STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

1996 No. 119

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996

Made - - - -	*26th March 1996*
Coming into operation	*1st May 1996*

The Department of Economic Development and the Department of Agriculture, acting jointly as the Department concerned(**1**), in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 17(1), (2) and (3)(**2**) and 55(2) of, and paragraphs 1(1), (3) and (4), 8, 11, 13 and 17(*a*) of Schedule 3 to, the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978(**3**) and of every other power enabling them in that behalf, after consultation in accordance with Article 46(1) of that Order with the Health and Safety Agency for Northern Ireland and such other bodies as appeared to them to be appropriate, hereby make the following Regulations:—

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 and shall come into operation on 1st May 1996.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

"acoustic signal" means a coded sound signal which is released and transmitted by a device designed for that purpose, without the use of a human or artificial voice;

"dangerous goods" has the meaning assigned to it by regulation 2(1) of the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail (Classification, Packaging and Labelling) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995(**4**);

"emergency escape or first-aid sign" means a sign giving information on escape routes or emergency exits or first-aid or rescue facilities;

"fire safety sign" means a sign (including an illuminated sign or an acoustic signal) which—

(**1**) *See* Article 2(2) of S.I.1978/1039 (N.I. 9)
(**2**) Article 17 must be read with S.I. 1992/1728 (N.I. 17), Article 3(2)
(**3**) S.I. 1978/1039 (N.I. 9); the general purposes of Part II referred to in Article 17(1) were extended by S.I. 1992/1728 (N.I. 17), Article 3(1)
(**4**) S.R. 1995 No. 47

(i) provides information on escape routes and emergency exits in case of fire;

(ii) provides information on the identification or location of fire-fighting equipment; or

(iii) gives warning in the case of fire;

"hand signal" means a movement or position of the arms or hands or a combination thereof, in coded form, for guiding persons who are carrying out manoeuvres which create a risk to the health or safety of persons at work;

"illuminated sign" means a sign produced by a device made of transparent or translucent materials which are illuminated from the inside or the rear in such a way as to give the appearance of a luminous surface;

"mandatory sign" means a sign giving instructions or information in relation to specified behaviour or action;

"offshore installation" has the same meaning as in the Offshore Installations and Pipeline Works (Management and Administration) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995(**5**);

"prohibition sign" means a sign prohibiting behaviour likely to cause a risk to health or safety;

"safety colour" means a colour to which a meaning is assigned;

"safety sign" means a sign referring to a specific object, activity or situation and providing information or instructions about health or safety at work by means of a signboard, a safety colour, an illuminated sign, an acoustic signal, a verbal communication or a hand signal;

"signboard" means a sign which provides information or instructions by a combination of geometric shape, colour and a symbol or pictogram and which is rendered visible by lighting of sufficient intensity;

"symbol or pictogram" means a figure which describes a situation or gives instructions or information in relation to specified behaviour or action and which is used on a signboard or illuminated surface;

"territorial waters" means United Kingdom territorial waters adjacent to Northern Ireland and "within territorial waters" includes on, over and under them;

"verbal communication" means a pre-determined spoken message communicated by a human or artificial voice;

"vessel" includes a hovercraft and any floating structure which is capable of being staffed;

"warning sign" means a sign giving a warning of a risk to health or safety.

(2) Any reference in these Regulations to a sign providing instructions includes a mandatory sign, a prohibition sign and a warning sign.

Disapplications

3. These Regulations shall not apply—

(a) to signs used in connection with the supply of any dangerous substance, preparation, product or equipment except to the extent that any statutory provision which requires such signs makes reference to these Regulations;

(b) to dangerous goods during the course of their transport by road, rail, inland waterway, sea and air;

(c) subject to regulation 4(6), to signs used for regulating road, rail, inland waterway, sea or air traffic; or

(**5**) S.R. 1995 No. 340

(d) to or in relation to the master or crew of a sea-going ship or to the employer of such persons in respect of normal ship-board activities of a ship's crew under the direction of the master.

Provision and maintenance of safety signs

4.—(1) Paragraph (4) shall apply if the risk assessment made under regulation 3(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992(**6**) indicates that the employer concerned, having adopted all appropriate techniques for collective protection, and measures, methods or procedures used in the organisation of work, cannot avoid or adequately reduce risks to employees except by the provision of appropriate safety signs to warn or instruct, or both, of the nature of those risks and the measures to be taken to protect against them.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1), risks shall only be treated as having been adequately reduced if, having adopted the appropriate techniques, measures, methods or procedures referred to in that paragraph, there is no longer a significant risk of harm having regard to the magnitude and nature of the risks arising from the work concerned.

(3) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), sub-paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of paragraph (4) shall also apply in relation to fire safety signs where they are required to comply with the provisions of any statutory provision.

(4) Where this paragraph applies, the employer shall (without prejudice to the requirements as to the signs contained in regulation 11(2) of the Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995(**7**))—

(a) in accordance with the requirements set out in Parts I to VII of Schedule 1, provide and maintain any appropriate safety sign (other than a hand signal or verbal communication) described in those Parts, or ensure that such sign is in place; and

(b) subject to paragraph (5), in accordance with the requirements of Parts I, VIII and IX of Schedule 1, ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that any appropriate hand signal or verbal communication described in those Parts is used; and

(c) provide and maintain any safety sign provided in pursuance of paragraph (6) or ensure that such sign is in place.

(5) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (*b*) of paragraph (4), the appropriate hand signal described in the documents specified in Schedule 2 shall be an alternative to the corresponding hand signal described in paragraph 3 of Part IX of Schedule 1.

(6) Where it is appropriate to provide safety signs in accordance with paragraph (1) because at a place of work there is a risk to the health or safety of any employee in connection with the presence or movement of traffic (including pedestrians in relation to such traffic) and there is an appropriate sign in that connection prescribed by regulations made under the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981(**8**), that sign shall be used whether or not that Order applies to that place of work.

Information, instruction and training

5.—(1) Every employer shall ensure that comprehensible and relevant information on the measures to be taken in connection with safety signs is provided to each of his employees.

(2) Every employer shall ensure that each of his employees receives suitable and sufficient instruction and training in the meaning of safety signs and the measures to be taken in connection with safety signs.

(**6**) S.R. 1992 No. 459, as amended by S.R. 1994 No. 478
(**7**) S.R. 1995 No. 345
(**8**) S.I. 1981/154 (N.I. 1), to which there are amendments not relevant to the subject matter of these Regulations

Transitional provisions

6. These Regulations shall not have effect in relation to any fire safety signs lawfully in use immediately before the coming into operation of these Regulations until 24th December 1998.

Enforcement

7. Notwithstanding regulation 4 of the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993(**9**), the enforcing authority in relation to fire safety signs provided in pursuance of regulation 4(4) as applied by regulation 4(3) (signs provided to comply with the provisions of any statutory provision) shall be—

(a) the Department, in the case of—

(i) premises where the Fire Certificate (Special Premises) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991(**10**) apply; or

(ii) any of the premises and activities within territorial waters mentioned in Schedule 4; or

(b) in any other case, the authority responsible for enforcing the relevant provision of the statutory provision which applies to the case.

Revocations and amendments

8.—(1) The Regulations referred to in column 1 of Part I of Schedule 3 shall be revoked to the extent specified in column 3 of that Part.

(2) The Regulations referred to in Part II of Schedule 3 shall be amended to the extent specified in that Part.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Economic Development on 26th March 1996.

L.S.

Philip B. Strong
Assistant Secretary

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Agriculture on 26th March 1996.

L.S.

L. Sinclair
Assistant Secretary

(**9**) S.R. 1993 No. 147
(**10**) S.R. 1991 No. 446, as amended by S.R. 1991 No. 509 regulation 37(4) and S.R. 1992 No. 413 regulation 3 and Schedule 2

SCHEDULE 1 Regulation 4(4) and (5)

Part I

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING SAFETY SIGNS AND SIGNALS AT WORK

Preliminary remarks

1

1.1. Where safety signs are required by these Regulations, they must conform to the specific requirements in Parts II to IX.

1.2. This Part introduces those requirements, describes the different uses of safety signs, and gives general rules on the interchanging and combining of signs.

1.3. Safety signs must be used only to convey the message or information specified in this Schedule.

Types of signs

2

Permanent signs

2.1

2.1.1. Permanent signboards must be used for signs relating to prohibitions, warnings and mandatory requirements and the location and identification of emergency escape routes and first-aid facilities.

Signboards and/or a safety colour must be used to mark permanently the location and identification of fire-fighting equipment.

2.1.2. Signboards on containers and pipes must be placed as laid down in Part III.

2.1.3. Places where there is a risk of colliding with obstacles or of falling must be permanently marked with a safety colour and/or with signboards.

2.1.4. Traffic routes must be permanently marked with a safety colour.

Occasional signs

2.2

2.2.1. Illuminated signs, acoustic signals and/or verbal communication must be used where the occasion requires, taking into account the possibilities for interchanging and combining signs set out in paragraph 3, to signal danger, to call persons to take a specific course of action and for the emergency evacuation of persons.

2.2.2. Hand signals and/or verbal communication must be used where the occasion requires, to guide persons carrying out hazardous or dangerous manoeuvres.

Interchanging and combining signs

3

3.1. Any one of the following may be used if equally effective: