



Specific safety signs are used to make people aware of hazards that, despite reasonable control measures, e.g. engineering controls and safe systems of work, still have the potential to cause harm and remind users of the actions required to stay safe.

The Health & Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 direct what signs must be used to convey health and safety information to people at work. Signs with specific shapes, colours and pictorial symbols are required to convey the safety message to everyone, without risk of misunderstanding.

The laboratories and workshops at the University contain a wide range of hazards and it is important for users and visitors to be aware of the major hazards and the basic control measures. However, it is equally important that this information is rationalised so that important messages are not lost in a crowd of signs. A safety sign is not required where the risk is not significant or if it would not help to reduce the risk of an accident.

Laboratory door safety signs are also used to provide information to fire and other emergency services and therefore may contain information on hazards that may only be dangerous in certain circumstances.

- **Lasers** – laboratories which contain Class 3R/M and Class 4 lasers should display the Laser warning signage on the entrance doors. Additional requirements for laser designated areas are outlined in Safety Guide 21;
- **Strong magnetic fields** Areas where there are strong magnetic fields which may pose a hazard to certain individuals must be clearly signed. Metal surgical implants should be kept away from strong fields and pacemakers may be affected. The signage should warn people with these devices to keep away;
- **Gas cylinders** – gases and the cylinders themselves can represent a hazard, particularly in the event of a gas leak or a fire. Laboratories containing gas cylinders must contain the following information on the type of gas (e.g. CO₂, Acetylene, Hydrogen);
- **Liquid Nitrogen or other Asphyxiant gases** If the risk assessment for a specific gas in a specific laboratory has shown, in the event of an accident (worst-case scenario), that the gas could be asphyxiant, the following information must be clearly displayed. Information must be given on what to do in the case of alarms sounding (for example, do not enter area, contact AHSC);
- **Piped Natural gas** - the flammable gas sign should be included in the additional information. Additional signage should be present in the room clearly displaying the location of the shut-off valve.

Health and Safety Services have designed a template which should be used to convey health and safety information at the entrance to the laboratory (in Microsoft Power point format). An example of the type of signage which can be produced is given in the Appendix B.

The sign may be displayed in a Perspex holder or laminated. Signs should be displayed on, or adjacent to the door to the area to which the information applies. Signs should be at a suitable height and in the line of sight but must not obscure a vision panel in a door [see Appendix C for an example].

Signs must be sufficiently large and clear, durable, secured, and properly maintained to ensure they remain visible. Avoid placing too many signs too close together as this can cause confusion or reduce their effectiveness.

If circumstances change and a hazard no longer exists, any redundant signs must be removed.

The University has adopted a colour-coded system for indicating levels of access control required for laboratories and workshops. This yellow/amber/red signage must also be displayed on laboratory and workshop doors. Safety Note 58 describes the system.



