

The Use of Colour for Safety Purposes

5.4.1

How is Colour Perceived?

Colour stimulates the colour receptors at the back of our eyes. Colour can convey strong messages to our brain when associated with certain functions or warnings. For example, the colour red is associated with “stop” or “danger”.

Standards Australia’s Use of Colour for Equipment and Hazards Identification

The Standards Association of Australia has issued the Australian Standard AS1318, “Use of Colour for the Marking of Physical Hazards and the Identification of Certain Equipment in Industry”, from which most of the information in this Dulux PC Tech Note is derived.

What are the main “Safety Colours”?

The main colours used for designating areas for safety purposes are:

Colour	AS2700 Reference	AS2700 Name	Contrast Colour
Red	R13	Signal Red	White
Yellow	Y15	Sunflower	Black
Green	G21	Jade	White
Blue	B23	Bright Blue	White

Where are these colours to be applied?

RED

Red, with or without white, is to be used to identify areas of:

- *Danger*
- *Fire protection equipment*
- *Stop buttons or Emergency stop controls.*

Examples of these are rail crossings, stop signs, fire alarms and boxes, valve locations, sprinkler piping, (refer AS 1345), fire blanket receptacles, fire buckets and areas around fire extinguishers, hoses, reels and hydrants.

Other examples are stop buttons for electrical switches used for either normal or emergency stopping of machinery and emergency stop bars or controls on hazardous machines.



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YELLOW

Yellow, with or without black, is to be used to identify areas where:

- *Caution is to be exercised*
- *Radioactive hazards or sources are located*

Examples of areas where caution is to be exercised are industrial locomotives, wheeled plant machines, overhead fixtures that extend down into normal operating areas, including low pulley blocks and crane hooks, low doorways, travelling conveyors and low pipes (refer AS 1345), pillars or posts that may be struck, temporary or permanent barricades, and hazards created by the removal of guards or covers for industrial machinery.



Examples of where radioactive hazards or sources are located include areas of radioactive use, storage or contaminated waste and equipment collection.

GREEN

Green, with or without white, is to be used to identify areas of:

- *Safety*
- *First Aid Equipment*

Examples of these are location of first aid facilities, stretchers, respiratory and revival equipment, showers, exist signs and safety instruction signs. (Refer AS 1319 for emergency-related information signs.)

BLUE

Blue, with white lettering, is to be used for:

- *Mandatory (obligatory) instructions to be followed*
- *Signs depicting areas where personal protective equipment must be worn*
- *General information*

Examples of these are location of first aid facilities, stretchers, respiratory and revival equipment, showers, exist signs and safety instruction signs. (Refer AS 1319 for emergency-related information signs.)



Other Colour-Related Australian Standards

AS 1345	Identification of the Contents of Piping, Conduits and Ducts
AS1319	Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment
AS2700	Colour Standards for Paints and Related Materials

For more information, please refer to AS1318, or contact the Dulux Protective Coatings Technical Consultant in your state.

Reference: Australian Standard AS1318, "Use of Colour for the Marking of Physical Hazards and the Identification of Certain Equipment in Industry"