

An investigation of signs used within Technology departments



Figure 1 - Example of a Prohibition Sign



Figure 2 - Example of a Mandatory Sign



Figure 3 - Example of a Warning Sign

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations, 1996) [1] standardised signs throughout the European Union.

The presence of each sign dictates and hopefully modifies our behaviour! Signs set standards of health and safety which must be maintained by law.

Signs which have a red circle with a red diagonal on a white background are the **Prohibition** signs. This sign says ‘**You must NOT**’ (Figure 1)

Signs which have a white symbol on a blue background are **Mandatory** signs. This sign says ‘**You must DO**’ (Figure 2)

Signs which have a black symbol and border on a yellow background give a **Warning**. This sign says ‘**You must exercise Caution**’. (Figure 3)

How good is the current signage in our Technology workshops? Let’s consider three machines; the circular saw, the planer-thicknesser and the bandsaw – the high-risk machines. What signs are required by law? What signs are actually displayed?

Try the following

On Table 1, tick in the left-hand box for signs that are currently displayed at each of the following machines in your Technology department. Compare your list with the minimum signage which **should** be displayed (right-hand box). This represents the minimum number of signs; local circumstances might dictate the need for more signs!

How did you compare? Does your department measure up to the requirements or do you need to get more signs? Care needs to be taken when producing your own ‘signs’ for example, the blue part of mandatory signs needs to be at least 50 % of the area of the sign. Only signs conforming to HSE regulations and British Standards [2] are acceptable.

Sign:	Circular Saw	Planer / Thicknesser	Bandsaw
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓
	✓		

Table 1 – Compare your signage with the minimum requirements

References

[1] *Signpost to The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996* – HSE - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg184.htm>. Guidance on Regulations - ISBN 0717608700, Price £8.50, www.hsebooks.com

[2] *Safety signs and Colours* - British Standards BS 5378: Parts 1 and 3: 1980.