Safety signs and symbols are used extensively on board ships to alert crew members to working hazards, escape routes, type of equipment etc.

These signs act as a pictorial illustration to help seafarers increase their level of personal safety on ships.

Safety signs use a variety of colours and symbols, which have been acknowledged by the regulatory bodies of the shipping industry, to explain different aspects related to the operation and maintenance of the ships.

It is imperative that sea going professionals are able to identify and understand the safety signs, as they greatly help in reducing the number of accidents on ships.

In order to provide sea going professionals with a concise guide that would help them to identify safety signs quickly and easily, Marine Insight has specially compiled the eBook - “The Ultimate Guide to Safety Signs on Ships”.

If remembering the meaning of safety signs is a problem for you, then this pocket guide is your best friend.

Each and every safety sign and symbol used on ships has been categorized and explained to help seafarers remember the signs in the most effective manner.

The Ultimate Guide to Safety Signs on Ships is a must-have book not only for sea going professionals but also for those working on shore, as most of these safety signs are standardized by the International regulatory bodies for use all around the world.
Direction Signs for Life Boats on Ships

Life boat direction signs must be pasted in accommodation area and on each deck of the ship. All the signs must be photo luminescent and IMO approved.
Direction Signs for Muster Station

Every Change in Direction should be provided with lifeboat and muster station signs.

Muster Station Signs must be pasted in all decks of accommodation area. They must be photo luminescent and IMO approved.
Direction Signs for Exit

It’s an IMO requirement that every escape or exit route must be provided with Photo luminescent sign, which must include a pictogram of running man, direction of exit and text written in Bold- “EXIT”.

The Sign for Exit is normally used for Primary Exit areas and they are positioned approximately 1700mm for deck level for normal direction marking and not more than 300 mm for low location lighting system.

At the Final exit point, only a running man pictogram along with EXIT text must be posted without any arrow, meaning the final exit point.

Where a door hinges to right, running man pictogram towards left must be used and vice versa.
Direction Signs for Emergency Exit and Escape Route

Secondary escape route must be provided with similar sign as described above but with additional text of – For emergency use only.

Escape Route signs in stairways and exits shall be marked by lighting or photo luminescent strip indicators placed not more than 300 mm above the deck at all points of the escape route, including angles and intersections.

The marking must enable passengers to identify the routes of escape and escape exits.

If electric illumination is used, it shall be supplied by the emergency source of power and shall be so arranged that the failure of any single light or cut in a lighting strip will not result in the marking being ineffective.

Additionally, escape route signs and fire equipment location markings shall be of photo luminescent material or marked by electric lighting.

The administration shall ensure that such lighting or photo luminescent equipment has been evaluated, tested and applied in accordance with the Fire Safety Systems Code.
Direction Signs for Exit Doors

Escape routes shall be evaluated by an evacuation analysis early in the design process.

The analysis shall be used to identify and eliminate, as far as practicable, congestions, which may develop during abandonment, due to normal movement of passengers and crew along escape routes, including the possibility that crew may need to move along these routes in a direction opposite to the movement of passengers.

In addition, the analysis shall be used to demonstrate that escape arrangements are sufficiently flexible to provide for the possibility that certain escape routes, assembly stations, embarkation stations or survival craft may not be available as a result of any casualty.
**Symbol for Station / Panel / Locker**

- Fire Plan
- Fire Station
- Fire Alarm Panel
- Locker with Fire-fighter Outfit
- Control Station
- Additional Protective Clothing
- Additional BA
- Emergency
- Locker
- Telephone Station

**Symbol for Alarm / Horn**

- CO2 Release
- Foam Release
- Powder Release
- Horn-Fire Alarm
- Bell- Fire Alarm
- CO2 Horn Alarm
- Foam Horn
- Sprinkler Horn
Symbol for Portable Extinguishers

The numerical value in the sign may change depending upon the quantity of extinguishing media.

- **Powder**
- **Foam**
- **CO2**

Extinguisher Extinguisher Extinguisher

- **Portable**
- **Wheeled Powder**
- **Wheeled CO2**

Foam Applicator Extinguisher Extinguisher

Symbol for Fixed Extinguishers/Installation/Banks

- **CO2 Battery**
- **Fixed Foam**
- **Drenching Bank**

Installation Installation Installation

- **CO2 /Nitrogen**
- **Powder**
- **Sprinkler Bulk Installation**

Installation Installation Installation

- **Inert Gas**
- **High Exp. Foam**

Installation Supply tank
Symbol for Division/Doors/Zone

- A-class Division
- A-class Fire door
- A-class Self closing

- B-class Division
- B-class Fire door
- B-class Self closing

Fire door

Main Vertical Zone

Symbol for Alarm Activation point

- Push Button
- Manual Operated

- Fire Alarm
- Call Point

Symbol for Restriction

- No Smoking
- No Naked Flame
- Do Not Extinguish
- With Water

- No Entry
- Authorized Person only
- Don’t Touch
Symbol for On board Hazard

Do Not Operate Do not Clean or No Maintenance
Oil while running while running

Electric shock Risk Fire Hazard Noise Hazard

Radiation Hazard Bio - Hazard Marine Pollutant

Same Hazard Sign/ Symbol can be used for different purposes. For e.g. Acid hazard symbol
battery locker and chemical can be used both for locker.

Similarly This symbol can be used to describe hazard from explosive gases, vapours, compressed
oxygen etc. The main aim is to identify the common hazard from various substances.
Symbol for Personal Protection

Wear Helmet  Eye Protection  Face Protection

Wear Mask  Wear Respirator  Ear Protection

Wear Gloves  Wear  Wear Safety shoe

Protective clothing

Wear Safety  Use Machine  Lift Correctly

Harness  Protective Guard
Identification and understanding of safety signs and symbols is one of the several steps towards ensuring personal safety on ships. It is important that mariners understand the importance of these signs and make conscious efforts towards recognizing and remembering them. These internationally recognized symbols are used on all ships around the world, irrespective of the type, size, or class of the ship. Ensuring personal safety of seafarers using safety signs is extremely important to guarantee overall safety of the ship and its property.

To enhance personal safety on ships in all aspects, read our FREE ebook – The Ultimate Guide to Personal Safety on Ships.
Definition/Explanation

What is safety committee on ships?

Understanding Neil Robertson Stretcher on ships

What is material safety data sheet (MSDS)?

Understanding International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code

What is Basic Safety Induction and Emergency Training?

What is inflatable survival rescue stick?

A brief overview of ship’s fire control plan

Understanding fire safety system (FSS) code on ships

A brief introduction to survival radios

SOLAS requirements for Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS)

Different types of alarms used on ships

Different types of Immersion suits

Dangers of Asbestos on ships

Understanding life rafts on ships

Safe container lashing for personal safety

Different periodic safety routines on ships

Important requirements for fireman’s outfit

Understanding different parts of SCABA

Safety features on engine room crane one should be aware of

Types of lifeboat release mechanisms

Types of lifeboats used on ships

Understanding oil spill kit on ships

What does IMO say about Stowaway?

Understanding sprinkler system on ship

Understanding fire fighting CO2 system for cargo holds

Importance of fire drills on ships

Duties of ship safety officer

Duties of ship security officer

How is ISM Code implemented on ships?

Duties of Company Security Officer
Procedures/ How-to

**How shipping companies can benefit from strict safety policies on ships?**

**How to avoid fire in the accommodation area?**

**Ensuring personal safety during mooring operation**

**What makes Ro-Ro Ships unsafe?**

**Measures taken to ensure safety of ship’s crew, cargo, and marine environment**

**Different types of non-pyrotechnic distress signals**

**16 fire fighting appliances and preventive measures**

**How to rescue a person from a confined space on ships?**

**How to lift loads properly and avoid back injury?**

**How to ensure personal safety in rough weather?**

**How to prepare container ship for loading cargo?**

**How to tackle man overboard situation on ships?**

**Procedure for entering enclosed space on ships**

Health/ Wellbeing

**15 ways to keep mind and body fit on board ships**

**Everything you ever wanted to know about sea sickness**

**How to avoid politics on ships?**

**How to fight stress on ships?**

**How to break monotony on board ships?**

Safety on Ships – Case Studies

**Can bacteria cause fire on ships?**

**Oily rags catches fire**

**Falling off engine room staircase**