

Safety signs and signals procedure

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Responsible work team: **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

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1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy describes the requirements for signage of hazards on Brigade Premises, vehicles and equipment and the use of signals within operational procedures.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all London Fire Brigade (LFB) establishments where there are hazards that need signage to give additional warning to people on those premises.

2 References

- 2.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Sections 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8.
- 2.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and, the Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L21.
- 2.3 The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 and the Guidance on Regulations L64.
- 2.4 The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and Guidance and the Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L22.
- 2.5 The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, as amended by The Quarries, Miscellaneous Health and Safety Provisions Regulations 1995 and the Approved Code of Practice and Guidance 12th Edition 1998 (reprinted 2001) L24.
- 2.6 The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and Controlling noise at work – Guidance on Regulations 2005 L108.
- 2.7 The Lifting Operations and lifting equipment regulations 1998.
- 2.8 Policy number 603 - Pole houses and sliding pole safety.
- 2.9 Policies where specific signals are required during the performance of tasks, e.g. Policy number 21 – Procedure for safe reversing and other vehicle manoeuvres.

3 Definitions

A hazard:	Is a potential source of harm.
A risk:	Is the likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised.
Risk assessment:	Is the qualitative or quantitative evaluation of the chance that a hazard will cause harm.
Sign:	A visual indication of a hazard using shapes, colours and / or words to convey a warning.
Signals	An intelligible movement to convey information or direction to people, especially at a distance.

4 Procedure

4.1 Legislation

- (a) This policy takes account of all the legislation and guidance documents included in section 2 above.
- (b) Regulation 4 of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 states that where a risk assessment has been carried out under regulation 3 of the Management of

Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and notwithstanding that all means of control have been employed, the risk cannot be adequately controlled except by the provision of an appropriate safety sign, then a sign of an approved pattern will be provided. Safety signs are to be regarded as a last resort in the hierarchy of risk control and should only be used in the absence of a reasonable or suitable alternative control measure.

4.2 Responsibility

Assistant Director/Commissioner

- (a) The Assistant Director/Commissioner or a person nominated by the Assistant Director/Commissioner is responsible for ensuring that each Brigade Premises is inspected at regular intervals to identify hazards and defects that may present a risk to health and safety.

Managers

- (b) Managers at Brigade premises must have systems in place for the regular inspection of the property, vehicles and equipment to ensure that the required signs are in place and are legible. If signs are discovered to be missing or illegible then action must be taken to restore them. (These inspections are controlled by local managers and are in addition to statutory safety inspections by appointed trade union safety representatives).
- (c) At LFB premises, when it is decided that a sign is necessary, as there is no other way to adequately control a hazard, an order must be placed for the appropriate sign through Procurement Department, a separate order will be required if Property Services have to make arrangements for its fixing. Brigade staff may fix self-adhesive signs into position, provided it is safe to do so. The size of sign used must be appropriate to the location, where possible a minimum size of 200mm x 150mm is recommended. Signs must also be considered on the approach to a hazard, e.g. a warning sign on the approach to a section of fragile roofing. (See also paragraph 4.3 below).
- (d) Managers responsible for the specification, purchase and maintenance of any vehicle or equipment must ensure that the signs required by legislation are permanently fixed to the item concerned and that the legibility of the sign is checked during routine maintenance checks. (See also paragraph 4.3 below).
- (e) Should managers responsible for the specification, purchase and maintenance of any vehicle or equipment identify a hazard that cannot be covered by a standard pattern sign specified in legislation they must consult Health, Safety and Wellbeing regarding the design of a bespoke sign. An example of such a sign is the number of people required to lift an object. (See also paragraph 4.3 below).
- (f) Managers responsible for the specification, purchase and maintenance of any vehicle or equipment must include details of all safety signs used and their respective meaning within the technical instruction for that item.
- (g) Managers responsible for the development of policies and other instructions relating to safe systems of work must include any standard signals that are required within the policy/instruction (e.g. the use of industry standard signals for forklift truck operators). In deciding on the signal(s) to use, reference must always be made to standard signals that are used in industry for the same operation, as this will prevent confusion during joint working. If there is difficulty in determining which signal would be most appropriate managers should consult with Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

Employees

- (h) All employees have a responsibility to comply with the instruction/requirements of any safety sign fixed in a building or on to a piece of equipment, and to use all appropriate signals during operational activities or training for operational activities.

4.3 Action at premises

- (a) Only signs that comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 will be used on Brigade premises. There are five categories of signs, each with its own distinctive shape and colour. Examples of each type of sign can be found at Appendix 1 and further information is available on the through the Health and Safety website.
- (b) If there is doubt over whether or not a sign is required or the design of sign, advice can be sought from:
 - (i) Health and Safety for prohibition, warning, and mandatory signs, and signs relating to first aid.
 - (ii) Fire Safety Guidance Note 61 and/or local fire safety officers throughout the borough support teams for emergency escape and fire-fighting signs.

4.4 Non – standard signs used at fire stations

- (a) Notwithstanding the above there are a number of occasions when non–standard signs are used on fire stations, these are to be supplemented by standard signs.

4.5 Temporary signs

- (a) There may be occasions when a temporary sign is needed, e.g. if a building defect allows water to enter and collect on a staircase. In such cases it may be appropriate to post a warning sign made up locally. However, these regulations require that safety signs cannot rely on text alone; they must incorporate an appropriate pictogram. Premises managers are to be vigilant to this practice and any locally made sign that is needed for more than a few days is to be replaced with an appropriate sign of a design that meets the requirements of the regulations.
- (b) Managers need to be aware that can take up to two weeks to procure standard signs, bespoke signs will take longer. If they become aware that additional signs might be necessary, even for temporary use, they should seek advice initially as directed in paragraph 4.3 above. Any text used in bespoke signs must conform to extant Brigade corporate identity guidance.

Appendix 1 – Examples of shape, colour and design of signs complying with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996

Prohibition signs

These are circular with a red border and diagonal line over a black symbol on a white background. These indicate the prohibition of the depicted activity, e.g. 'No Smoking'.



Warning signs

These are triangular in shape with a black border and symbol on a yellow background. These denote the presence of the depicted danger in the area where the sign is displayed, e.g. 'Caution'.



Mandatory signs

These are circular on a blue background with symbols in white. These indicate specific instructions that must be obeyed, where there is an obligation to use safety equipment, e.g. 'Hearing protection must be worn'.



Emergency signs

These are square or rectangular (depending on the size of text or sign) and will consist of a green background with white symbols. These will denote some safety consideration, e.g. 'First aid post'.



Fire-fighting signs

These are square or rectangular, with a white pictogram on a red background.



Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	03/11/2006	SDIA	H - 25/08/2011	HSWIA	10/04/2019	RA	NA
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 3, para 4.2 (c)	Technical and service support changed to Technical and Commercial to reflect the changes in organisational structure and governance due to the abolition of LFEPA.	14/10/2020
Throughout	Reviewed as current, no changes made	11/07/2022
Throughout	Amended department names: Health and Safety to Health, Safety and Wellbeing. Technical and Commercial to Property Services.	19/02/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Health and safety at work	Safety signs and signals

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification