This page presents the directive and its national transposition more clearly. It is a practical assistance website created by a branch of the German social accident insurance institutions. It contains a collection of the signs most commonly found in workplaces (available for download).

DIN 4844-2:2012-12 'Graphische Symbole – Sicherheitsfarben und Sicherheitszeichen – Teil 2: Registrierte Sicherheitszeichen' (Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Part 2: Registered safety signs), February 2012. This document adds further signs information, beyond the scope of the EU directive. This national standard contains a selection of water safety signs from ISO 20712-1: 2008 and national safety signs that are not or not yet standardised in EN ISO 7010:2020-03. As with other norms, such as EN ISO 7010, the application of DIN

4844-2:2012-12 is legally non-binding, however, following the recommendations expressed by the norms may prove advantageous in terms of liability.

DIN/TR 4844-4:2020-06 'Graphische Symbole – Sicherheitsfarben und Sicherheitszeichen – Teil 4: Leitfaden zur Anwendung von Sicherheitskennzeichnung' (Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Part 4: Code of practice for the use of safety signs), June 2020. This document adds further information beyond the scope of the EU directive. This technical report contains recommendations and explanations for the practical application of safety labelling. Among other things, this includes the use of directional arrows in combination with emergency exit signs. As it is a technical report, this document is non-binding.

DIN EN 1838 Beiblatt 1:2018-11 'Angewandte Lichttechnik – Notbeleuchtung; Beiblatt 1: Erläuterungen und Anwendungshinweise' (Lighting applications – Emergency lighting; Supplement 1: Explanations and notes for application), November 2018. This document adds further information beyond the scope of the EU directive. This supplementary sheet on safety lighting is intended to help the user implement the safety goals of the DIN EN 1838 standard and, in particular, to provide explanations and information to help solve frequently encountered problems. DIN EN 1838 specifies the lighting requirements for safety lighting and replacement lighting systems that are installed in systems and rooms. In addition, practical information is given on installing escape signs at the correct height and determining the distances at which signs can be recognised. This document is non-binding.

Austria (in German):

Verordnung der Bundesministerin für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales über die Sicherheits- und Gesundheitsschutzkennzeichnung (Kennzeichnungsverordnung – KennV)

(https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesn ummer=10009067). This legal act contains national provisions implementing Directive 92/58/EEC. However, it also contains specifics about signs, especially in Annex 3. Finally, it describes how to use signs and mentions the requirement to train employees and inform them about signs.

Ireland (in English):

Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations Chapter of Part 7: Safety signs places 1 at (https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications and Forms/Publications/General Application Re gulations/Safety_Signs_at_Places_of_Work.pdf) (guide amended in 2016). This guide is addressed to safety and health practitioners, employers, managers, employees. safety representatives and others to give guidance on the national regulations in the field of safety signs. This guide gives a detailed description of different types of signs and pictograms and shows which are correct and which are not. However, it is not intended to be used as a legal interpretation of the Irish legislation.

France (in French)

France / French Standard NF X 60-400 29 Décembre 2017 Indice de classement: X 60-400 Maintenance - Mise en sécurité des intervenants lors des opérations de maintenance - Processus de maîtrise des énergies (Maintenance - Securing of workers during maintenance operations - Process control of energies). The norm was created in order for someone to be able to react in a situation where workers who carry out maintenance, repair or any other interventions on equipment or installations could be endangered by different sources of energy. The risk associated with energy must be controlled in all circumstances. To this end, the French standard NF X 60-400 offers a risk analysis method allowing for a choice of prevention measures according to the type of energy (with the exception of electricity) and situation. One of the recommended measures affixing specific sign to each isolation or cut-off device. This sign allows a worker to easily find such a device and to cut off energy, if necessary.

This method is recommended by the French National Research and Security Institute.

Corresponding links

French National Research and Security Institute: http://www.inrs.fr/



Belgium (in Dutch and French)

Safety and health signage: http://www.werk.belgie.be/defaultTab.aspx?id=590#

Dedicated page on the application of the ISO 7010 norm: http://www.werk.belgie.be/defaultTab.aspx?id=43447

EU – Occupational Safety and Health Administration:

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work website, which contains general information regarding safety signs: https://osha.europa.eu/en

A smartphone application for identifying safety signs: http://apps.auva.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.759832&portal=auvaportal

OSHwiki: https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/Safety_signs

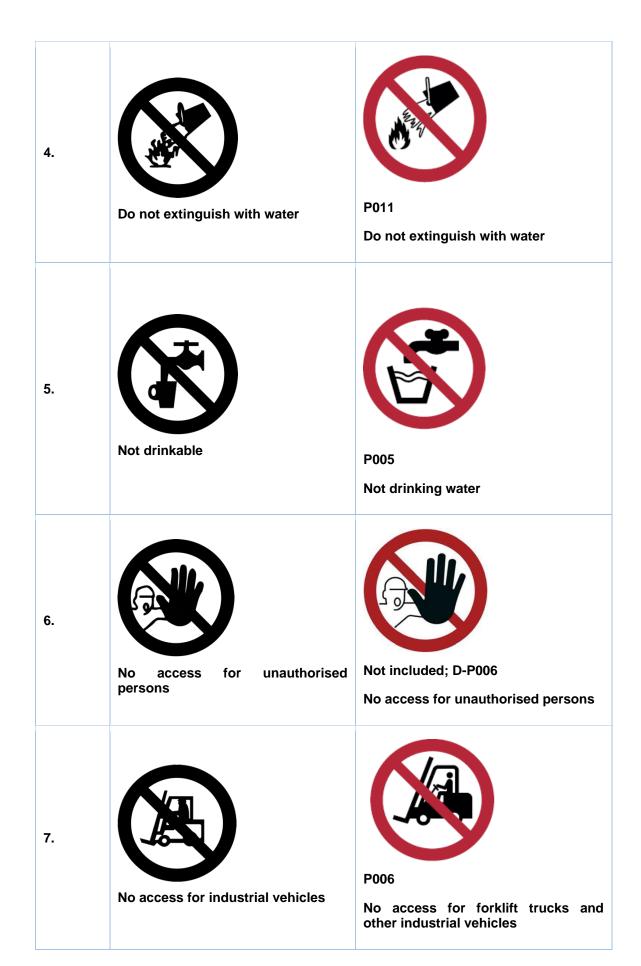
European Construction Industry Federation training module for workers – prevention of asbestos risks

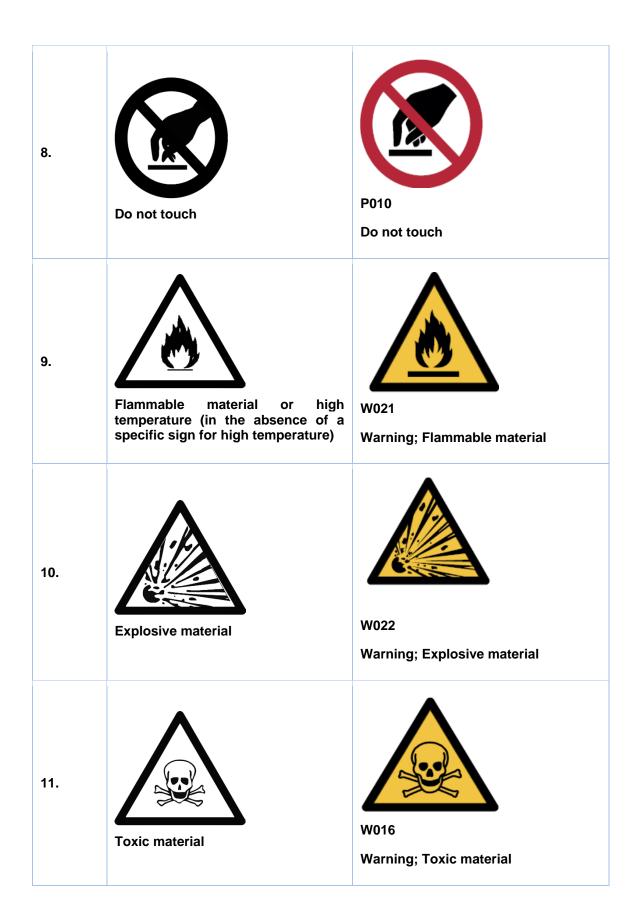
The European Construction Industry Federation proposes a training module on the prevention of asbestos risks, which also covers safety signs relating to the precautions that should be taken in such a situation: http://www.fiec.eu/en/fiec/projects/completed-projects/information-modules-asbestos.aspx

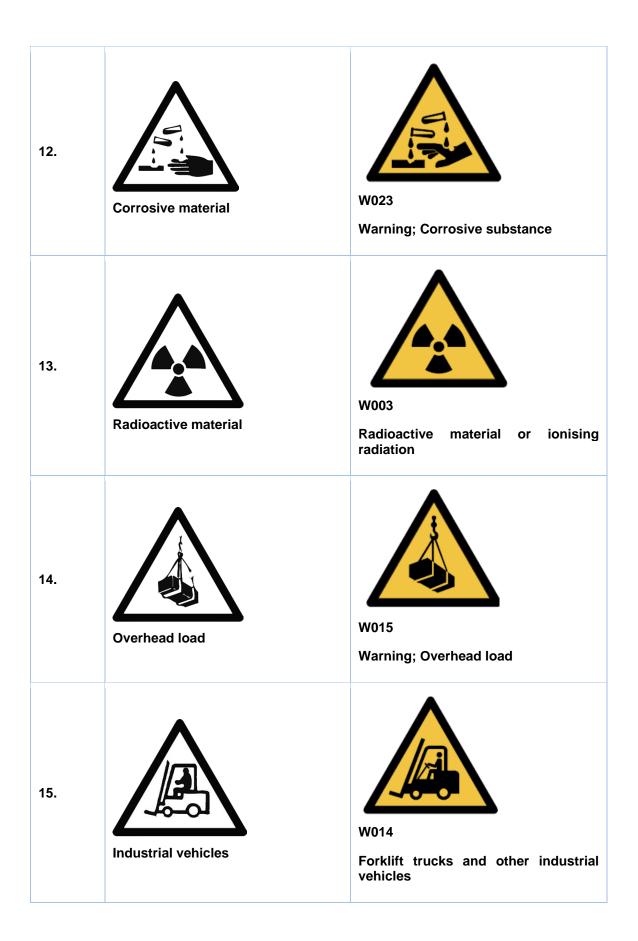
Annex II: Comparison

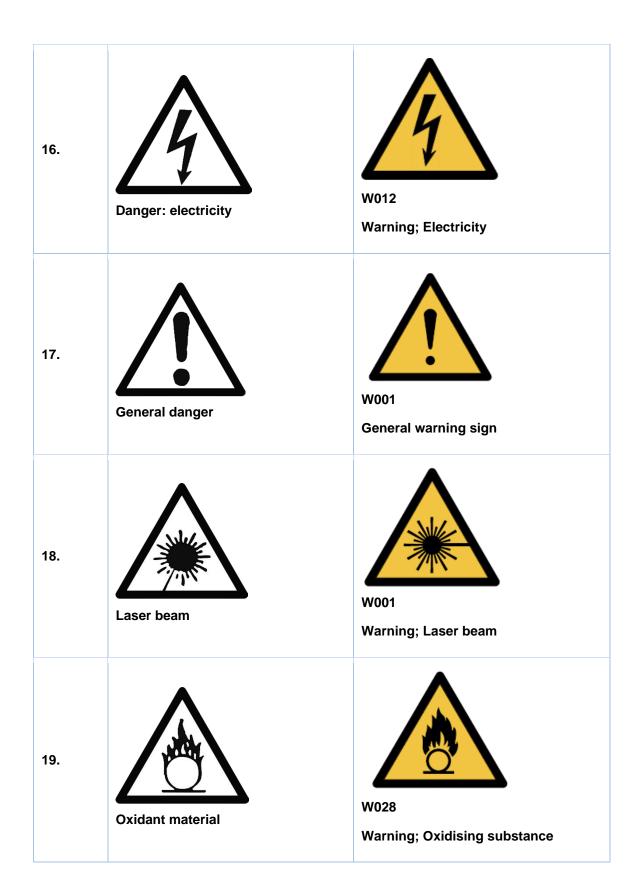
Table 4.

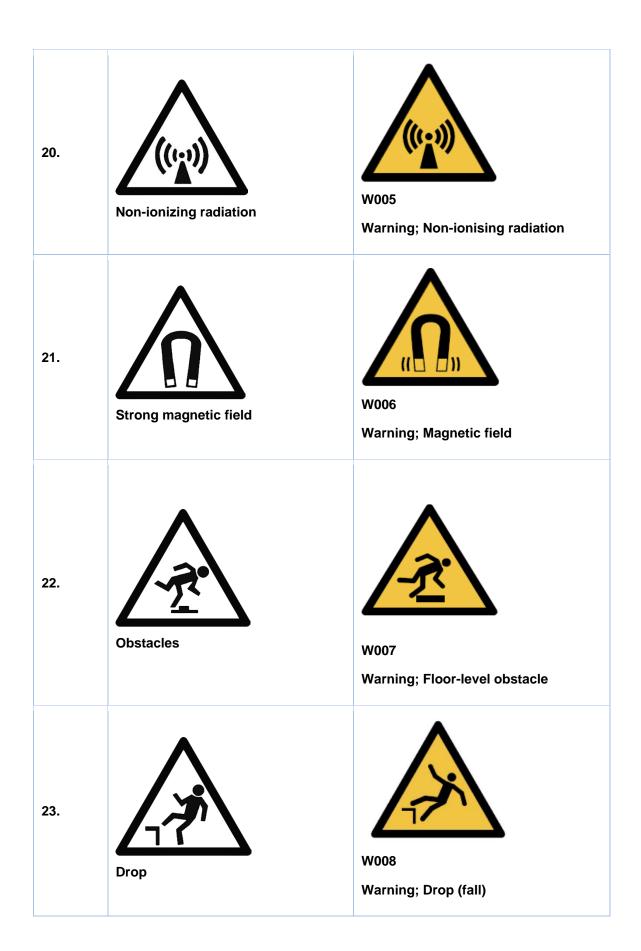
No.	Directive 92/58/ EEC	EN ISO 7010:2020-03 Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs
1.	No smoking	P002 No smoking
2.	Smoking and naked flames forbidden	P003 No open flame; Fire, open ignition source and smoking prohibited
3.	No access for pedestrians	P004 No thoroughfare

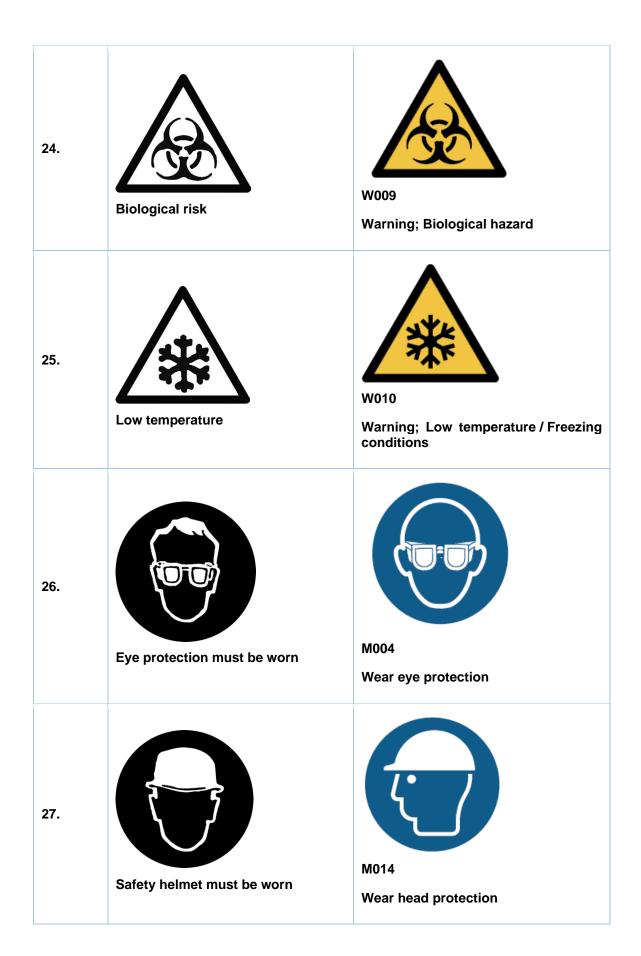


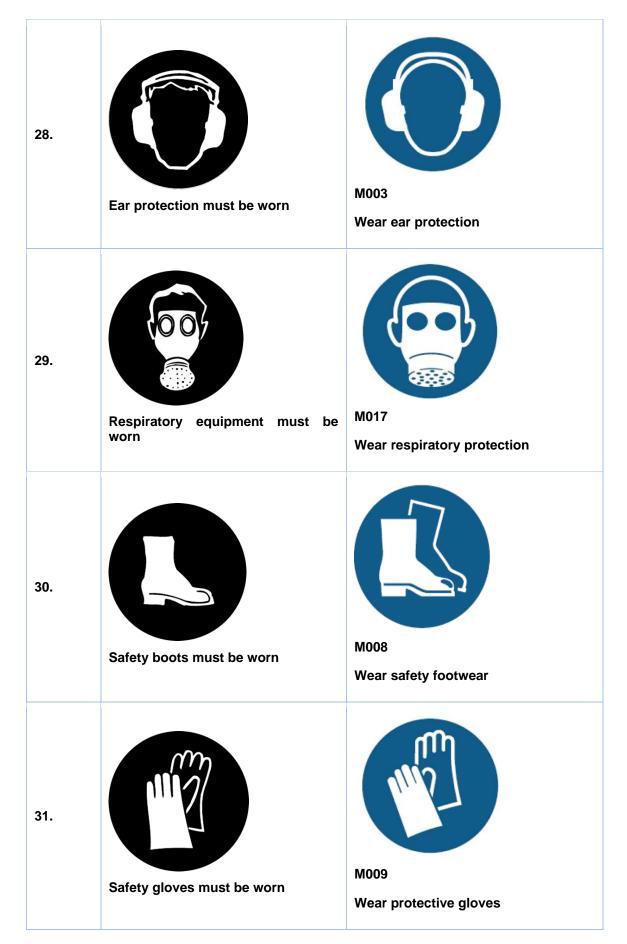


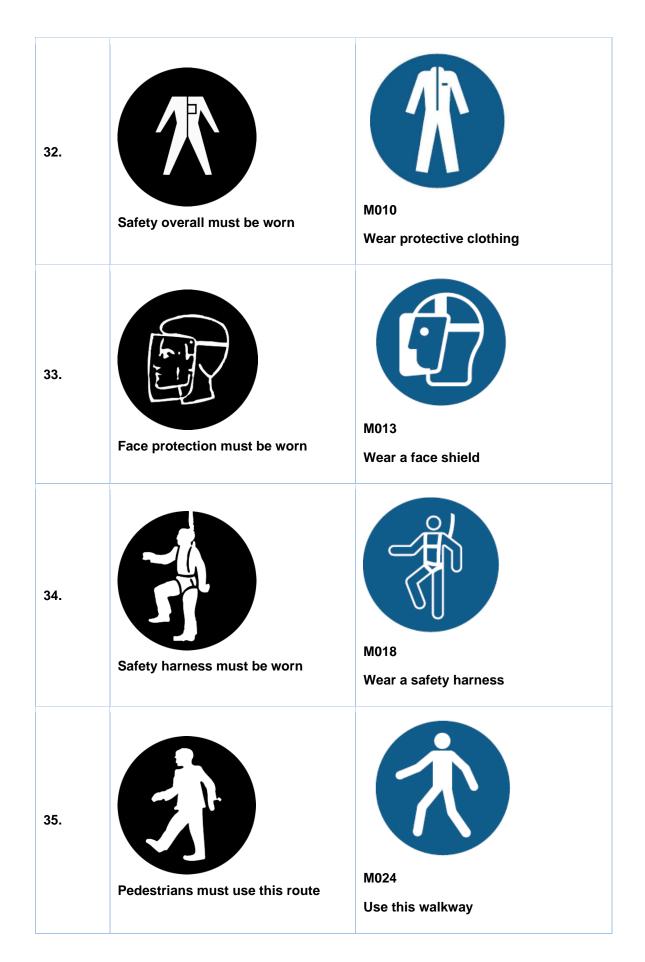


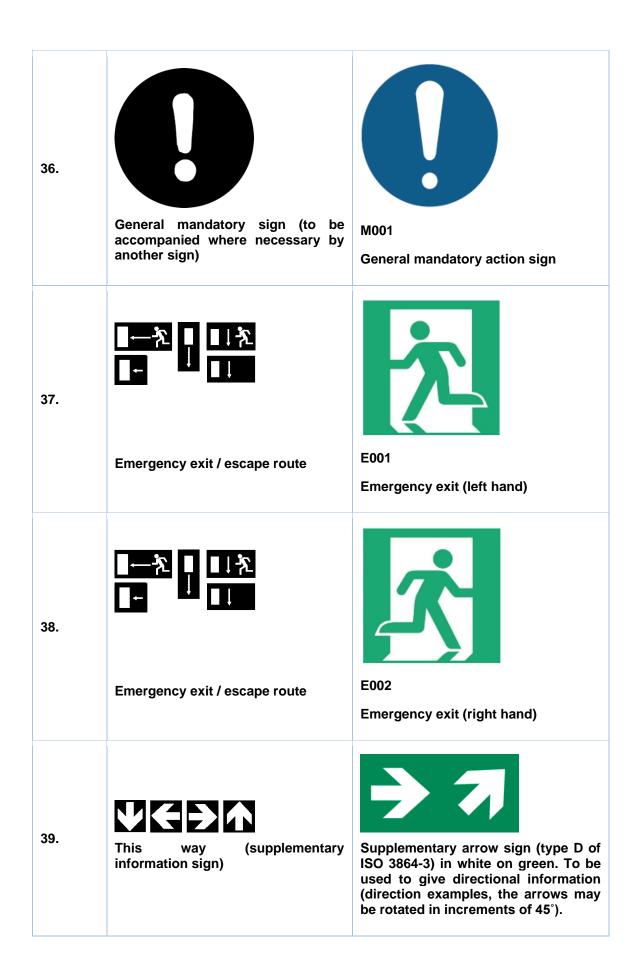


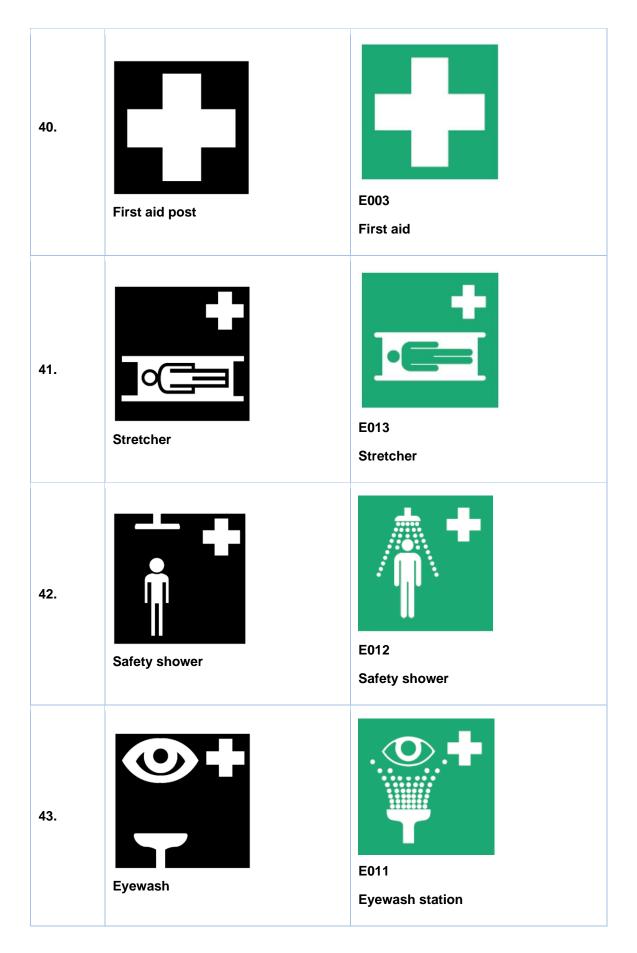


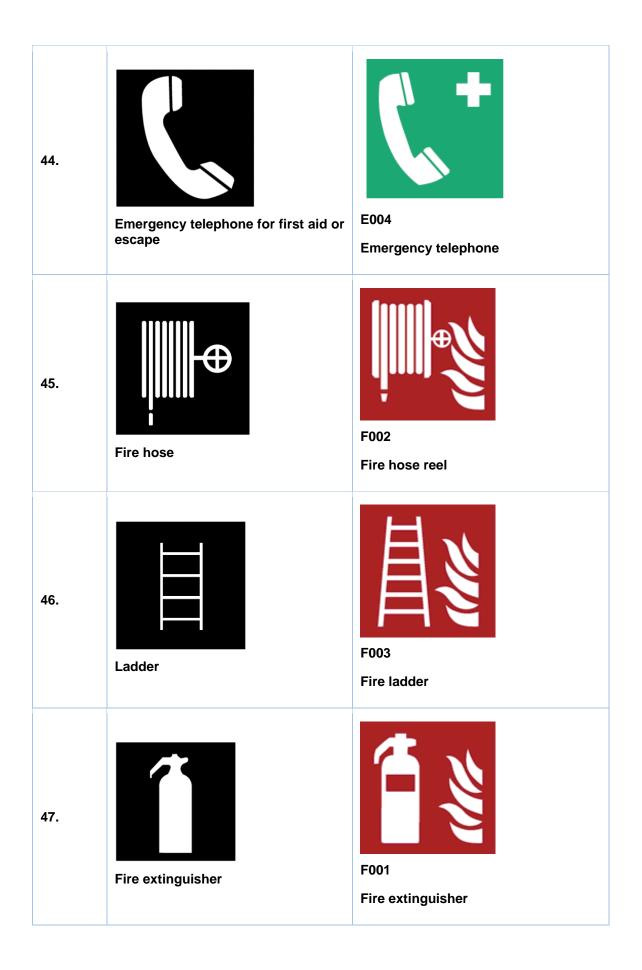












48.	Emergency fire telephone	F006 Fire emergency telephone
49.	This way (supplementary information sign)	Red arrow: not included in ISO 7010

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