

# Fire safety signage guide

## Introduction

**Fire safety signs are designed to warn building occupants of any fire hazards, provide information on fire safety equipment and procedures, and give concise instructions about the actions to take in the event of a fire.**

They are an integral part of a buildings fire safety measures, helping to ensure that all occupants exit the premises as safely and as quickly as possible as well as aiding attending emergency services. Installing and maintaining the correct fire safety signage in a premises is not only essential to saving lives and protecting property but is also a legal requirement.

## UK Regulations

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 (HSR) outlines the types of fire signs, their placement, and the importance of maintenance.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) requires a premises Responsible Person(s) to take responsibility for fire safety ensuring that the premises Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) covers all fire safety signage requirements.

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 which came into effect in England from 23 January 2023 made it a legal requirement for wayfinding signs to be installed in all high-rise residential buildings in England, including clear markings identifying floor and individual flat numbers to assist the Fire and Rescue Service.

### The main British Standards governing fire safety signs in the UK are:

**BS 5499-10:2014+A1:2023** Guidance for the selection and use of safety signs and fire safety notices, which provides guidance on how to select, install, position and maintain safety signs conforming to BS ISO 3864 1 and BS EN ISO 7010.

**BS 5499-4:2013 Safety signs** – Code of practice for escape route signing, which gives recommendations for the selection and use of escape route signs conforming to BS EN ISO 7010 to be provided within buildings.

BS 5499 satisfies the requirements of the HSR and the RRO and is applicable to all premises, except for private domestic premises. However, it is applicable to the common access areas within multi occupied dwellings.

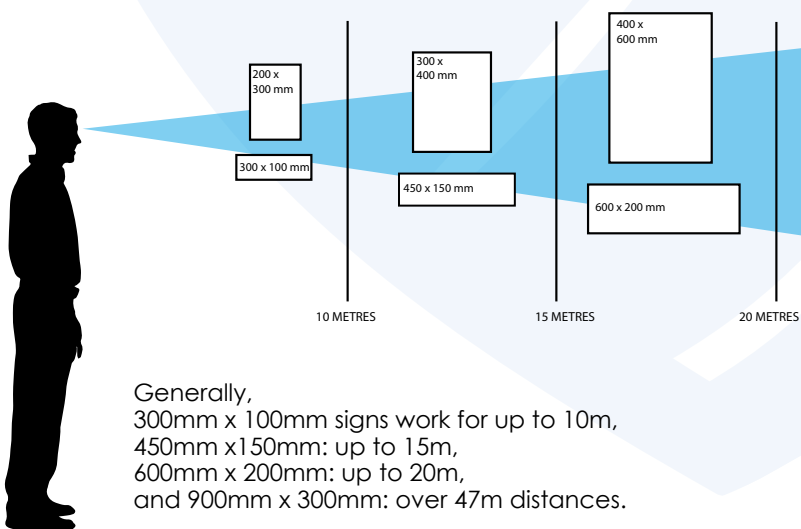


## What signs does a premise require?

There are several categories and types of fire safety signage a premises requires.

Carrying out an FRA and regularly reviewing it, as required by the RRO, is essential to determine which signs your premises requires and are always maintained, keeping your premises compliant at all times.

- **Fire exit and Exit signs** highlight the safest evacuation route and nearest emergency exit of a building.
- **Fire door signs** provide mandatory instructions to occupants to ensure the effectiveness of a building's compartmentation.
- **Fire alarm signs** highlight the nearest fire alarm and manual fire alarm call points, providing information regarding its activation.
- **Emergency door operation signs** offer simple instructions on how to operate emergency exit doors.
- **Stairway and floor level identification (wayfinding) signs** enable occupants of multi-storey high-rise buildings to accurately and quickly inform Fire and Rescue Services of the location of a fire and assist firefighters in navigating their way around the building.
- **Fire assembly point signs** show where a building's assembly point is located to enable evacuees to report to their designated point and identify any missing persons quickly.
- **Fire extinguisher signs** indicate the position and type of extinguishers present in a premises, show the classes of fire they can be used on and how to operate them safely, and help identify any missing extinguishers that need replacing.
- **Fire equipment signs** ensure that equipment is present, and correctly and clearly identified (where provided) to enable firefighters to gain immediate access to facilities such as rising main outlets and smoke control vents on arrival at the scene of a fire.
- **Fire action notice signs** include step-by-step instructions for occupants to follow in the event of a fire.
- **Prohibition Signs** indicate actions or behaviours that are strictly forbidden because they pose a health or fire safety risk.
- **Warning and Hazard signs** identify the location of potential hazardous materials or environments.
- **Fire safety notices and Fire plans** reinforce important messages of life safety arrangements to occupants and Fire and Rescue Services concerning the premises.



Signage manufacturers such as JALITE provide detailed guides on viewing distances and the size selection of their signage range to ensure premises compliance.  
<https://www.jalite-group.com/en/content/solutions>



It's important to remember that in the event of a fire, smoke and power outages can reduce sign visibility. That's why it is always worth considering photoluminescent signs which function without the need for any additional illumination to help maintain their visibility.

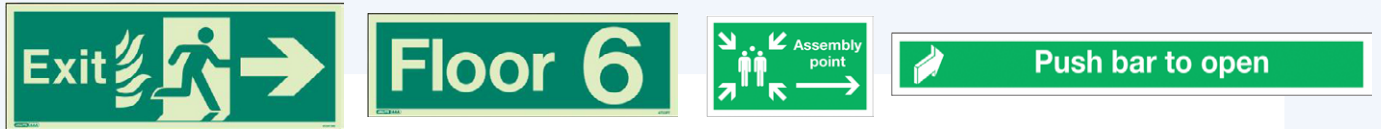
Another important consideration is the size of signs, especially when it comes to safe condition signs such as Fire exit and Exit signs.

Viewing distances are calculated based on sign height and illumination type, which typically are 200x sign height for internal illumination and 100x for external illumination.

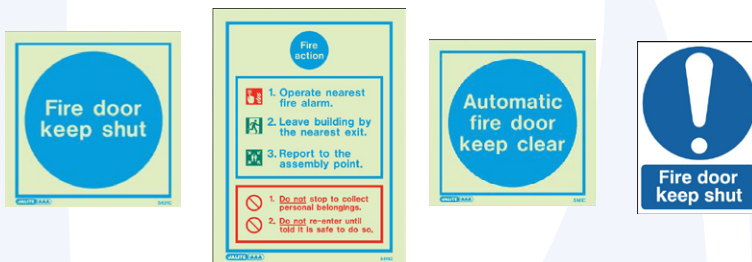
## Sign Categories

Fire safety signage is categorised by colour and shape to indicate safety information, hazards, and actions under UK Regulations. The five main categories are **Safe Condition** (green), **Mandatory** (blue), **Fire Equipment** (red), **Warning** (yellow), and **Prohibition** (red) signs. They ensure safe evacuation and fire safety compliance.

**Safe Condition Signs** are green rectangular or square signs which mark Exits, Fire Exits, Escape routes, operation of doors on escape routes and exits, Assembly points and the location of safety equipment, such as first aid equipment and breathing apparatus.



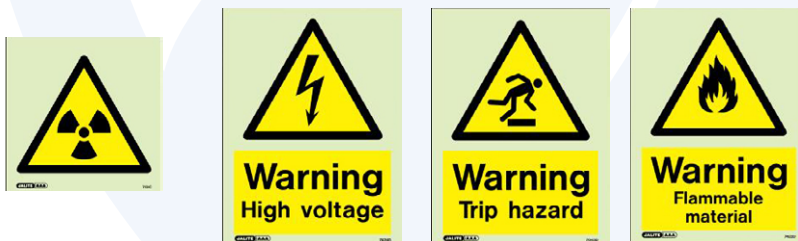
**Mandatory Fire Safety Signs and Notices** have blue circles which must be obeyed as a legal requirement such as fire door signs, fire action notices and keeping escape routes clear.



**Fire Equipment Signs** are red signs to indicate the location of fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire alarm call points and fire brigade equipment.



**Warning Signs** are yellow triangular signs and warn of potential risks such as flammable liquids, gas and chemicals.



**Prohibition Signs** are red circular signs with crossbars that forbid certain actions that could be dangerous such as No Smoking, Do not use mobile phones and No Admittance.



## Other types of Signs

A premises may well have **Combination Signs**, one sign providing different instructions using each signage categories colour such as **Green** for a safe condition/escape route action, **Blue** for a mandatory action, **Red** to identify fire equipment or a prohibition action, and **Yellow** to warn people to a danger or an unsafe action.



Above: Typical examples of combination signs found in premises.

**Orange** signs indicate serious hazards, often related to dangerous substances that may intensify or complicate a fire. Examples include, highly flammable liquids, reactive chemicals and explosive materials. Orange acts as an enhanced visual warning in environments where extreme caution is required.



## Wayfinding signage

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 made it a legal requirement from 23 January 2023 for all high-rise residential buildings in England to install Wayfinding Signage. This includes clear markings identifying floor and individual flat numbers as per the requirements of Building Regulations:

**Wayfinding signage for the fire service** 15.13 To assist the fire service to identify each floor in a block of flats with a top storey more than 11m above ground level, floor identification signs and flat indicator signs should be provided. (Building Regulations 2010 AD B V1 B5 Section 15: Access to buildings for firefighting personnel – flats)

[Approved Document B](#) should be consulted for detailed guidance on the type, positioning and specification for signs; the wording to be used on each floor identification sign; and the specification for flat indicator signs to provide information relating to flats accessed on each storey.



**Further information:**

[Fact sheet: Wayfinding signage \(regulation 8\)](#)

[Case Study - Wayfinding signage for high rise residential buildings](#)

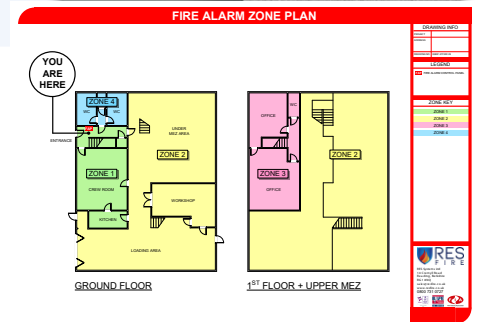
## Fire alarm zone plan

A fire alarm zone plan is a diagram showing how a building is divided into fire detection zones and is typically located next to the fire alarm control panel. It should include important features such as entrances, exits and circulation areas (fire doors) and should be oriented to match the viewers perspective and be presented in a tamper proof frame.

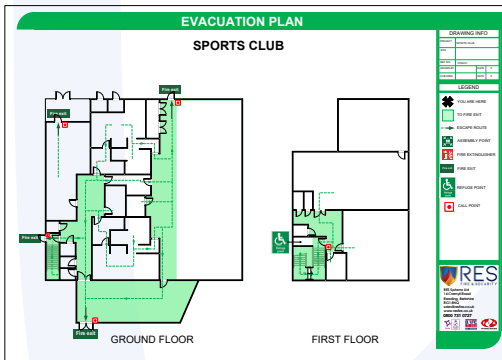
When a fire alarm activates, anyone responding to the alarm needs to be able to identify the affected area immediately. The plan can be used for quickly locating the area the alarm has been activated in as well as for fire marshals when evacuating the building. This improves response times, supports effective evacuation, and enables fire and rescue services to act quickly.

If your premises does not have an accurate and up-to-date fire zone plan this is now classified as a **major non-conformity** according to BS 5839- 1: 2025.

[See our Fire alarm zone plan video](#)



## Fire evacuation plans



Fire Evacuation Plans are an integral feature of your buildings system of safety signs and play a vital role in your fire safety strategy. Fire Evacuation and Procedure Plans are created to suit the fire safety strategy of your building.

Your plans must show how you have:

- a clear passageway to all escape routes
- clearly marked escape routes that are as short and direct as possible
- enough exits and routes for all people to escape
- emergency doors that open easily
- emergency lighting where needed
- training for all employees to know and use the escape routes
- a safe meeting point for staff
- disabled facilities such as refuges and evacuation chairs

**People with mobility needs** should have special arrangements for [people with mobility needs](#), for example make sure there are people to help wheelchair users get downstairs if there's a fire.

For further information see our [Evacuation Guide](#)

## Fire equipment plans

Fire equipment plans are visual, documented layouts of a building that identify the precise locations of fire safety systems, measures, and fire-fighting equipment. They are crucial for complying with Building Regulations, RRO, assisting emergency services, and guiding regular checks, servicing and maintenance.

Key Components of a Fire Equipment Plan:

- Locations of Active Equipment: Clearly marking the locations of fire extinguishers, fire blankets, and sprinkler systems.
- Detection & Alarm Systems: Identifying fire alarm panels, call points, smoke detectors, and sounders.
- Evacuation Routes: Displaying designated emergency exits, emergency doors, illuminated fire exit signs, and emergency escape lighting.
- Building Information: Marking fire-rated doors, walls, and escape routes to show compartmentation designed to restrict fire spread.
- Emergency Service Access: Indicating dry/wet rising mains, firefighting lifts, and the building information box (premises (secure) information box).



Fire equipment and evacuation plans should be used during staff induction training to ensure staff know the locations of extinguishers and escape routes. Also, they should be readily available for the Fire and Rescue service to locate firefighting equipment as well as any Hazards present on site and identifying the building layout upon arrival.

## General advice concerning 'Fire Plans'

**Fire strategy plans** are essential for modern premises to have on record, often contained within the premises fire strategy document, they should be used by an assessor during the FRA process to ensure all fire safety systems and measures, including fire safety signs are maintained as originally designed as an absolute minimum.

In older premises where there is no record of the original 'fire' plans, by using basic floor plans, a competent person such as a fire risk assessor **should use floor plans** as part of the FRA process to record and make recommendations regarding the premises fire safety systems, equipment, signage and passive fire protection measures. One recommendation may be to include a full compartmentation survey complete with plan should confirmation of the premises internal fire resistance be required and or there are concerns with the lack of fire resistance in some areas.

'**Fire Plans**' for any premises under the RRO are an essential item for a premise fire safety document records and should be kept on site to ensure any works (decoration, renovation or maintenance) being carried out, the plan is referred to so fire safety systems, equipment, signage and passive fire protection measures are always maintained and not compromised.

## Effective fire safety signing system

Safety signs are a requirement to protect the health and safety of the employees and anyone within the vicinity of the building. For an effective safety signing system, signs should be of similar style, design and format. A good way to achieve this, is to ensure that your signs conform to standards.

Why choose JALITE AAA photoluminescent signs and products?

Legislation states that all safety signs require illumination and must remain illuminated under a power loss. This requirement can be met by using JALITE AAA photoluminescent signs.

RES are an Authorised Distributor of the JALITE range of photoluminescent safety products which now include fire safety signs, health and safety signs, safety way guidance systems and even photoluminescent paint.



[> Find out more here](#)



## Our Fire Safety Signage Services

- Fire Safety Signage Sales
- Fire Safety Signage Installation
- Fire Safety Signage Guidance, Advice & Training

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## Our Fire Plan Services

- Fire Alarm Zone Plans
- Fire Equipment Plans
- Fire Escape Plans
- Fire Evacuation and Procedure Plans

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## Key frequently asked questions

### • Are fire safety signs a legal requirement?

Yes. The "Responsible Person" (employer, owner, or manager) must ensure that appropriate signage is installed wherever risks cannot be eliminated, and to indicate emergency exits and equipment.

### • What are the required sign types and colours?

- **Green (Safe Conditions)**: Emergency exits, escape routes, and first aid.
- **Red (Prohibition/Equipment)**: Fire equipment locations and actions "prohibited" to prevent danger.
- **Blue (Mandatory)**: Mandatory instructions such as "Fire Door Keep Shut".
- **Yellow (Warning)**: Warnings of potential danger.
- **Orange (Serious Hazard)**: Warning of dangerous substances that may intensify or complicate a fire.

### • Where should 'Fire exit' signs be placed?

They must be placed on 'secondary' routes that serves as a fire escape (that is not normally used so requires clearly signing), at all changes in direction, intersections, and above final fire exits. Signs should be visible as people approach, usually mounted at a height of 1.7m to 2.0m on walls, or 2.0m to 2.5m above doors.

### • Are 'Fire exit' signs required in residential communal areas?

If it is one way in and out communal area then no, Fire exit signs are not required as the communal areas corridors and landings can be considered as occupants having 'established use' therefore know their way in and out of the premises. If there is a secondary stairwell leading to a Fire exit ultimately with a compliant fire exit door which opens in one motion in the direction of escape, then Fire exit signs should be installed. If the final exit door is not compliant then Exit signs should be used.

### • When should 'Exit' signs be used?

They should be used on establish routes such as the main way in and out of a building if it is not immediately obvious to visitors or secondary escape routes that do not lead to a compliant fire exit but occupants may be able to exit.

### • What are the rules for fire door signs?

Fire doors with a self-closing device must have a blue and white "Fire Door Keep Shut" sign on both sides. If the door is automatically closing, it should read "Automatic Fire Door Keep Clear". If the door is kept locked e.g. storeroom or plant room), it should read "Fire Door Keep Locked Shut".

### • Does a flat front door require a mandatory fire door sign?

Although a flat front door is a self-closing fire door it does not require a mandatory fire door sign on the understanding that a flat front door is competently managed by the occupant.

### • What are the requirements for high-rise residential buildings?

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 require clear "wayfinding" signage, including floor identification and flat numbers on staircase walls, to assist fire services.

### • Are photoluminescent (glow-in-the-dark) signs required?

While not always legally mandated for all premises, they are widely recognized as best practice, particularly in stairwells and areas with low-level emergency lighting to ensure visibility during power failures.

### • Do I need to sign fire extinguishers?

Yes. All fire-fighting equipment, such as extinguishers and fire blankets, must be identified with a sign (usually red with a white symbol) that indicates the type of extinguisher.

### • When should I check fire safety signs?

Regularly, as part of your fire risk assessment review or during routine maintenance checks, to ensure they are still in place, visible, unobstructed, and not faded.

### • Can I use custom or text-only signs?

No. Signs must comply with BS EN ISO 7010, which requires, at minimum, a standard pictogram. Text can be used to aid understanding, but it cannot replace the required image.

Disclaimer: This information is for general guidance. Always consult the latest legal requirements and a qualified fire safety professional for specific building fire safety signage requirements.