

## COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

of 25 July 1977

on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to the provision of safety signs at places of work

(77/576/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament <sup>(1)</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee <sup>(2)</sup>,

Whereas, in its resolution of 21 January 1974 concerning a social action programme <sup>(3)</sup>, the Council affirmed the need to improve safety and protection of health in places of work, as part of the improvement of living and working conditions;

Whereas the freedom of movement of persons and services has considerably increased the risk of accidents at work and occupational diseases, in particular because of the differences in the organization of work within the Member States, the different languages and the resulting misunderstandings and errors; whereas these difficulties, which constitute an obstacle to the functioning of the common market, can be reduced by the introduction of a Community system of safety signs;

Whereas the use of uniform safety signs has positive effects both for workers at places of work, inside or outside undertakings, and for other persons having access to such places;

Whereas a Community system of safety signs can be effective only if it is ensured by means of unified provisions, if the presentation of the signs is as simple and striking as possible, if it makes the minimum use

of explanatory texts and, furthermore, if those concerned receive full and repeated information thereon;

Whereas technical progress and the future development of international methods of signposting require that safety signs be brought up to date; whereas, in order to facilitate the carrying out of the necessary measures with regard to Community signs, close collaboration should be instituted between the Member States and the Commission; whereas a Special Committee should be set up for the purpose,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

*Article 1*

1. This Directive shall apply to safety signs at places of work.
2. This Directive shall not apply to:
  - (a) signs used in rail, road, inland waterway, marine or air transport;
  - (b) signs laid down for the placing of dangerous substances and preparations on the market;
  - (c) coal mines.

*Article 2*

1. For the purposes of this Directive:
  - (a) *system of safety signs*  
means a system of signs referring to a specific object or situation and providing safety information by means of a safety colour or sign;
  - (b) *safety colour*  
means a colour to which a specific safety meaning is assigned;

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ No C 178, 2. 8. 1976, p. 57.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ No C 278, 24. 11. 1976, p. 3.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ No C 13, 12. 2. 1974, p. 1.

(c) *contrasting colour*  
means a colour contrasting with the safety colour and providing additional information;

(d) *safety sign*  
means a sign combining geometrical shape, colour and symbol to provide specific safety information;

(e) *prohibition sign*  
means a safety sign prohibiting behaviour likely to cause danger;

(f) *warning sign*  
means a safety sign giving warning of a hazard;

(g) *mandatory sign*  
means a safety sign prescribing a specific obligation;

(h) *emergency sign*  
means a safety sign indicating, in the event of danger, an emergency exit, the way to an emergency installation or the location of a rescue appliance;

(i) *information sign*  
means a safety sign providing safety information other than that referred to in points (e) to (h);

(j) *additional sign*  
means a safety sign used only in conjunction with one of the safety signs referred to in points (e) to (h) and providing additional information;

(k) *symbol*  
means a pictural representation, describing a specific situation, used on one of the safety signs referred to in points (e) to (h).

2. The meaning and use of safety and contrast colours and the shape, design and meaning of safety signs shall be as defined in Annex I.

#### Article 3

Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that:

— safety signs at all places of work conform to the principles laid down in Annex I,

— only those safety signs defined in Annex II are used to indicate the dangerous situations and to provide the information specified in that Annex;

— road traffic signs in force are used to regulate internal works traffic.

#### Article 4

Any amendments required to adapt Annex I, points 2 to 6, and Annex II to technical progress and to future developments in international methods regarding signs shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 6.

#### Article 5

1. A Committee of Representatives of the Member States, with a Commission representative as chairman, is hereby set up.

2. The Committee shall establish its rules of procedure.

#### Article 6

1. Where the procedure laid down in this Article is invoked, the matter shall be referred to the Committee by its chairman, either on his own initiative or at the request of a representative of a Member State.

2. The Commission representative shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall give its opinion on the draft within the time laid down by the chairman, having regard to the urgency of the matter. Decisions shall be taken by a majority of 41 votes, the votes of the Member States being weighted as laid down in Article 148 (2) of the Treaty. The chairman shall not vote.

3. (a) Proposed measures which are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee shall be taken by the Commission.

(b) Where the proposed measures are not in accordance with the opinion of the Committee, or if no opinion is delivered, the Commission shall forthwith submit to the Council a proposal on the measures to be taken. The Council shall act by a qualified majority.

(c) If the Council has not acted within three months of receiving the proposal, the

proposed measures shall be adopted by the Commission.

*Article 7*

1. Member States shall adopt and publish by 1 January 1979 the measures necessary to comply with this Directive and shall inform the Commission immediately thereof. They shall apply these measures from 1 January 1981 at the latest.

Done at Brussels, 25 July 1977.

2. Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of any national provisions which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive.

*Article 8*

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

*For the Council*

*The President*

H. SIMONET

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## ANNEX I

## Basic principles of the system of safety signs

## 1. GENERAL

- 1.1. The objective of the system of safety signs is to draw attention rapidly and unambiguously to objects and situations capable of causing specific hazards.
- 1.2. Under no circumstances is the system of safety signs a substitute for the requisite protective measures.
- 1.3. The system of safety signs may be used only to give information related to safety.
- 1.4. The effectiveness of the system of safety signs is dependent in particular on the provision of full and constantly repeated information to all persons likely to benefit therefrom.

## 2. SAFETY COLOURS AND CONTRASTING COLOURS

## 2.1. Meaning of safety colours

Table 1

| Safety colour       | Meaning or purpose  | Examples of use  |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Red                 | Stop<br>Prohibition   | Stop signs<br>Emergency shutdown devices<br>Prohibition signs  |
|                     | This colour is also used to identify fire-fighting equipment. |  |
| Yellow              | Caution!<br>Possible danger                                   | Identification of dangers (fire, explosion, radiation, chemical hazards, etc.)<br>Identification of steps, dangerous passages, obstacles |
| Green               | No danger<br>First aid  | Identification of emergency routes and emergency exits<br>Safety showers<br>First aid stations and rescue points                         |
| Blue <sup>(1)</sup> | Mandatory signs<br>Information                                | Obligation to wear individual safety equipment<br>Location of telephone  |

<sup>(1)</sup> Counts as a safety colour only when used in conjunction with a symbol or words on a mandatory sign or information sign bearing instructions relating to technical prevention.

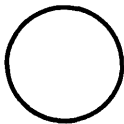


## 2.2. Contrasting colours and symbol colours

Table 2

| Safety colour | Contrasting colour | Symbol colour |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Red           | White              | Black         |
| Yellow        | Black              | Black         |
| Green         | White              | White         |
| Blue          | White              | White         |

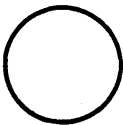


3. GEOMETRICAL FORM AND MEANING OF SAFETY SIGNS

Table 3

| Geometrical form  | Meaning                                     |
|---|---|
|  | Mandatory and prohibition signs             |
|  | Warning signs                               |
|  | Emergency, information and additional signs |

4. COMBINATIONS OF SHAPES AND COLOURS AND THEIR MEANINGS FOR SIGNS

Table 4

| Shape \ Colour |  |  |  |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| Red            | Prohibition   | .....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  | Fire-fighting equipment   |
| Yellow         | .....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  | Caution, possible danger  | .....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  |
| Green          | .....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  | .....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  | No danger<br>Rescue equipment   |
| Blue           | Mandatory   | .....<br>.....<br>.....<br>.....  | Information or instruction  |

5. DESIGN OF SAFETY SIGNS

5.1. Prohibition signs

Background: white; symbol or wording: black.

The safety colour red must appear around the edge and in a transverse bar and must cover at least 35 % of the surface of the sign.

**5.2. Warning, mandatory, emergency and information signs**

Background: safety colour; symbol or wording: contrasting colour.

A yellow triangle must have a black edge. The safety colour must cover at least 50 % of the surface of the sign.

**5.3. Additional signs**

Background: white; wording: black;

or

background: safety colour; wording: contrasting colour.

**5.4. Symbols**

The design must be as simple as possible and details not essential to comprehension must be left out.

**6. YELLOW/BLACK DANGER IDENTIFICATION**

Identification of permanent risk locations such as:

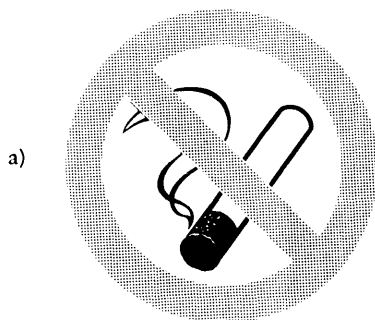
— locations where there is a risk of collision, falling, stumbling or of falling loads,

(Proportion of safety colour at least 50 %) — steps, holes in floors, etc.

## BILAG II — ANLAGE II — ANNEX II — ANNEXE II — ALLEGATO II — BIJLAGE II

## SÆRLIG SIKKERHEDSSKILTNING — BESONDERE SICHERHEITSKENNZEICHNUNG — SPECIAL SYSTEM OF SAFETY SIGNS — SIGNALISATION PARTICULIÈRE DE SÉCURITÉ — SEGNALETICA PARTICOLARE DI SICUREZZA — BIJZONDERE VEILIGHEIDSSIGNALERING

## 1. Forbudstavler — Verbotsschilder — Prohibition signs — Signaux d'interdiction — Segnali di divieto — Verbotssignalen



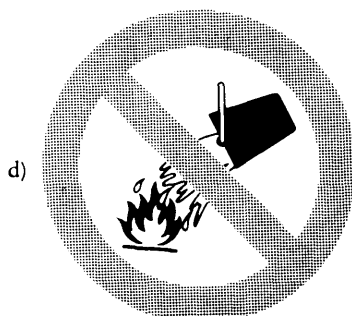
Rygning forbudt  
Rauchen verboten  
No smoking  
Défense de fumer  
Vietato fumare  
Verboden te roken



Rygning og åben ild forbudt  
Feuer, offenes Licht und Rauchen verboten  
Smoking and naked flames forbidden  
Flamme nue interdite et défense de fumer  
Vietato fumare o usare fiamme libere  
Vuur, open vlam en roken verboden



Ingen adgang for fodgængere  
Für Fußgänger verboten  
Pedestrians forbidden  
Interdit aux piétons  
Vietato ai pedoni  
Verboden voor voetgangers



Sluk ikke med vand  
Verbot, mit Wasser zu löschen  
Do not extinguish with water  
Défense d'éteindre avec de l'eau  
Divieto di spegnere con acqua  
Verboden met water te blussen

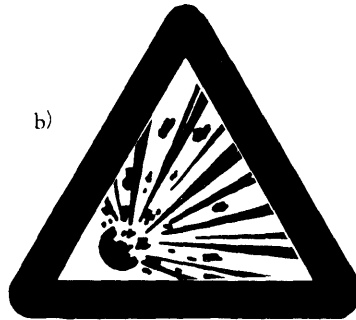


Ikke drikkevand  
Kein Trinkwasser  
Not drinkable  
Eau non potable  
Acqua non potabile  
Geen drinkwater

## 2. Advarselstavler — Warnzeichen — Warning signs — Signaux d'avertissement — Segnali di avvertimento — Waarschuwingssignalen



Brandfarlige stoffer  
 Warnung vor feuergefährlichen  
 Stoffen  
 Flammable matter  
 Matières inflammables  
 Materiale infiammabile  
 Ontvlambare stoffen



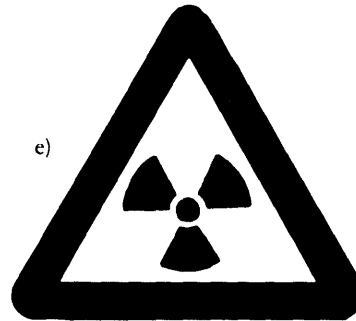
Eksplodingsfarlige stoffer  
 Warnung vor explosionsgefährlichen  
 Stoffen  
 Explosive matter  
 Matières explosives  
 Materiale esplosivo  
 Explosieve stoffen



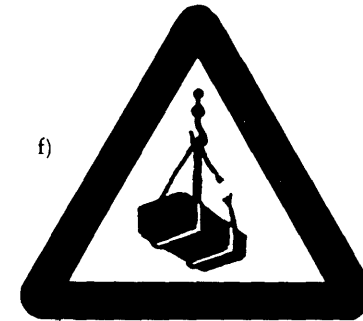
Giftige stoffer  
 Warnung vor giftigen Stoffen  
 Toxic matter  
 Matières toxiques  
 Sostanze velenose  
 Giftige stoffen



Ætsende stoffer  
 Warnung vor ätzenden Stoffen  
 Corrosive matter  
 Matières corrosives  
 Sostanze corrosive  
 Bijtende stoffen



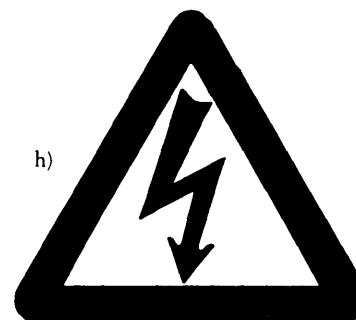
Ioniserende stråling  
 Radioaktivitet/Røntgenstråling  
 Warnung vor radioaktiven Stoffen oder  
 ionisierenden Strahlen  
 Radioactive matter  
 Matières radioactives  
 Radiazioni pericolose  
 Radioactieve stoffen



Kran i arbejde  
 Warnung vor schwebender Last  
 Beware, overhead load  
 Charges suspendues  
 Attenzione ai carichi sospesi  
 Hangende lasten



Pas på kørende transport  
 Warnung vor Flurförderzeugen  
 Beware, industrial trucks  
 Chariots de manutention  
 Carrelli di movimentazione  
 Transportvoertuigen



Farlig elektrisk spænding  
 Warnung vor gefährlicher elektrischer  
 Spannung  
 Danger: electricity  
 Danger électrique  
 Tensione elettrica pericolosa  
 Gevaar voor elektrische spanning



Giv agt  
 Warnung vor einer Gefahrenstelle  
 General danger  
 Danger général  
 Pericolo generico  
 Gevaar



3. Påbudstavler — Gebotszeichen — Mandatory signs — Signaux d'obligation — Segnali di prescrizione — Gebodssignalen



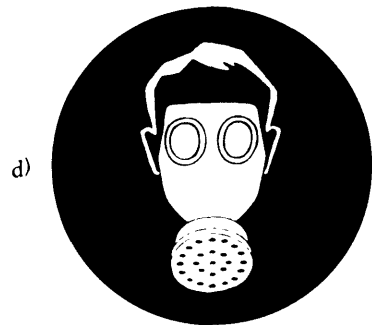
Øjenværn påbudt  
Augenschutz tragen  
Eye protection must be worn  
Protection obligatoire de la vue  
Protezione degli occhi  
Oogbescherming verplicht



Hovedværn påbudt  
Schutzhelm tragen  
Safety helmet must be worn  
Protection obligatoire de la tête  
Casco di protezione  
Veiligheidshelm verplicht



Høreværn påbudt  
Gehörschutz tragen  
Ear protection must be worn  
Protection obligatoire de l'ouïe  
Protezione dell'udito  
Gehoorbescerming verplicht



Åndedrætsværn påbudt  
Atenschutz tragen  
Respiratory equipment must be used  
Protection obligatoire des voies respira-  
toires  
Protezione vie respiratorie  
Adembescerming verplicht

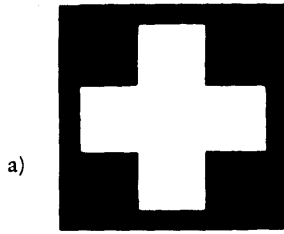


Fodværn påbudt  
Schutzschuhe tragen  
Safety boots must be worn  
Protection obligatoire des pieds  
Calzature di sicurezza  
Veiligheidsschoenen verplicht

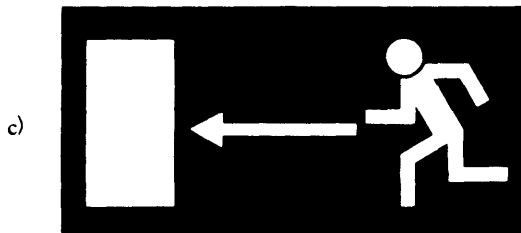
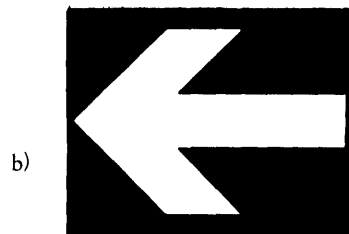


Beskyttelseshandsker påbudt  
Schutzhandschuhe tragen  
Safety gloves must be worn  
Protection obligatoire des mains  
Guanti di protezione  
Veiligheidshandschoenen verplicht

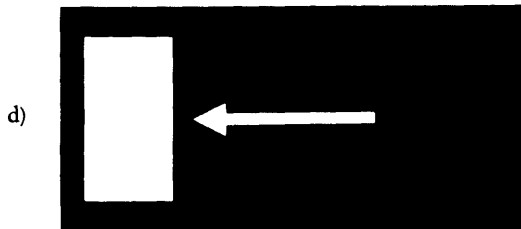
4. Redningstavler — Rettungszeichen — Emergency signs — Signaux de sauvetage — Segnali di salvataggio — Reddings-  
signalen



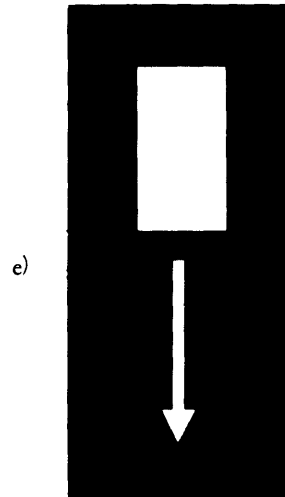
Førstehjælp  
Hinweis auf „Erste Hilfe“  
First aid post  
Poste premiers secours  
Pronto soccorso  
Eerste hulp-post



eller/oder/or/ou/o/of



Retningsangivelse til nødudgang  
Fluchtweg (Richtungsangabe für Flucht-  
weg)  
Emergency exit to the left  
Issue de secours vers la gauche  
Uscita d'emergenza a sinistra  
Nooduitgang naar links



Nødudgang  
(anbringes over udgangen)  
Fluchtweg  
(über dem Fluchtausgang anzubringen)  
Emergency exit  
(to be placed above the exit)  
Sortie de secours  
(à placer au-dessus de la sortie)  
Uscita d'emergenza  
(da collocare sopra l'uscita)  
Nooduitgang  
(te plaatsen boven de uitgang)