

Australian Standard™

**Design and application of water safety  
signs**



**S t a n d a r d s** Australia

This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee CS-093, Water Safety Signs and Symbols. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 30 November 2001 and published on 7 February 2002.

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The following interests are represented on Committee CS-093:

Aquatic and Recreation Institute  
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Australian Local Government Association  
Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguards Association  
Consumers Federation of Australia  
Department of Sport and Recreation, N.S.W.  
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Australian Standard™

## **Design and application of water safety signs**

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee CS-093, Water Safety Signs and Symbols, to supersede AS 2416—1995.

This edition has been revised to include a total of six new symbolic signs which have been successfully tested for comprehension in accordance with AS 2342—1992\*, *Development, testing and implementation of information and safety symbols and symbolic signs*.

A further category of sign of the general type 'Warning—(activity) Not Advised' has been introduced in this edition. The category is referred to in Clause 3.11.3 and Appendix B. Further explanation relating to this sign is given in the Foreword.

The sign indicating 'stingers' in the previous edition has now been replaced by two signs, both indicating 'hazardous marine creatures', one sign showing these underwater and the other showing them floating.

The term 'normative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which it applies. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard.

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\* Testing of five of these signs is reported in ADAMS, A.S. *Testing of proposed water safety signs*: Report to the NSW Water Safety Taskforce, University of NSW, November 2000.

Testing of the sixth sign 'Surfboard riding between flags prohibited' was reported in an unpublished report by Forte Design and Marketing of Wollongong NSW, prepared for the Wollongong City Council.

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## FOREWORD

As a means of visual communication, symbols and symbolic signs are often regarded as being superior to words. With well-designed graphics, a symbolic sign can have greater legibility than one with words and provided the meaning is reasonably self-evident to the people for whom its message is intended, it can transcend language barriers. However, whether the meaning is sufficiently self-evident cannot be reliably assessed without comprehension testing in accordance with AS 2342. This Standard, therefore, requires that only the symbolic signs specified shall be used, except where a new symbol has been introduced after testing as set out in Clause 3.2.

The Standard also makes provision for combination word/symbol signs. These may be in the form of either a 'composite' sign, where the words are used to qualify or augment the message, or a 'hybrid' sign where the meaning of the symbol is merely repeated in words. Use of the latter is generally deprecated because, if the symbol performed satisfactorily in comprehension testing, it should not be necessary. The need to provide a hybrid sign is generally indicative of a symbol which does not convey its meaning adequately, and therefore, either needs further attention to its design, or should be abandoned in favour of words. However, if a symbol has been accepted entirely on the results of the *recall* test in AS 2342 after having failed the *comprehension* test, its use as a hybrid sign may need to be considered (see Clause 3.5.2(d) of this Standard).

This edition of the Standard introduces a third category of sign, the warning sign of the type 'Warning—(Activity) Not Advised'. It comprises a standard symbol indicating the activity on a yellow diamond with a red cross superimposed on the symbol. The use of these signs has been brought about by the situation referred to in Note 1 to Clause 3.3(a), i.e. the legal ineffectiveness of prohibition signs in the absence of enforcement. At this stage only one such sign has been included in this Standard, the 'Warning—Swimming Not Advised' sign which is shown in Appendix B and referred to in Clause 3.11.3. The Standard requires that it only be used as a composite sign with the words indicating the reason for the warning.

## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

### **Australian Standard** **Design and application of water safety signs**

#### SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

##### **1.1 SCOPE**

This Standard sets out requirements for the design and application of flags and safety signs including signs incorporating graphic symbols, intended for use where water sports may be undertaken or where there are other activities close to bodies of water such as the seaside, rivers, creeks, dams and open drains.

##### **1.2 OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this Standard is to reduce the risk of drownings and serious accidents by providing a uniform basis for the identification of—

- (a) hazardous conditions associated with a body of water or water sports;
- (b) areas on beaches patrolled by lifesavers or lifeguards;
- (c) areas where certain water sports are prohibited or permitted; and
- (d) the location of first aid and rescue equipment.

NOTE: Symbols denoting activities such as swimming can be used on signs either permitting or prohibiting the activity. To avoid unnecessary use of symbols it is recommended that as far as possible the signs only be used to indicate areas where such activities are prohibited.

##### **1.3 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS**

The following documents are referred to in this Standard:

###### AS

- 1319 Safety signs for the occupational environment
- 1744 Forms of letters and numerals for road signs (known as Standard alphabets for road signs)
- 2342 Development, testing and implementation of information and safety symbols and symbolic signs
- 2700 Colour Standards for general purposes
- 2899 Public information symbol signs
- 2899.2 Part 2: Water safety signs

###### AS/NZS

- 1906 Retroreflective materials and devices for road traffic control purposes
- 1906.1 Part 1: Retroreflective materials

##### **1.4 DESIGN**

Water safety signs incorporating graphic symbols shall be designed in accordance with AS 2899.2.