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Guidance for the selection and use of safety signs and fire safety notices

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages I to IV, pages 1 to 45, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This part of [BS 5499](#) is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 August 2014. It was prepared by Subcommittee PH/8/1, *Safety signs*, under the authority of Technical Committee PH/8, *Graphical symbols*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

Supersession

BS 5499-10:2014+A1:2023 supersedes [BS 5499-10:2014](#) which is withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

This part of [BS 5499](#) is part of a series that contains the following current part:

- Part 4: *Code of practice for escape route signing*.

The original suite of standards on safety signs in [BS 5499](#) included [BS 5499-1](#), [BS 5499-5](#), [BS 5499-6](#) and [BS 5499-11](#). They were all crosslinked. All have been superseded as follows:

- BS ISO 3864-1 supersedes [BS 5499-1](#);
- BS ISO 3864-4 is new and covers material replacing that in the previous edition of [ISO 3864-1](#), specifically the colour of safety signs;
- BS ISO 3864-3 supersedes [BS 5499-6](#); and
- BS EN ISO 7010 supersedes [BS 5499-5](#) ^{A1} and [BS 5499-11](#) ^{A1}.
- ^{A1} Text deleted. ^{A1}

Information about this document

Text introduced or altered by Amendment No. 1 is indicated in the text by tags ^{A1} ^{A1}. Minor editorial corrections are not tagged.

The purpose of this part of [BS 5499](#) is to improve public safety by providing guidance on the use of safety signs and fire safety notices, excluding escape route signing, fire action notices and water safety signs.

The provisions of this standard are intended to be applied in situations in which a formal risk assessment has established the need for safety signs and fire safety notices.

This was a full revision of the standard and the principal changes are a consequence of the adoption of [ISO 3864-1](#), [ISO 3864-3](#) and [ISO 3864-4](#) as British Standards and the graphical images of the registered safety signs in BS EN ISO 7010 with regard to colour specification and presentation. Fire safety notices are now included. Additional guidance is provided on viewing distances and viewing zones for safety signs and associated supplementary text, including the effects of viewing angle.

^{A1} Amendment A1 introduces changes regarding guidance on materials used for safety signs. ^{A1}

Use of this document

The colours represented in the electronic file of this British Standard can be neither viewed on screen nor printed as true representations. Although the copies of this British Standard have been produced to correspond (with an acceptable tolerance as judged by the naked eye) to the colour requirements, it is not intended that these printed copies be used for colour matching. Instead, colorimetric and

photometric properties together with, as a guideline, references from colour order systems are provided in BS ISO 3864-4.

This part of [BS 5499](#) takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this part of [BS 5499](#) is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this part of [BS 5499](#) that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

The word “should” is used to express recommendations of this standard. The word “may” is used in the text to express permissibility, e.g. as an alternative to the primary recommendation of the clause. The word “can” is used to express possibility, e.g. a consequence of an action or an event.

Notes and commentaries are provided throughout the text of this standard. Notes give references and additional information that are important but do not form part of the recommendations.

Commentaries give background information.

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Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Introduction

Safety signs and fire safety notices can make a major contribution to good communication and the development of good safety culture.

This standard is intended to assist the facilities manager of the premises and others responsible for selecting and installing safety signs and fire safety notices. This code of practice reflects best practice and shows how to use safety signs and fire safety notices in a standardized manner to ensure consistent application throughout a particular environment or an entire organization.

Safety signs using graphical symbols provide important benefits in the field of communication. Properly used they can:

- a) provide information in a compact form;
- b) provide information in a form that is independent of language;
- c) have visual impact; and
- d) guide the viewer to a desired outcome or appropriate decision.

However, these benefits are not always achieved in practice. If safety signs are used in a consistent manner they will become familiar to the viewers and thus be widely understood and effective. There might, however, be instances when optimum results can only be achieved by the provision of supplementary text. The use of the appropriate combination of safety signs with suitable supplementary text assists the process of education on the meaning of safety signs and the action(s) to be taken to control risk.

It is important that safety signs clearly convey the intended message to the viewers. In particular, safety signs need to clearly differentiate between information that relates to safety requirements (including those associated with unsafe use or misuse of products and equipment) and those that relate to public information.

A fire safety notice is a notice that consists of a specific geometrical format and colour with text to convey a specific action or identify specific types of fire equipment.

1 Scope

This part of [BS 5499](#) provides guidance on how to select, install, position and maintain safety signs conforming to BS ISO 3864-1 and BS EN ISO 7010, excluding escape route signs, to present specific safety information. Fire safety notices are also covered in [Annex A](#).

This part of [BS 5499](#) satisfies the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 [1] and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [2].

This part of [BS 5499](#) is applicable to all premises, with the exception of private domestic premises. However, it is applicable to the common access areas within multi-occupied dwellings.

This part of [BS 5499](#) is intended for use by building owners, facility managers of premises, safety managers and others responsible for selecting, installing and/or inspecting safety signs.

This part of [BS 5499](#) is not applicable to:

- a) road traffic signs;
- b) public information symbols;
- c) actions to be taken in the event of a fire;
- d) International Maritime Organization symbols;

- e) labels provided under the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations 1996; and
- f) labels provided under the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code.

This part of [BS 5499](#) does not give guidance on the use of escape route signs or water safety signs.

NOTE 1 A code of practice for the use of escape route signing is given in [BS 5499-4](#).

NOTE 2 Specification of water safety signs and guidance for use are covered by [A1](#) BS ISO 7010 and BS ISO 20712-3 respectively. [A1](#)

NOTE 3 The illustrations in this standard are as accurate as possible within the limitations of the printing process.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

[A1](#) [BS 5266-1](#), *Emergency lighting – Part 1: Code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises* [A1](#)

BS EN ISO 7010, *Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Registered safety signs (ISO 7010)*

[A1](#) BS EN IEC 60598-1:2021+A11:2022, *Luminaires – Part 1: General requirements and tests* [A1](#)

[A1](#) BS EN IEC 60598-2-22:2022, *Luminaires - Particular requirements. Luminaires for emergency lighting* [A1](#)

BS ISO 3864-1:2011, *Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Part 1: Design principles for safety signs and safety markings*

BS ISO 3864-3, *Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Part 3: Design principles for graphical symbols for use in safety signs*

BS ISO 3864-4:2011, *Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Part 4: Colorimetric and photometric properties of safety sign materials*

BS ISO 17398:2004, *Safety colours and safety signs – Classification, performance and durability of safety signs*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this part of [BS 5499](#), the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 assessment area

premises, or a specific part of the premises, under consideration for safety signing

3.2 audit

systematic and independent process for obtaining evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which specified criteria are fulfilled

NOTE Independent does not necessarily mean external to the organization.

3.3 combination sign

sign that combines a safety sign and one or more associated supplementary signs on the same rectangular carrier

[SOURCE: BS ISO 3864-1:2011, 3.1]