201: Health and safety in building services engineering  
**Handout 11: Safety signs and symbols**

**Learning outcome**

The learner will:

1. Understand the requirements for identifying and dealing with hazards in the work environment

**Assessment Criteria**

4.1 identify warning signs for the seven main groups of hazardous substance, as defined by The Chemical (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations (CHIP).

**Safety signs and symbols**

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 states that all new health and safety signs must contain pictorial symbols in addition to text. Other requirements contained in these regulations include the following.

* If a hazard cannot be adequately controlled by any other means then it must be marked with a safety sign.
* Every employer must ensure that their employees are trained in the meaning of safety signs.
* Any emergency escape route and firefighting equipment must have their location identified with safety signs.

Most workplaces have safety signs and posters to alert you of any dangers. These are grouped into four categories:

* warning signs
* information signs
* mandatory signs
* prohibition signs

and in addition there are location signs for firefighting equipment.

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| **Warning signs**  Warning signs are triangular and yellow with a black border. They mean: **caution**, **risk of danger** or **hazard ahead**. | Warning 01 Danger Electricity - Large.PNG | Warning 02 Drop - Large.PNG | Warning 03 General - Large.PNG |
| **Danger Electricity** | **Drop** | **General** |

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| **Information signs**  Safe condition signs are rectangular and white on a green background and indicate the correct place to go or the correct action to be taken in an emergency. They give information about safe conditions.  You are likely to find extra information included with any of the safety signs, such as the type of first aid available, the particular type of eye protection required, the clearance height of an obstacle, etc. | Information 01 Fire Exit - Large.png | Information 02 First Aid - Large.png | Information 03 Fire Assembly Point - Large.png |
| **Fire Exit** | **First Aid** | **Fire Assembly Point** |
| **Mandatory signs**  Mandatory signs are white on a blue background, circular and mean **you must do**. | Mandatory 01 Safety helmet must be worn - Large.PNG | Mandatory 02 Ear Protection must be worn - Large.PNG | Mandatory 03 Eye Protection must be worn - Large.PNG |
| **Safety helmet must be worn** | **Ear protection must be worn** | **Eye protection must be worn** |
| **Prohibition signs**  Prohibition signs are circular in shape, have a crossbar through the centre and mean **stop** or **do not**. They are red on a white background and must be obeyed. | Prohibition 01 No Smoking - Large.PNG | Prohibition 02 Do Not Extinguish With Water - Large.PNG | Prohibition 03 No unauthorised Persons - Large.PNG |
| **No Smoking** | **Do Not Extinguish With Water** | **No Unauthorised Persons** |
| **Firefighting equipment signs**  The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations require the location of all firefighting equipment to be marked in red. Typical signs are shown on the right. | Fire 01 Fire Call point - Large.png | Fire 02 Extinguisher - Large.png | Fire 03 Extinguisher - Large.png |

**Hazardous substances**

You may encounter hazardous substances during your day-to-day work in the building services industry and they will be identified by appropriate signs that are square and orange with a black border and symbol/writing. The main ones to remember are listed below.

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|  | **Toxic**:  Chemicals that at low levels cause damage to health. |
|  | **Harmful**:  Chemicals that may cause damage to health. |
|  | **Corrosive**:  Chemicals that may destroy living tissue on contact. |
|  | **Irritant**:  Chemicals that may cause inflammation to the skin or other mucous membranes. |
|  | **Oxidising**:  Chemicals that react exothermically with other chemicals. |
|  | **Highly flammable**:  Chemicals that may catch fire in contact with air, only need brief contact with an ignition source, have a very low flash point or evolve highly flammable gases in contact with water. |
|  | **Extremely flammable**:  Chemicals that have an extremely low flash point and boiling point, and gases that catch fire in contact with air. |