

Regulatory Compliance

OSHA Regulations Adopt ANSI Z535

Rob Marcantonio | Mar 01, 2017

All you need to know about the ANSI Z535 standards.

In 2013, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations adopted the sign standards of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) code Z535—the first major change in these regulations since 1968. Old and new signs are in compliance with OSHA regulations, so you should update signs as soon as it makes sense for your business.

“As the ANSI standards were updated over the years to reflect best practices and new learning, employers started using safety signage that reflected the updated standards, not the older standards,” says Tracy Cullen, senior director of communications and marketing at the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). That created potential problems for employers. However, Cullen explains, “OSHA now clarifies that the updated standards are a legally satisfactory means of meeting the OSHA workplace rules.”

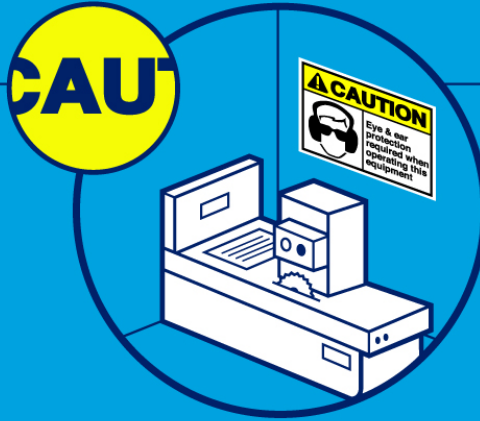
That means you need to update your safety signs to a new OSHA-compliant format that helps workers make safer decisions.

New Elements of ANSI Signs

Point the way to making safe decisions.

Clear Header

Signs should have a solid background color and contain an appropriate signal word written in all capital letters. Signal words—"CAUTION," "WARNING" and "DANGER"—are preceded by an alert symbol.



Prominent Pictogram

Each safety sign should contain a symbol that illustrates the hazard. "They can be important for people who speak languages other than the country where the facility is located," says Tracy Cullen, of the National Emergency Management Association.



Informative Legend

Succinct legends should convey three things: *What is the hazard?*, *How can workers avoid it?* and *What are the consequences of not avoiding it?*

Legends should use upper and lowercase letters, line breaks, proper punctuation, and contain black text on a white background.



Final Thought

Each workplace is unique, so each workplace safety program should be, too. "Each workplace safety program will have to implement its own requirements based on its assessment of the workplace facility," says Cullen.

Illustration by T.M. Detwiler

Have you seen success in your workplace from updating your OSHA signage?

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