



ANSI Z535.2-2007

American National Standard

**for Environmental and
Facility Safety Signs**

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ANSI Z535.2-2007

**American National Standard
AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND FACILITY
SAFETY SIGNS**

Secretariat:

National Electrical Manufacturers Association

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Foreword (Neither this foreword nor any of the informative Annexes is a part of American National Standard Z535.2-2007.)

This standard is one of six standards maintained and revised by the ANSI Z535 Committee. The six standards are:

- Z535.1 – Safety Color Code
- Z535.2 – Environmental and Facility Safety Signs
- Z535.3 – Criteria for Safety Symbols
- Z535.4 – Product Safety Signs and Labels
- Z535.5 – Safety Tags and Barricade Tapes (for Temporary Hazards)
- Z535.6 – Product Safety Information in Product Manuals, Instructions, and Other Collateral Materials

This standard was formulated to provide a visual alerting system to aid in identifying potential hazards known to exist in the environment. Together, ANSI Z535.1, Z535.2 and Z535.3 contain information needed to specify formats, colors, and symbols for safety signs used in environmental and facility applications. The ANSI Z535.4 and Z535.5 standards are harmonized with this standard to provide appropriate hazard avoidance information for products that might be encountered in the environment (ANSI Z535.4) or temporary changes to the environment (ANSI Z535.5). It is desirable that new signs, symbols and colors for environmental and facility safety signs specified after the approval of this standard comply with the standard.

The ANSI Z35 Committee on Safety Signs and ANSI Z53 Committee on Safety Colors were combined in 1979 to form the ANSI Z535 Committee on Safety Signs and Colors. The ANSI Z535.4 Standard addresses the design of safety signs and labels for application to products, and was first published in 1991. In that Standard, the format specified for the signal word panel was a simple rectangle. The rectangle contained the Safety alert symbol, a signal word (DANGER, CAUTION or WARNING), and specific safety colors were designated to be used with those signal words (DANGER/ Safety Red; WARNING/ Safety Orange; CAUTION/ Safety Yellow.) This contrasted with the longstanding format of the black rectangle with red oval and white letters used for danger signs. The initial impetus for the new ANSI Z535.4-1991 header format was that products often had limited space for a sign or label and omitting the older format allowed bigger letters for the signal word. The ANSI Z535.2-1991 standard retained the longstanding danger heading format and created a similar format (using a truncated diamond) for the new warning sign head. Each 1991 standard allowed the user to use the format of the other standard if desired.

The ANSI Z535.2-1998 standard showed the preferred format for environmental and safety signs to be the simple header style of the ANSI Z535.4 standard for product safety signs and labels; both standards included the older system. The ANSI Z535.2-1998 standard also stated a preference to use a white background for the message panel, in order to increase contrast and viewing distance. Like the ANSI Z535.4 standard, the Z535.2-1998 standard also required the sign to give information of the consequences of not avoiding the hazard, if the consequence is not obvious.

The ANSI Z535.2-1998 standard was carefully crafted so that the new requirements scheduled to become mandatory in the 2002 Edition were stated as *preferred* in the 1998 Edition. As of the 2002 standard, the older format is no longer included; the simple header with larger letters and more differential color is set forth.

The ANSI Z535.2-2007 includes definitional changes and safety alert symbol formats intended to clarify the distinction between signal words and greater harmonization with international standards. The 2007 edition started the process of eliminating the use of the CAUTION signal word panel without the safety alert symbol for procedures not related to personal safety, such as property damage. The preferred signal word is NOTICE. The use of CAUTION for that purpose will be phased out in the 2011 Edition.

There are five Annexes to this standard, including a new annex of informative references. An annex on risk assessment and choice of signal words was also added in 2007.

This Foreword and all of the Annexes are considered to be informative and not an official part of this standard. In the vocabulary of writing standards, the word “informative” is meant to convey that the information presented is for informational purposes only and is not considered to be mandatory. The body of this standard is “normative”, meaning that this information is considered to be mandatory.

See the ANSI Z535.1-2006 Safety Color Chart for the purpose of viewing accurate colors. Due to the differences in color printing technologies and color monitors, the appearance of colors in this document may not be accurate.

This standard was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the Accredited Standards Committee on Safety Signs and Colors, ANSI Z535. Committee approval of this standard does not necessarily imply that all committee members voted for its approval. At the time it approved this standard, the Z535 Committee had the following members:

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Subcommittee Z535.2 on Environmental and Facility Safety Signs, which developed the 2007 standard, had the following members:

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AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND FACILITY SAFETY SIGNS

1 Introduction

This standard covers requirements for environmental and facility safety signs that are to be used to visually alert and inform observers of potential hazards in the environment or facility. See ANSI Z535.4-2007 for the requirements for product safety signs and labels.

Sometimes the actions required to avoid the hazard or the consequences of not avoiding the hazard are not obvious to the viewer from the context in which the sign is used. In such situations viewer training, additional messages, or the use of safety symbols on the sign should be used to provide this information. To achieve these objectives, it is most important to have an easily recognizable and highly conspicuous hazard alerting system such as is presented in this document.

The diversity of culture and background in the American society increases the need to standardize a visual alerting identification system for safety signage. The great need to eliminate accidents and suffering among individuals who may be exposed to hazards requires the use of standard formats, sizes, colors, shapes, and a firm understanding of the degree of hazard. This document contains the elements that designate a separation between levels of hazard severity.

This standard sets forth a hazard alert system that uses different signal words and colors to distinguish between levels of hazards. Use of this standard will allow observers of environmental and facility safety signs to determine the type and degree of hazards and take appropriate actions to avoid injury.

To promote standardization and increase effectiveness, the formats used in this standard are intentionally similar to those used in ANSI Z535.4-2007 Standard for Product Signs and Labels. While these standards are similar in many respects, they each address different physical and visual requirements. As a result, there are basic differences between environmental/facility safety signs and product safety signs. Environmental and facility safety signs are usually larger and observed at longer distances; they frequently contain lesser amounts of information for visual clarity at a distance. Product safety signs are likely to contain more information within a smaller format, are usually observed at closer distances, and must physically and visually integrate with a wide range of product size, shape and color characteristics. The Z535 Committee on Safety Signs and Colors has recognized and affirmed the need for these two standards.

The ultimate application of the visual alerting messages will be up to those responsible for affixing these messages. This standard is intended to provide specifications for signs to convey a safety alert message that is clearly and rapidly understood regardless of the viewers' background. In certain areas of the country where other languages are used, consideration should be given to providing messages in those languages.