

BRITISH STANDARD

Safety signs, including fire safety signs —

Part 10: Code of practice for the use of safety signs, including fire safety signs

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Foreword

Publishing information

This part of BS 5499 was published by BSI and came into effect on 31 July 2006. It was prepared by Subcommittee PH/8/1, *Safety signs, including fire safety signs*, under the authority of Technical Committee PH/8, *Graphical symbols and signs*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Information about this document

BS 5499 comprises the following parts:

- *Part 1: Specification for geometric shapes, colours and layout;*
- *Part 2: Specification for self-luminous fire safety signs;*
- *Part 4: Code of practice for escape route signing;*
- *Part 5: Signs with specific safety meanings;*
- *Part 6: Creation and design of graphical symbols for use in safety signs – Requirements;*
- *Part 10: Code of practice for the use of safety signs, including fire safety signs;*
- *Part 11: Water safety signs.*

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 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.

The recommendations regarding the size of safety signs and factors related to viewing distances reflect current practice. These parameters remain the subject of research.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard 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 British Standard 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 British Standard 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 in 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.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

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

Introduction

Safety signs can make a major contribution to good communication and the development of good safety culture. Throughout this code of practice the term “safety sign” includes “fire safety sign” where appropriate.

This code of practice is intended to assist the facilities manager of the premises and others responsible for selecting and installing safety signs. This code of practice reflects best practice and shows how to use safety signs 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:

- provide information in a compact form;
- provide information in a form that is independent of language;
- have visual impact; and
- 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 should 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.

1 Scope

This part of BS 5499 provides guidance on how to select, install, position and maintain safety signs conforming to BS 5499-1 and BS 5499-5, excluding escape route signs, to present specific safety information.

This part of BS 5499 satisfies the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 [1] and existing fire safety legislation.

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) International Maritime Organization symbols;
- d) labels provided under the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations 1996;
- e) 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 Water safety signs are given in BS 5499-11.

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

2 Normative references

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

BS 5266-1, *Emergency lighting – Part 1: Code of practice for the emergency lighting of premises*

BS 5499-1, *Graphical symbols and signs – Safety signs, including fire safety signs – Part 1: Specification for geometric shapes, colours and layout*

BS 5499-5:2002, *Graphical symbols and signs – Safety signs, including fire safety signs – Part 5: Signs with specific safety meanings*

BS 5499-6, *Graphical symbols and signs – Safety signs, including fire safety signs – Part 6: Creation and design of graphical symbols for use in safety signs – Requirements*

BS EN 60598-1, *Luminaires – Part 1: General requirements and tests*

BS ISO 16069, *Graphical symbols – Safety signs – Safety way guidance systems (SWGS)*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this part of BS 5499, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 safety sign

sign that gives a general safety message, by means of a combination of a safety colour and a geometric shape and which, by the addition of a graphical symbol, gives a particular safety meaning

3.2 categories of safety sign

NOTE These are referred to as “types” in BS 5499-1 and BS 5499-5.

3.2.1 prohibition sign

safety sign that indicates that specific behaviour is forbidden

3.2.2 mandatory sign

safety sign that indicates that a specific course of action is to be taken

3.2.3 hazard sign

safety sign that indicates a specific source of potential harm

3.2.4 safe condition sign

safety sign that indicates a safety action, the location of safety equipment or a safety facility

NOTE This definition is different from that given in BS 5499-5 in that it does not include escape route signs. The safe condition signs given in BS 5499-5 include escape route signs, while the scope of BS 5499-10 specifically excludes escape route signs.

3.2.5 fire equipment sign

safety sign that indicates the location or identification of fire equipment or how it should be used

3.2.6 supplementary sign

sign that is supportive of a safety sign by providing additional clarification

NOTE 1 A supplementary sign may comprise text or an arrow.

NOTE 2 A supplementary sign when used with a safety sign becomes part of the safety sign.

3.3 graphical symbol

visually perceptible figure with a particular meaning used to transmit information independently of language

[BS ISO 17724:2003, Definition **31**]

3.4 letter height

nominal height of the lower case letter “x”

3.5 hazard

source of potential harm

[BS ISO 17724:2003, Definition **36**]

3.6 risk

combination of the probability of occurrence of harm and the severity of that harm

[BS ISO 17724:2003, Definition **65**]

3.7 risk assessment

process of identifying hazards and evaluating the risks to health and safety arising from these hazards taking account of the existing risk controls (or, in the case of new activity, the proposed risk controls)

3.8 risk control

selection and application of suitable measures to reduce risk

3.9 assessment area

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

3.10 zone of influence

space in which the safety message intended to be conveyed by a safety sign is effective

3.11 viewing distance

distance at which a safety sign can be seen and understood

3.12 premises

building, including any ancillary accommodation and any area under the control of the building occupier, construction site or other area

3.13 manager

person in overall control of the premises, exercising this responsibility either in his/her own right or by delegation

NOTE There may be more than one person in charge of the premises.

3.14 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.

3.15 safety culture

product of individual and group values, attitudes, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization's approach to health and safety

4 System design

4.1 General

The objective of the safety signing system is to ensure that all personnel within the premises (or the part of the premises under review) are reliably informed, instructed and aware of the location and nature of hazard(s) and the measure(s) required to control risk to an acceptable level as necessary to meet the requirements of health and safety legislation and the health and safety management requirements of the organization.

It is recommended that all safety signing systems conform to this code of practice to minimize confusion. Therefore the designer of the safety signing system or the specifier of the safety signs should follow the principles set out within this code of practice. This will ensure a uniformity of application of safety signs which will lead to increased familiarity, consistent correct interpretation, maximum influence and good understanding of the safety message.

4.2 Decision on the need for a safety signing system

It is assumed that the organization has established and maintained procedures for the ongoing identification of hazards, the assessment of risk and the implementation of the necessary risk control measures, which taken together have established the need for safety signs as part of the risk control process.

It is also assumed that the organization has developed an emergency plan in case any risk control measure fails. This should form the basis for the provision of suitable emergency and fire equipment and, where necessary, any associated signing.

Before a decision is taken to use a safety signing system in a particular situation, a risk assessment should have been carried out to identify the hazards and the risks associated with each hazard. For each hazard the best means of minimizing the risks associated with it should then be selected. The method of first choice should be to remove the hazard, the second choice should be to prevent people coming into contact with the hazard. If neither of these options is practical, then a safety sign should be used.

For example, if the hazard were an uneven floor surface that puts people at risk of a fall, the choices would be as follows.

- First choice: Remove the hazard by levelling the floor.
- Second choice: Prevent people coming into contact with the hazard by putting up a permanent and effective barrier.
- Third choice: If neither the first nor the second choice is a practical option, put up a safety sign to warn people of the hazard.

However, reliance should not be placed on the use of safety signs where the hazard could and should be eliminated. For example the warning of a trip hazard should be a purely temporary safety sign until the hazard has been eliminated.

Figure 1 illustrates this process.

4.3 Assessment area

It is strongly recommended for the purpose of determining the safety signs required that, in all but the smallest premises, the premises be divided into manageable assessment areas. This is particularly important where the premises are large or complex or where multiple functions are carried out in the premises.

The establishment of assessment areas will enable the focused scrutiny of the need, if any, for safety signs and will assist in avoiding the provision of unnecessary or inappropriate safety signs.

Each assessment area should be an area for which there is a clearly defined and nominated safety management responsibility and for which a manager or supervisor is deemed to be in control.

The assessment area should have clearly defined boundaries in respect of purpose, process and/or facility. The assessment area should generally also have clearly defined physical boundaries, such as divisions, walls, barriers or fencing.

Figure 1 Decision process

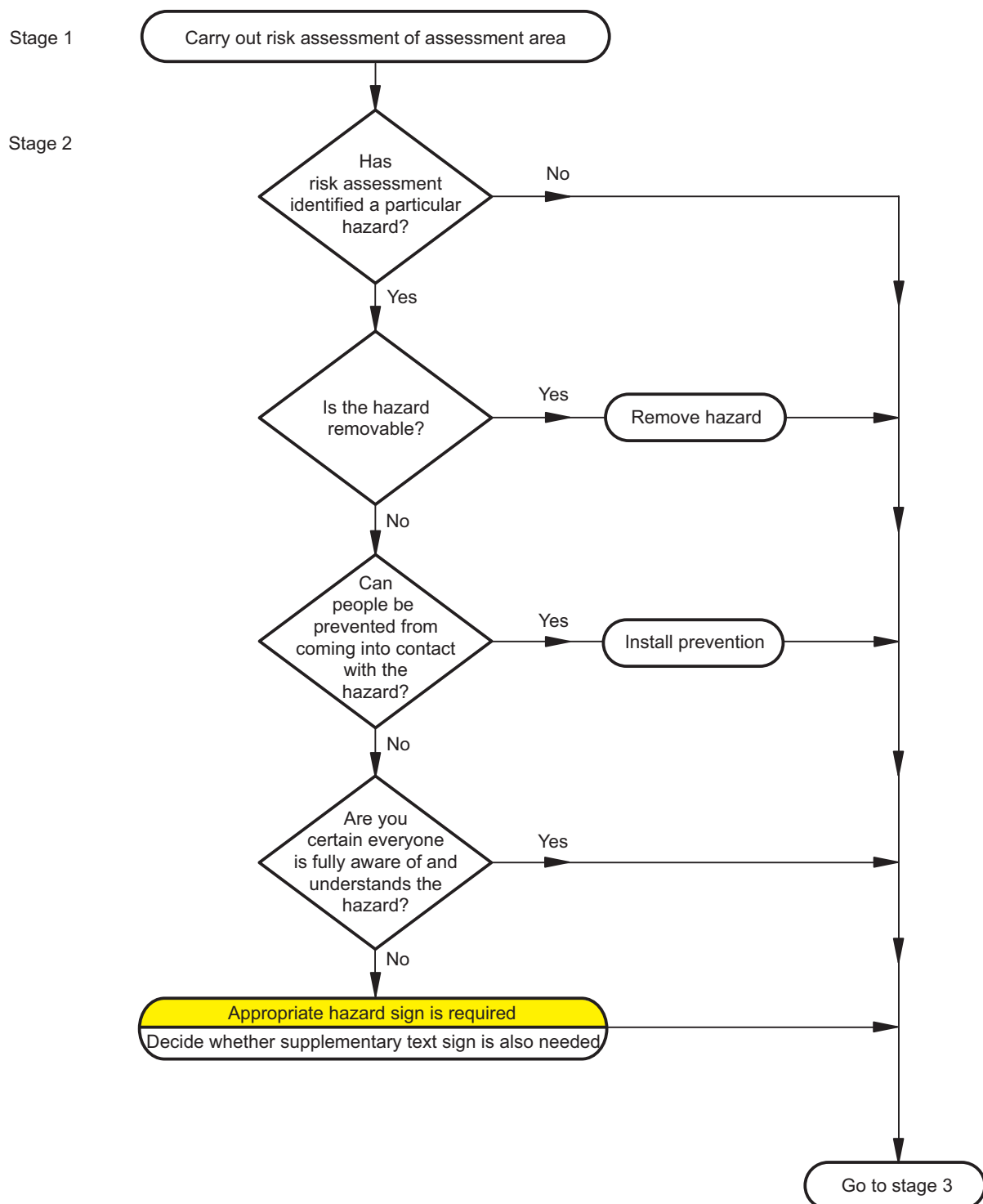
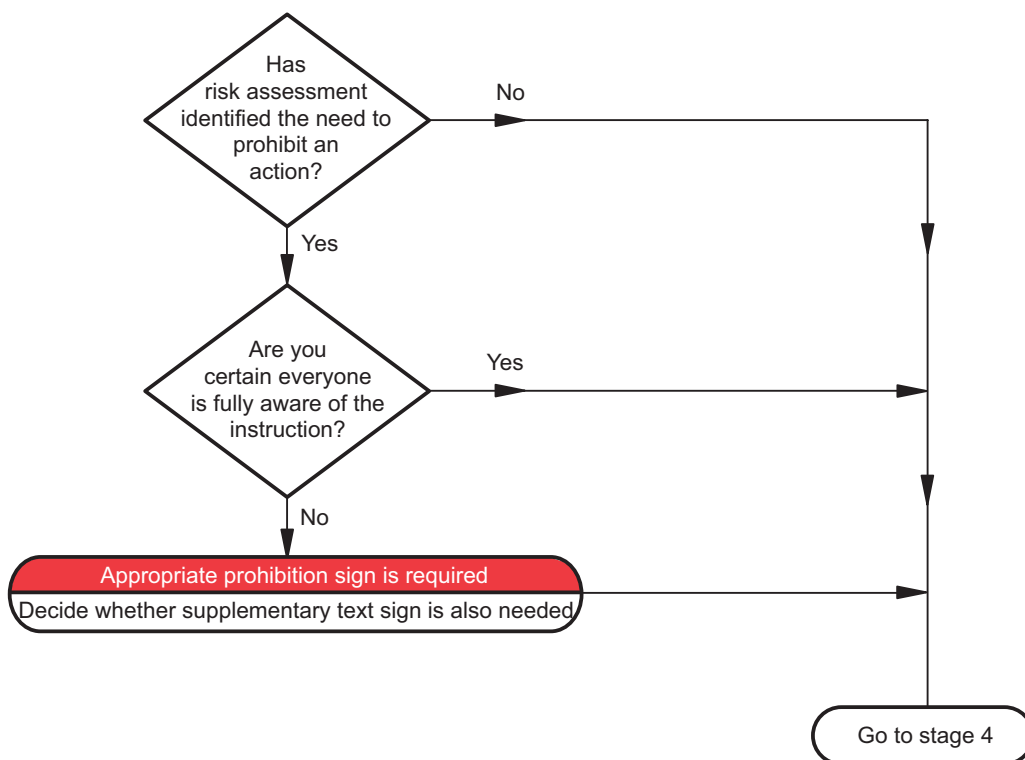


Figure 1 Decision process (*continued*)

Stage 3



Stage 4

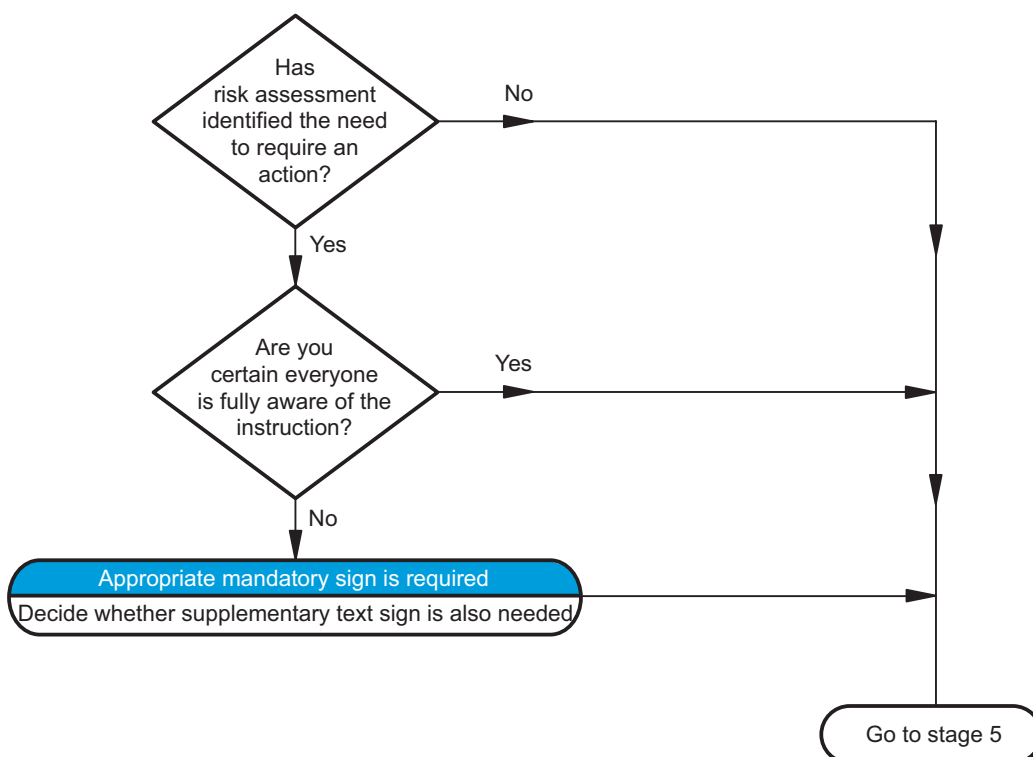
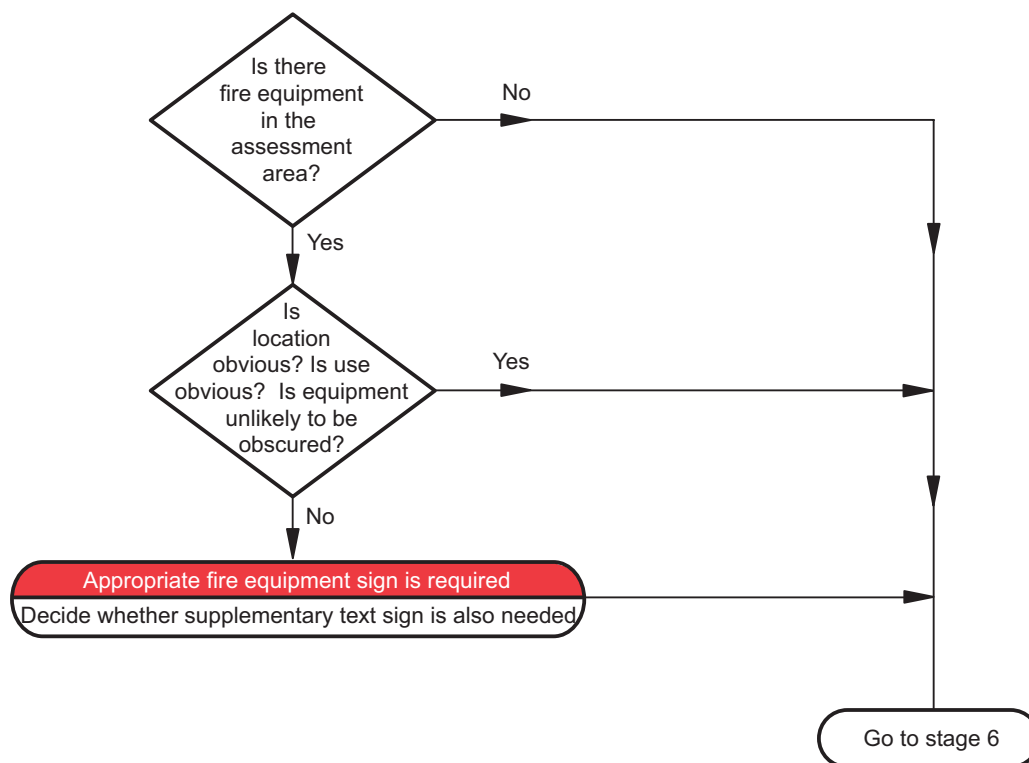


Figure 1 Decision process (*continued*)

Stage 5



Stage 6

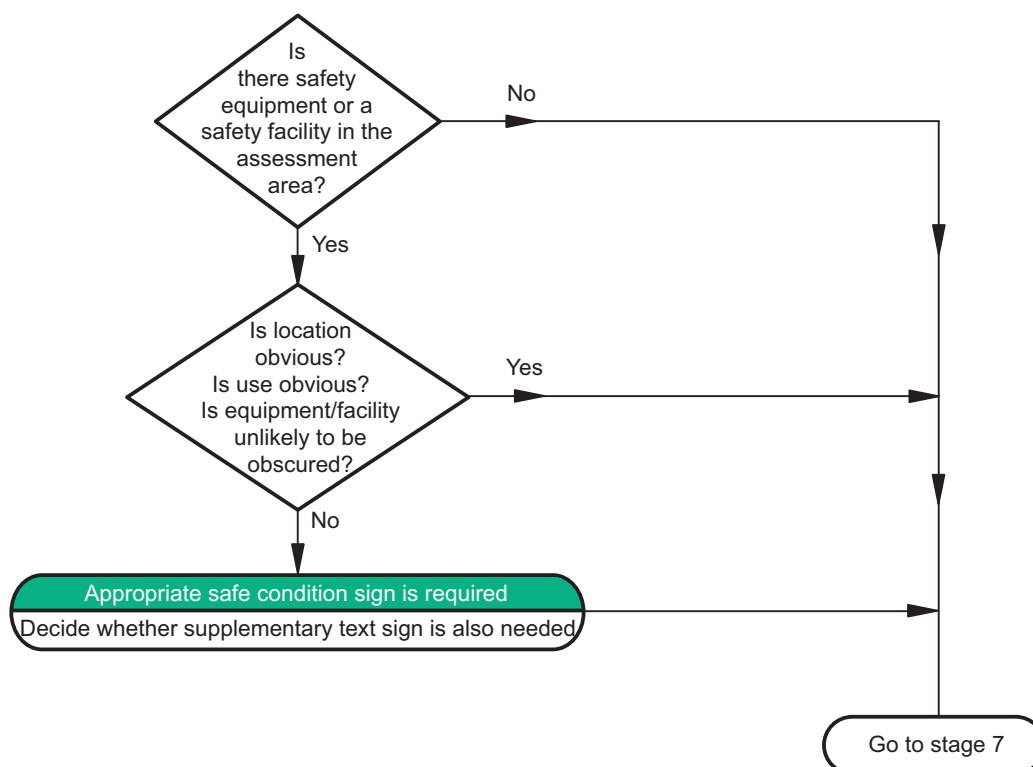
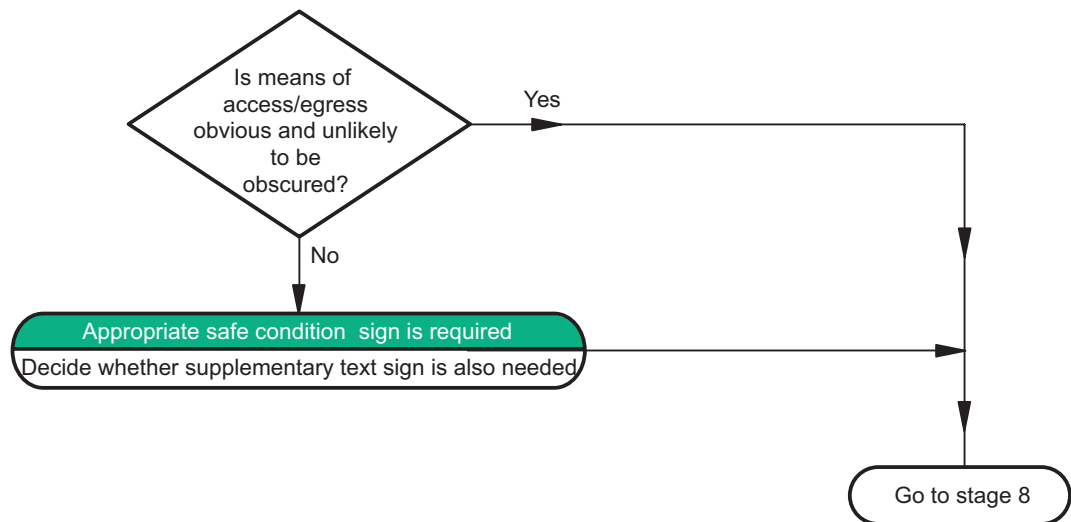


Figure 1 Decision process (*continued*)

Stage 7



Stage 8

