

Compliance – Resource Bulletin

OSHA Safety Signs

Overview:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, is a branch of the United State Department of Labor. OSHA's main objective is to regulate working conditions in America through various training programs, educational opportunities, and numerous regulations. OSHA governs the majority of private businesses and the employees who work there. They additionally cover some of the public companies as well. This is thoroughly laid out in the OSH Act of 1970 which was created "to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women; by authorizing enforcement of the standards developed under the Act; by assisting and encouraging the States in their efforts to assure safe and healthful working conditions; by providing for research, information, education, and training in the field of occupational safety and health; and for other purposes."¹

Resources:

OSHA

<http://www.osha.gov>

Coverage:

As stated above, OSHA covers private employers, some public employers, and their employees through the OSH Act.

Though not all fifty states have an OSHA-approved program, there are now 22 states that do have one in place.

Employer Responsibilities under OSHA:

Employers are required to provide a safe work environment for their employees. OSHA has developed numerous safety standards that must be adhered to, and these include ways to fix problems, safety issues and hazards. OSHA explains that it wants employers to try to fix problems/hazards instead of simply having workers use protective equipment in the hopes of them not getting injured. While safety equipment is essential in many situations, OSHA does not want companies to rely on this when larger problems exist (OSHA.gov).

OSHA lists various responsibilities that employers have, including:

- Provide a workplace free from serious recognized hazards and comply with standards, rules and regulations issued under the OSH Act.
- Correct safety concerns.
- Properly train employees to be aware of the hazards of their positions.
- Supply employees with necessary safety equipment.
- Keep accurate records of injuries.
- Use codes, posters, labels or signs to warn of potential hazards.
- Post, at a prominent location within the workplace, the OSHA poster (or the state-plan equivalent) informing employees of their rights and responsibilities. (OSHA.gov)

¹ OSH Act of 1970 (2004)



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Worker's Rights:

- Have the right to work in a safe environment.
- Request that a check be performed by OSHA to insure workplace is following OSHA standards.
- Have the right to be trained in their native language to help insure understanding.
- Receive all the records and results from any injuries that happen while they are at work.
- Have the right to interact with OSHA inspectors to voice concerns without the threat of punishment from employers. (OSHA.gov)

OSHA Standards:

All of the standards that OSHA provides were created with the safety of workers in mind. Because OSHA understands that these workers are faced with hazardous, and potentially life-threatening, situations on a daily basis, it has provided standards that cover these workers in several different areas and situations. OSHA has created standards to help workers remain safe, including:

- Provide fall protection;
- Prevent trenching cave-ins;
- Prevent exposure to some infectious diseases;
- Ensure the safety of workers who enter confined spaces;
- Prevent exposure to harmful chemicals;
- Put guard on dangerous machines;
- Provide respirators or other safety equipment; and
- Provide training for certain dangerous jobs in a language and vocabulary workers can understand²

Sign Requirements:

OSHA has specific requirements in order for signs to be in compliance with the standards that are set forth. The standard, 29 CFR 1910.145, covers what must be included on a sign or tag for it to be an OSHA approved accident prevention sign or tag.

- Sign Header
 - Must use capitalized, block letters.
 - Will include a signal word.
- Signal Words
 - DANGER: Used when there is a threat of death or serious injury due to a hazard. (1910.145(f)(5))
 - Only red, white and black will be used. Must be opaque glossy coloring. (1910.145(d)(2))
 - WARNING: Used when there is a hazard that could possibly be life-threatening. Represents a hazard level between "CAUTION" and "DANGER". 1910.145 (f)(7)
 - Orange and black are used for this sign.
 - CAUTION: Used when there is a hazard, but it is a non-immediate, lesser threat 1910.145(f)(6)
 - Black with yellow lettering. (1910.145(d)(4))
 - NOTICE: Used for information rather than to warn.
 - Blue with white lettering.
 - OTHER: Various other wordings are used in Safety Instruction signs such as: SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS, SAFETY FIRST, THINK, BE CAREFUL, EMERGENCY. These signs shall be used where there is a need for general instructions and suggestions relative to safety measures.

² "All About OSHA," https://www.osha.gov/Publications/all_about_OSHA.pdf

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(1910.145(c)(3)). The SECURITY NOTICE sign has also been developed as an additional type of OSHA Notice sign. A special CAUTION sign is used when there is radioactive material present, with purple or magenta radiation symbol with yellow background. (1910.1096)

- Wording Format for Sign Information
 - Centered format;
 - Simple and easy to understand. (1910.145(e)(2))
- Safety Symbols
 - Used to show the meaning of the sign. (1910.145(f)(4)(iii))
 - Example: Image of a cigarette with a red line through it to indicate no smoking.
- Sign Materials and Specifications
 - Must have rounded or blunt corners without any sharp edges. (1910.145(d)(1))
 - Must be made of materials that can stand up to the elements.

Examples of OSHA Header Options:



Conclusion:

OSHA's main goal is to provide standards and rules for companies to follow for workers to have the safest conditions possible within their work environment. The specifications that they outline regarding signs were put into place to simplify the design and allow for less confusion in the workplace. These specifications must be followed to assure continuity and uniformity.

For OSHA Safety Signs visit our store: <https://www.compliancesigns.com/sign-finder>