

ANSI Z535.5-2002
Revision of
ANSI Z535.5-1998

American National Standard

Safety Tags and Barricade Tapes (for Temporary Hazards)

Secretariat:

National Electrical Manufacturers Association

Approved July 17, 2002

American National Standards Institute, Inc.

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Foreword (Neither this foreword nor any of the informative Annexes is a part of American National Standard Z535.5-2002.)

The ANSI Z35 Committee on Safety Signs and ANSI Z53 Committee on Safety Colors were combined in 1979 to form the ANSI Standards Committee Z535 on Safety Signs and Colors. This Committee has the following scope:

> To develop standards for the design, application, and use of signs, colors, and symbols intended to identify and warn against specific hazards and for other accident prevention purposes.

This standard is one of five standards in the series maintained and revised by the ANSI Z535 Committee. Those five standards are:

- ANSI Z535.1, Safety Color Code
- ANSI Z535.2, Environmental and Facility Safety Signs
- ANSI Z535.3, Criteria for Safety Symbols
- ANSI Z535.4, Product Safety Signs and Labels
- ANSI Z535.5, Safety Tags and Barricade Tapes (for Temporary Hazards)

This standard was prepared by the Subcommittee Z535.5 on Safety Tags and Barricade Tapes (for Temporary Hazards).

The standards in this series are intended to provide a consistent visual alerting system to aid in identifying potential hazards that may lead to an accident. The ANSI Z535.1 Standard and the ANSI Z535.3 Standard contain requirements and guidelines for safety colors and safety symbols. Although intended to provide specifications for these features when used in conjunction with the other Standards in this series, ANSI Z535.1 and ANSI Z535.3 may also be widely applied to other safety related standards.

ANSI Z535.2 and ANSI Z535.4 address requirements and guidelines for hazard alerting in two broadly different applications. The first application involves safety alerting in buildings, facilities and the general environment (ANSI Z535.2). The second involves safety alerting used for product safety applications (ANSI Z535.4).

The expectations and needs involved with providing adequate safety alerting information differ between these two applications. While attempting to maintain visual consistency, there are subsequently different requirements contained in the particular Standard addressing each application.

The first version of the ANSI Z535.5 Standard was made available to the public in 1992. It recognized the differences between these two broad application areas. The Standard focused on how to carry forward the requirements for hazard alerting stated in both the ANSI Z535.2 Standard and the ANSI Z535.4 Standard through the media of safety tags.

In both the 1998 revision and this, the 2002 revision, a notable change has been the evolution in the format of the signal word panels. The format of these panels is now uniform across the ANSI Z535.2, ANSI Z535.4, and ANSI Z535.5 Standards and most closely resembles the format originally used in ANSI Z535.4.

The most significant change in this version of the ANSI Z535.5 Standard is the introduction of requirements and guidelines for safety barricade tapes. The Standard continues to focus on carrying forward the requirements for hazard alerting addressed in ANSI Z535.2 and ANSI Z535.4 through the media of safety tags, and now also barricade tapes.

It is desirable that new safety tags and barricade tapes specified after the approval of this standard comply with the standard.

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This Standard is comprised of sections that are to be considered either “normative” or “informative.” In the vocabulary of writing standards, the term normative refers to the portions of the standard considered mandatory. The body of this standard is normative. The word “informative” is meant to convey that the information presented is for informational purposes only and is not considered to be mandatory. This Foreword and all of the Annexes are considered to be informative.

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 the 2002 standard, the Z535 Committee had the following members:

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Richard Olesen, Vice Chair
Carin Bernstiel, Secretary

Organization Represented:	*Name of Representative:*
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Edison Electric Institute	David C. Young Janet Fox (Alt.)
Hale Color Consultants	William N. Hale
Hazard Communication Systems, Inc.	Geoffrey Peckham
Human Factors & Ergonomics Society	Michael S. Wogalter Kenneth R. Laughery (Alt.)
Human Factors & Safety Analytics, Inc.	Jay Martin

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Industrial Safety Equip. Assoc.	Linda Moquet Richard Fisk (Alt.) Russel Goldman II (Alt.)
Industrial Services Group	Will M. Garth James Moore (Alt.)
Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers	Al Clapp Sue Vogel (Alt.)
International Staple, Nail, and Tool Assoc.	John Kurtz
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L. Dale Baker & Associates	L. Dale Baker
Lab Safety Supply, Inc.	Jim Versweyveld
Marhefka & Associates	Russell E. Marhefka
National Electrical Mfrs. Assoc.	James F. McElwee
National Spa & Pool Institute	Carvin DiGiovanni
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Power Tool Institute	George Whelchel Charles M. Stockinger (Alt.)
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Safety Behavior Analysis, Inc.	Shelley Waters Deppa
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Standard Register Corporation	Amy Martin Pat Konkol (Alt.)
System Safety Society	Robert Cunitz
World Kitchen, Inc.	William P. Whitney
Underwriters Laboratories	Richard Olesen
3M Company	David Burns

Subcommittee Z535.5 on Safety Tags and Barricade Tapes, which developed the standard, had the following members:

B. Brewster, Chairperson
C. Bernstiel, Secretary

L. Dale Baker
Gary Bell
Ray Hunter
Don Meeker
Loren Mills
Linda Moquet
Jim Versweyveld
Jeffrey B. Wolfrom

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AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD **ANSI Z535.5-2002**

Safety Tags and Barricade Tapes (for Temporary Hazards)

1 Introduction

Safety tags and barricade tapes are a means of alerting persons to temporary hazards often associated with construction, equipment installation, maintenance, repair, lockout, or other transient conditions. This standard provides guidance for the design, completion, and installation of accident prevention tags and the design of barricade tapes. It employs the graphic principles set forth in ANSI Z535.4-2002, Product Safety Signs and Labels and ANSI Z535.2-2002, *Environmental and Facility Safety Signs.*

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 tag or tape is used. In such situations training, additional messages, or the use of safety symbols on the tag or tape 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 tags, tapes, labels, and signs. 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 safety tags and tapes to determine the type and degree of hazards and take appropriate actions to avoid injury.

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 safety tags and barricade tapes 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 may need to be given to providing messages in other languages.

This standard sets forth a hazard communication system that is designed to complement the ANSI Z535.4-2002 and ANSI Z535.2-2002 standards. While all of these standards are similar in many respects, they each address different physical and visual requirements.

2 Scope and purpose

2.1 Scope

Safety tags and barricade tapes shall be used to identify a temporary hazard. They shall be used only until such time as the identified hazard is eliminated or the hazardous operation is completed. For example, a safety tag would be appropriate for use during lockout/tagout procedures or use on a damaged tool until the tool can be properly removed from the work area. A barricade tape would be suitable to mark an area affected by a chemical spill or an open and temporary trench. Safety tags or barricade tapes shall not be used in place of a permanent sign or label intended for hazards in normal use, operation, or maintenance. If a permanent sign or label is presented in a tag configuration, it shall comply with the provisions of ANSI Z535.4-2002, or ANSI Z535.2-2002.

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2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this standard is to define the requirements for the design and use of safety tags and barricade tapes. No other tag or tape types are addressed by this standard. Underground tapes, permanent tapes, striped tapes and non-skid tapes, for example, are not covered by this standard.

2.2.1 Existing American National Standards

There are a number of existing American National Standards which are recognized for particular industries or specific use. Compliance with these standards may be considered for such particular industries or uses. It is not the intent of this ANSI Z535.5-2002 standard to replace existing standards or regulations, which are uniquely applicable to a specific industry or use. It is the intent to encourage adoption of this standard in subsequent revisions of other standards and regulations.

3 Definitions

3.1 accident: An occurrence in a sequence of events that produces unintended death, injury, or property damage.

3.2 barricade tape: A visual alerting device in the form of a tape for alerting persons to the presence of a temporary hazard or hazardous condition. It may also provide other directions to eliminate or reduce the hazard and may advise of the probable consequences of not avoiding the hazard. Barricade tapes are typically made of polyethylene or vinyl and may be reusable.

3.3 colors: Colors specified in this standard shall conform to ANSI Z535.1-2002.

3.4 hazard: A source of potential injury to a person or to property.

3.5 intent

3.5.1 may: This word is understood to be permissive.

3.5.2 shall: This word is understood to be mandatory.

3.5.3 should: This word is understood to be advisory.

3.5.4 informative: Refers to those portions of this standard provided only for purposes of clarification, illustration, and general information. Those portions of the standard considered informative do not contain mandatory requirements. The Forward and all of the Annexes are considered informative.

3.5.5 normative: Refers to those portions of the standard containing the mandatory requirements (shall), as well as recommended practices (should). The body of this standard is considered normative.

3.6 panel: Area of the safety tag or barricade tape that is clearly delineated and contains a specific type of information. There are four (4) types of panels a safety tag may use: signal word, message, signature block, and safety symbol. There are three (3) types of panels that a barricade tape may use: signal word, message, and safety symbol.

3.6.1 signal word panel: Area of the safety tag or barricade tape that contains the signal word or words. For personal injury hazards, the signal word panel also contains the safety alert symbol (see Figure 1).

3.6.2 safety symbol panel: Area of a safety tag or barricade tape that contains the safety symbol.

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3.6.3 message panel: Area of the safety tag or barricade tape that indicates in written text, symbolic form, or both written and symbolic form, the specific hazardous condition or the instruction to be communicated.

3.6.4 signature block: Area of a temporary tag used for contemporaneously inscribed information such as the worker's name, activity starting date, expected completion date, job-specific notes and signature. The signature block information may be completed by the user in the field.

3.7 permanent facility/environmental safety sign: Signs used at fixed locations, such as industrial facilities, to warn against exposure to hazards in the environment. The sign is permanently attached so that it cannot be easily removed.

3.8 permanent product safety sign or label: Information affixed to a product to warn against potential exposure to hazards inherent in the normal use of the product, or which might be created during reasonably anticipated product use or misuse. The sign or label is permanently attached to the product so that it cannot be easily removed.

3.9 safety tag (lock-out tag, accident prevention tag): a device usually made of plastic, card stock, paper, paperboard, or other material on which letters, markings, symbols, or combinations thereof, appear for the purpose of alerting persons to the presence of a temporary hazard or hazardous condition created by situations such as electrical maintenance, shipment, setup, service, or repair. The tag shall be removed when the hazard or hazardous condition no longer exists.

3.10 safety alert symbol: A symbol which indicates a potential personal injury hazard. It is composed of an equilateral triangle surrounding an exclamation mark. The safety alert symbol should not be used to alert persons to property damage only accidents.

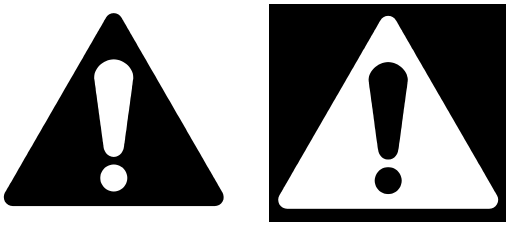

Figure 1— Format for the safety alert symbol – equilateral triangle surrounding an exclamation mark.

3.11 safety symbol: A graphic representation intended to convey a message without the use of words. It may represent a hazard, a hazardous situation, a precaution to avoid a hazard, the result of not avoiding a hazard, or any combination of these messages. (See ANSI Z-535.3- 2002, Criteria for Safety Symbols)

3.12 signal word: The word or words that call attention to the safety tag or barricade tape and designate a degree or level of hazard seriousness. The signal words for safety tags and barricade tapes are DANGER, WARNING, CAUTION, and NOTICE.

3.13 tag border: Outside area of potentially both sides of the tag used to draw attention to the tag.

4 Safety tags and barricade tape classifications

4.1 DANGER tags and tape: DANGER tags and tape indicate an imminently hazardous situation which, if not avoided, will result in death or serious injury. The signal word DANGER is to be limited to the most extreme situations. DANGER tags may be used for lock-out/tag-out situations when used with the

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intention of preventing death or serious injury. DANGER tags or tape should not be used for property damage hazards unless personal injury risk appropriate to these levels is also involved.

4.2 WARNING tags and tape: WARNING tags indicate a potentially hazardous situation which, if not avoided, could result in death or serious injury. WARNING tags or tapes should not be used for property damage hazards unless personal injury risk appropriate to this level is also involved.

4.3 CAUTION tags and tape: CAUTION tags or tapes indicate a potentially hazardous situation which, if not avoided, may result in minor or moderate injury. CAUTION tags or tapes may also be used to alert against unsafe practices that may cause property damage.

4.4 NOTICE tags and tape: NOTICE tags and tape are used to indicate a statement of company policy directly or indirectly related to the safety of personnel or protection of property. This signal word should not be associated directly with a hazard or hazardous situation and shall not be used in place of "DANGER," "WARNING," or "CAUTION."

5 Tag and tape format and color criteria

5.1 Color

Tag and tape colors shall conform to ANSI Z535.1-2002, Safety Color Code.

5.2 Safety alert symbol

5.2.1 Color

The solid triangle portion shall be the same color as the signal word lettering and the exclamation mark portion shall be the same color as the signal word panel background.

5.2.2 Format

The safety alert symbol shall precede the signal word. The base of the symbol shall be on the same horizontal line as the base of the letters of the signal word. The height of the safety alert symbol shall be equal to or exceed the signal word letter height.

5.3 Signal word panel

All safety tags and barricade tapes shall contain a signal word which designates a degree or level of hazard seriousness. The signal word shall be either DANGER, WARNING, or CAUTION. NOTICE is used to convey a company policy statement related to the safety of personnel or the protection of property. For tags, the signal word panel shall be located near the top of the tag, above the message panel. For tapes, the signal word panel shall be located adjacent to the message or symbol panel. No other word or symbol shall be used within these specified shapes or color arrangements.

5.3.1 DANGER tags and tapes

5.3.1.2 Signal word panel

Danger tags and tape shall have the signal word "DANGER" in safety white letters on a rectangular safety red background.

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**Figure 2—Format for the DANGER signal word panel –
white letters on safety red background, safety red exclamation mark.**

The previous format for the signal word panel of a danger tag shown in Annex B shall not be used for new tag or tape procurement. However existing stocks may be used.

5.3.2 WARNING tags and tapes

5.3.2.1 Signal word panel

Warning tags and tapes shall have the signal word “WARNING” in safety black letters on a rectangular safety orange background.



**Figure 3—Format for the WARNING signal word panel –
black letters on safety orange background, safety orange exclamation mark.**

The previous format for the signal word panel of a warning tag shown in Annex B shall not be used for new tag or tape procurement. However existing stocks may be used.

5.3.3 CAUTION tags and tapes

5.3.3.1 Signal word panel

Caution tags and tapes shall have the signal word “CAUTION” in safety black letters on a rectangular safety yellow background.



**Figure 4—Format for the personal injury CAUTION signal word panel –
black letters on safety yellow background, safety yellow exclamation mark.**

The previous format for the signal word panel of a warning tag shown in Annex B shall not be used for new tag or tape procurement. However existing stocks may be used.

5.3.4 CAUTION tags — property damage only

5.3.4.1 Signal word panel

The safety alert symbol is omitted on Caution tags and tapes used to indicate property damage only accidents. These tags and tapes have the signal word “CAUTION” in safety black letters on a rectangular safety yellow background.

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Figure 5—Format for the property damage only CAUTION signal word panel – black letters on safety yellow background.

5.3.5 NOTICE tags and tapes

5.3.5.1 Signal word panel

These tags and tapes shall have the signal word “NOTICE” in white italic letters on a safety blue background.



Figure 6—Format for the NOTICE signal word panel – white italic letters on safety blue background.

5.4 Message panel

5.4.1 All safety tags and barricade tapes

All safety tags and barricade tapes shall contain a message panel which indicates the specific hazardous condition or the instruction to be communicated or both. The message may be presented using written text or using both written text and symbols. (See section 8.1.) The message should be concise and readily understood.

5.4.2 A single tag or length of tape

A single tag or length of tape shall address one topic only. The signal word panel should be reproduced on both sides of the tag. A translated signal word panel may be used on the second side of a bilingual tag. Either the message panel, or general support information, may be printed on the back of the tag. Examples of general support information are: “Do not remove - see reverse”, or “Contact supervisor before removing,” or “See other side.”

5.4.3 Message panel color

The message panel for tags should be safety white for high contrast and for good legibility of information. Lettering, or symbols, or both should be safety black. Other high contrast color pairs may be used for symbolic representations.

5.4.4 Formats for tag borders

The message panel may be surrounded by a tag border panel. The tag border should offer a contrast to the background color of the message panel and use the same colors shown on the tag signal word panel. (See Figure 7 below.) If necessary to achieve better contrast, the border may be white.

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Figure 7— Formats for tag borders

5.5 Tag and tape design/layout

Tag and tape formats shall be as illustrated below. Actual size, layout, and proportions may vary depending on application requirements. The signature block may be omitted on tags used for product safety related applications.

5.5.1 Safety tags shall be as illustrated in Figure 8

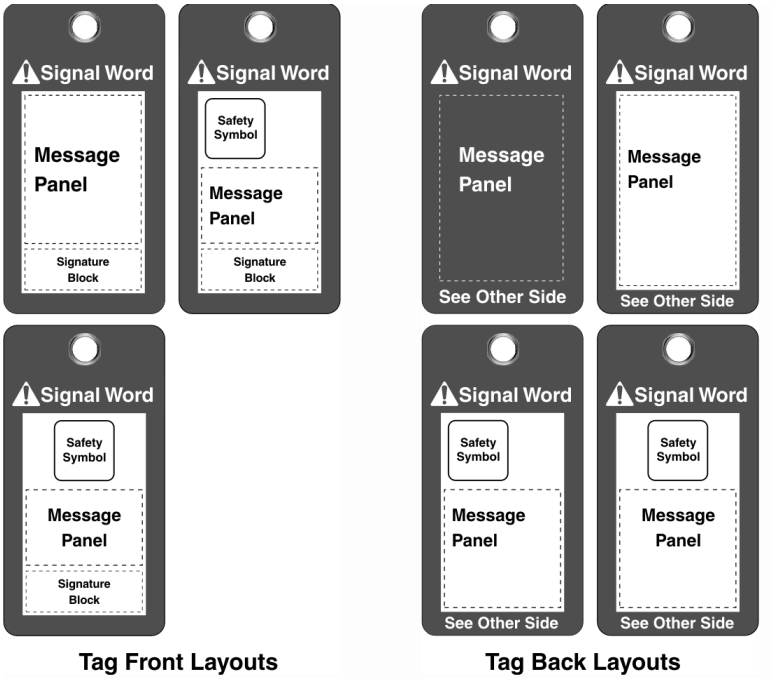

Figure 8—Safety tag illustration

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5.5.2 Tape layout

Barricade tapes shall be as illustrated in Figure 9.

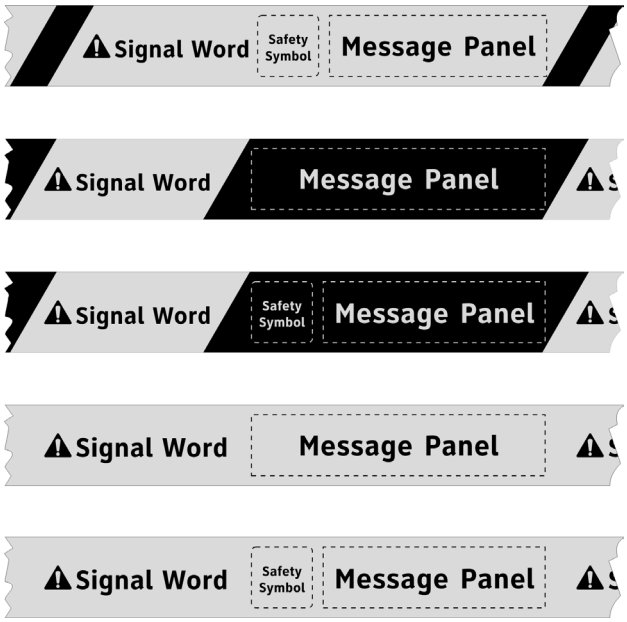

Figure 9—Barricade tape illustration

The back side of the tape may be blank or a repeat of the signal word panel, the message panel and the symbol panel on the front of the tape.

6 Tag location, attachment methods, life expectancy, authorization

6.1 Tag location

Safety tags shall be affixed as close as safely possible to their respective hazards, or at the switches, levers or other points of control that would activate the hazards, and be readily visible to the intended user. Where other tags are used in addition to a safety tag, they should not detract from the impact or visibility of the signal word and major message panel of the safety tag.

6.2 Barricade tape placement

6.2.1 Placed to alert and inform the viewer

Barricade tapes shall be so placed to alert and inform the viewer in sufficient time to take appropriate evasive actions to avoid the potential harm from the hazard.

6.2.2 Placed to be legible, non-distracting, and not hazardous

Barricade tapes shall be so placed that they are legible, non-distracting and not hazardous in themselves.

6.3 Safety tag attachment methods

Safety tags shall be affixed by a positive means such as nylon tie wrap, string, wire, adhesive or other connecting means that reduce the likelihood of loss or unintentional removal. Lock-out tags should be attached by means of a one-piece, all environment tolerant nylon cable tie.

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All safety tags should be strong enough to prevent accidental removal. When used with locks, safety tags should have a reinforced hole that is big enough to accept a lock shank.

6.4 Life expectancy

The safety tag or barricade tape shall be capable of withstanding the environment to which it is exposed for the maximum period of time that the temporary hazard is expected to exist.

6.5 Safety tag authorization

Safety tags should include a provision for identifying and contacting the person authorizing or applying the tag. Tags used for product safety do not require this provision. This information should be completed in a legible, durable, and timely manner. Both computer printed information and hand-written text are acceptable. Adequate guidelines on which fields to complete along with sufficient spacing should be provided to accommodate hand written text.

NOTE—For additional reference on hand written tag forms and the signature block, see Annex A.

7 Letter style, viewing distance, tag size and shape

NOTE—For additional reference on letter style and size, see Annex A.

7.1 Letter style

7.1.1 Signal words

Signal words shall be in Sans Serif letters in upper case only.

7.1.2 Message panel lettering

Message panel lettering should be a combination of upper and lower case letters either in sans serif or serif. Serif lettering may be used for longer text messages on safety tags. Upper case only lettering may be used for short messages or emphasis of individual words.

7.1.3 Examples of acceptable sans serif type faces

Examples of acceptable sans serif type faces are: Arial, Bell Contennial, Clearview, Folio Medium, Franklin Gothic, Helvetica, Meta, New Gothic, Spartan Classified and Univers. Examples of acceptable serif type faces include Garamond and Times New Roman.

7.1.4 Handwritten tags

Handwritten tags should be legibly printed. If tags have preprinted lines to guide the location of handwritten text at least ¼ inch should exist between lines. Preprinted lines should not obscure the handwritten text and should only be guides. If text boxes are used, they should also be of sufficient size to accommodate handwritten text.

Computer printed text shall be legible under the intended light conditions and should be no smaller than 7 point text.

7.2 Letter size

Balance and legibility shall be determined by the combination of the signal word, message panel length and the size of a symbol, if used. Legibility is influenced by letter height, width, the ratio of letter height to stroke width and spacing between letters, words, and lines. The overall size of the lettering shall be

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determined by the distance from which the tag or tape can be safely and easily read. The message should be as concise as practical. Letters shall be adequately spaced and not crowded.

7.2.1 Letter height for barricade tape

Minimum letter height shall be one unit in height for every 150 units of safe viewing distance from the hazard alerting device for signal words and one unit in height for every 300 units viewing distance for the majority of other words contained on the word message panel. The safe viewing distance will be determined for each specific case where a Barricade Tape is needed. The message panel text shall meet the legibility criteria at the determined safe viewing distance.

7.2.2 Viewing distance/letter height

The tag signal word shall be legible under normal viewing conditions at a distance of 5 feet (1.52 m) or such greater distance as warranted by the hazard. Minimum signal word letter height should be 3/8 inch (.95 cm). Message panel text shall be legible under normal viewing conditions.

7.3 Tag size and shape

The tag should have a rectangular shape. The corners may be square cut, chamfered or rounded.

8 Safety symbols

8.1 General

8.1.1 Safety symbols

Safety symbols are graphic representations chosen to clearly convey a specific safety alerting message.

8.1.2 Conveyed message

The conveyed message of a symbol is to describe the type of hazard, potential consequences of the hazard, or evasive/avoidance actions to be taken. When used, the symbol must be compatible with the word message(s).

8.2 Symbol use

Safety symbols may be used to clarify, supplement or substitute for a portion or all of a word message found in the message panel. A symbol may only be used to substitute for a portion or all of a word message if it has been demonstrated to be satisfactorily comprehended (e.g., Annex B of ANSI Z535.3) or there is a means (e.g., instructions, training materials, manuals, etc.) to inform people of the symbol's meaning.

9 References

See the following documents for reference and information.

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American National Standards Institute (ANSI). *Environmental and Facility Safety Signs*. ANSI Z535.2-2002.

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Annex A
(Informative)
Principles and Guidelines for the Design of Safety Tags and Safety Barricade Tapes

A1 Scope

Good, consistent visual design helps to effectively communicate hazard information. The purpose of this annex provides the designer with information on widely recognized principles that can aid in the development of effective safety tags and barricade tapes.[1]

A2 Signal word panel arrangement

For those signal words that require the use of the safety alert symbol (i.e. DANGER, WARNING, and CAUTION, the safety alert symbol and signal word should be positioned close together and centered in the signal word panel. See Figures A1 and A2. For those signal words that do not require the safety alert symbol (i.e. NOTICE, CAUTION, etc.), the signal word should be positioned in the center of the signal word panel. For property damage-only tags or tapes, the signal word CAUTION is used without the safety alert symbol.



Figure A1—Examples of correct signal word and safety alert symbol placement.



Figure A2—Examples of incorrect signal word and safety alert symbol placement.

A3 Developing the word message

A.3.1 The content of the word message

The word message on a tag or tape typically communicates information to an observer on the type of hazard, the consequence of not avoiding the hazard, and how to avoid the hazard and, for tags, work instructions and personal information. Many factors must be considered when determining whether to omit consequence, avoidance or type of hazard information or the level of instructional detail in the word message. Factors to consider include whether the message can be inferred from a symbol, other text messages, user training or the context in which the safety sign tag or tape is used.

A.3.2 Ordering the content of the word message

[1] Note: Every safety tag or barricade tape must be considered on its own terms. Limitations on space or other unique conditions may justify variance from these principles. Examples of word messages are provided to illustrate how principles related to grammatical structure, writing style and print layout can enhance the safety tag or barricade tape. These examples are not intended to prescribe standardized word messages for the hazards mentioned in the examples.

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The order in which the content appears in the message panel is flexible. Factors to consider when determining the order of a word message's content include the target audience's degree of prior knowledge of the hazard and the reaction time required to avoid the hazard.

The information required on a tag should be arranged to provide the most important information first. Where reaction time is an issue, the action statement will be the most important portion of the word message and should be placed first. In other cases, the hazard description statement will be the most important information to communicate first. The statement concerning the consequences of interaction with the hazard is generally best understood when placed after the hazard description statement, or used integrally with the hazard description statement. As a general rule, the hazard message should come first when there are many feasible action/avoidance alternatives. However, action/avoidance messages should come first when there are few avoidance alternatives.

Figure A3 illustrates a word message for a tag that explains the type of hazard and consequences of interaction with the hazard before it describes the hazard avoidance information. Placing the information in this order would be appropriate if it is found that the audience needs to know what the hazard is before they would follow the avoidance information presented on the sign tag. This format assumes that there is time to read the entire word message and still avoid the hazard.

Figure A4 illustrates a word message that places the hazard avoidance information first. Ordering the word message in this way would be appropriate if a person needs to immediately follow the avoidance information in order to prevent interaction with the hazard.

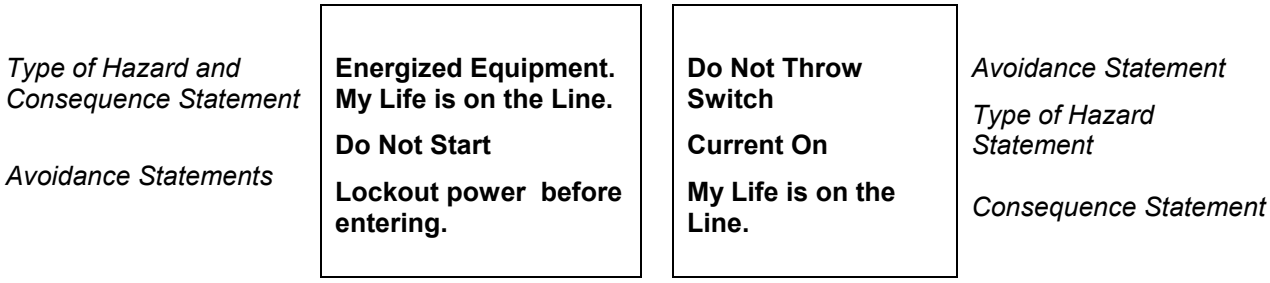

Figure A3 – Word message with hazard description first.

Figure A4 – Word message with hazard avoidance message first.

A3.3 Formatting the word message

There are many issues that must be considered when developing a word message; from sentence structure to typesetting specifications. The length of the word message depends on the amount of information that needs to be communicated to a person to allow them to understand and avoid the hazard. Once this information is determined, it should be written and formatted in a manner that is concise and easily understood. The following are several principles that can be applied to the word message to achieve this objective.

A3.3.1 Use headline style

Tags and tapes are intended to communicate appropriate information to the viewer fast enough to allow the viewer to comprehend the information and take the necessary actions to avoid the hazard. Faster reaction times are promoted by using succinct statements. Write in a "headline style." Compare the sample word messages shown in Figures A5 and A6. The "headline style" example of Figure A5 eliminates nonessential words and omits pronouns ("this," "that," "they,") articles ("a," "the," "an,"), repeated words and forms of the verb "to be" ("is," "are," "were"). Avoid hyphenation when at all possible.

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Figure A5 –Headline style message.

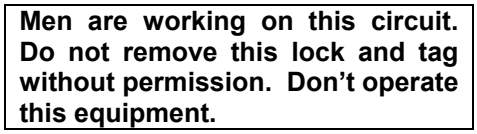

Figure A6 – Non-headline style message.

A3.3.3 Components of a word message

A3.3.2.1 Action statement

The action statement gives the viewer instructions on how to avoid the hazard. The statement should be simple, direct, and applicable to the hazard. Figure A7 contains examples of action statements:

Do Not Operate	**Do Not Reclose**	**Do Not Energize**
Do Not Start	**Do Not Open**	**Do Not Throw Switch**
Keep Out!	**No Smoking**	**Do Not Cross**

Figure A7 – Examples of action statements.

A3.3.2.2 Hazard description statement

The hazard description statement identifies the specific hazard in clear, simple language. Where the desired action and the consequence of not avoiding the hazard are obvious from the hazard description statement (such as "Slippery when wet"), the action and consequence statements may be omitted. Figure A8 contains examples of concise hazard description statements:

Live Wire	**Confined Space**
Equipment Locked Out	**Hazardous Voltage**
Construction Area	**Open Trench**

Figure A8 – Examples of concise hazard description statements.

A3.3.2.3 Consequence statement

The consequence statement tells the viewer in clear, simple language what will happen if the warning is ignored. Figure A9 contains examples of consequence statements:

My Life is on the Line

Will Cut Life Support Equipment

Figure A9 – Examples of consequence statements.

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A3.3.3 Refer to another source

Given space and legibility constraints, it may be possible to keep only essential hazard-related information on the tag. If necessary, consideration can be given to referring the viewer to another source for additional safety information or for permission to proceed. Examples of such sources include company lock-out procedures and manuals, safety instruction labels, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), operation manuals, service manuals, or operating procedures and safety bulletins.

A3.3.4 Text justification and spacing

Left aligned “ragged right” text should be used for all but one-line text messages (which can be either left aligned or centered). Left alignment aids in readability by creating a vertical line that the eye naturally locates when searching for the next line of text. Justified text should be avoided because the added space between words makes the message more difficult to read.

The correct spacing between lines of text, between words, and between letters helps to make a word message easier to read. The amount of space between lines of text is called leading. Lines of text should be separated by leading that is approximately 120% of the type point size (e.g. 10 point type should have 12 point leading, 14 point type should have 16.8 point leading, etc.). Additional leading can be added to separate portions of a word message. The space between words and between letters is called tracking. For purposes of legibility, it is important to use proper tracking, word and letter spacing when typesetting the word message. See Figure A10.

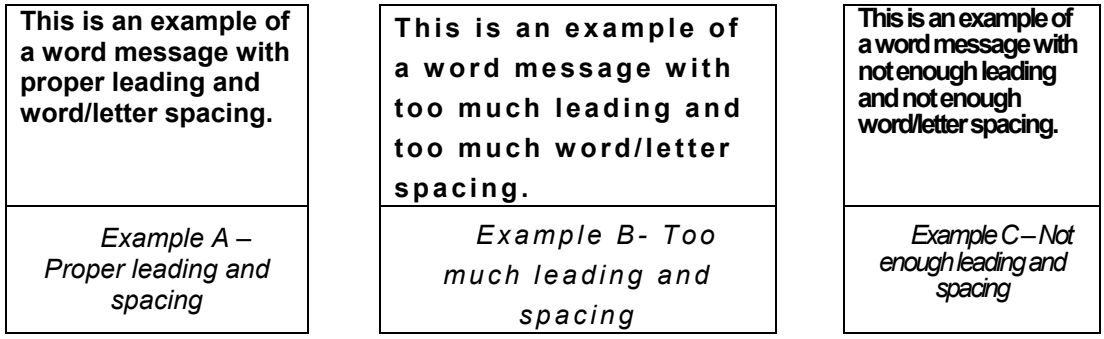

Figure A10 – Examples of correct and incorrect type spacing.

A3.3.5 Letter size

Legibility of the word message at the minimum safe viewing distance determines the proper letter size for the word messages. The letter size/safe viewing distance guidelines in Table A1 define the type size required to achieve legibility at the given viewing distance. The height of the capital letter “H” identifies the type’s letter size. Note that the type sizes shown in column two and column three of Table A1 indicate the minimum word message letter size for favorable light conditions and the recommended letter size for unfavorable reading conditions, respectively. Letter size may need to be larger for the various reasons, including the following:

- to obtain conspicuousness from other information displayed in the area,
- to facilitate legibility under low light, or other unfavorable viewing conditions,
- to warn persons at distances greater than the minimum safe viewing distance,
- to convey special emphasis for portions of the message, and
- to facilitate legibility for populations who have difficulty reading small text (e.g., senior citizens),

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A formatted tag or tape with the selected letter size word messages should be visually examined in the environments expected for actual use (lighting, background, angle, etc.) and tested for legibility in that environment by persons representative of the expected viewers. A larger type size may also be desired in order to warn persons at a distance greater than the minimum safe viewing distance.

Table A1 – Examples of word message letter heights and minimum safe viewing distances

Minimum Safe Viewing Distance[2]		Minimum Height for FAVORABLE Reading Conditions		Recommended Letter Height for UNFAVORABLE Reading Conditions	
		[viewing distance (ft)/25]	[viewing distance (m)/3]	[viewing distance (ft)/0.084]	[viewing distance (m)/1.43]
(ft)	(m)	(in)	(cm)	(in)	(cm)
≤4	≤1.2	.16*	0.4*	.336	0.8
6	1.8	.24	0.6	.504	1.3
8	2.4	.32	0.8	.672	1.7
10	3.0	.40	1.0	.840	2.1
15	4.6	.60	1.5	1.26	3.2
20	6.1	.80	2.0	1.68	4.3
30	9.1	1.20	3.0	2.12	6.4
40	12.2	1.60	4.1	3.36	8.5
60	18.3	2.40	6.1	4.24	12.8.
80	24.4	3.30	8.1	6.72	17.1
100	30.5	4.00	10.2	8.40	21.3
125	38.1	5.00	12.7	10.5	26.6
150	45.7	6.00	15.2	12.6	32.0
200	61.0	8.00	20.3	16.8	42.7

[2] The minimum safe viewing distance refers to the closest distance a person can be to the tag or tape and still have time to follow the warning message to avoid the hazard.

A3.3.6 Minimum letter height calculations

Type size is defined in “points,” a term that was used to describe the space required for lead type characters. Point sizes measure from the top of the capital letters to the bottom of the lower case letters with descenders (e.g. the bottom of the letter “g” or “j” etc.). One point equals 0.01384 inches, or approximately 1/72 of an inch.

Although type faces vary slightly, a practical guide for defining type size is based on using the capital letter “H” for measurement purposes. Since the character “H” has no descender, it is possible to use a conversion factor of 0.01 inches = 1 point of type size. Thus, 12 point type yields a capital “H” approximately 0.12 inches high. For metric purposes, use a conversion factor of 3.9 points =1 mm of height for a capital “H.”

A3.3.7 Comprehension

The word message should be written so that it can be understood by the target audience (i.e. those who are expected to be in the vicinity of the hazard). This means choosing words that accurately describe the specific hazard and avoidance information in terms the intended audience will understand.

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A4 Use of safety symbols or photos

Well designed safety symbols can often communicate hazard information quickly and across language and literacy barriers. Although the ANSI Z535.5 standard allows word-message-only formats for tags and tapes, the use of symbols and photos is encouraged whenever practical. See ANSI Z535.3 Criteria For Safety Symbols for additional information concerning symbol selection, design and testing.

Many plants find that personalized lock-out tags with a photo not only help you find someone, especially when you have many contractors on a site, but that photos help convey the singular immediacy of the danger. See Figure A11.



Figure A11

A5 Handwritten tag forms

A5.1 Signature block

Using the prompt, “Name:”, instead of “Signed by:” helps to indicate to the user he or she should write their name in a way that others can decipher. See Figure A12 for an example of a Signature block. The tag line, “This Lock/Tag may only be removed by:” helps reinforce the strict language of many lock-out programs. the word “tag” or “lock” may then be circled or crossed out in the field, if needed. See Figure A13.

This Lock/Tag may only be removed by:
Name: .....
Date: ..... Dept: .....
Expected Completion Date: .....

Figure A12

This Lock/Tag may only be removed by:
Name: .....
Date: ..... Dept: .....
Expected Completion Date: .....

Figure A13

A5.2 Step-by-step instructions

Many tags require on-site completion. With complex tag forms, it may be helpful to show, in a step-by-step form, the fields that need to be completed. That way, fields requiring user input may be easier to follow and vital fields are not missed. See the highlighted steps shown in Figure A14, as an example.

Order No. 1 .....
Switching Device No. 2 .....
Circuit No. 3 .....
Date and Time Tag Placed: 4 .....

Figure A14
Example of step-by-step procedure.

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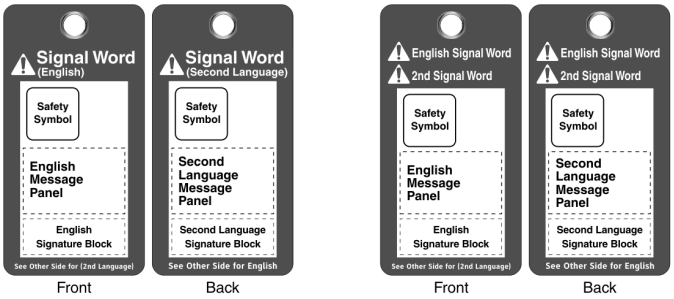
A6 Multi-lingual formats

The selection of additional languages for tags and tapes is an extremely complex issue. Experts suggest that nearly 150 foreign languages are spoken in the United States and over 23 million Americans speak a language other than English in their homes. If it is determined that additional languages are desired on a tag or tape, the formats shown in Figure A12 should be considered. In all examples, the use of symbols is strongly encouraged in order to better communicate the tag's or tape's hazard information across language barriers. See figures A15 and A16.



Multi-Lingual Tag Layouts

Figure A15

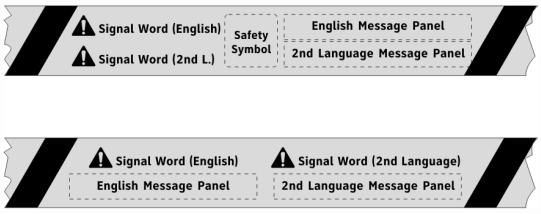


Figure A16

A7 Back of tag

The back side of the tag should refer to the front side of the tag. Additionally, the back of the tag may be used to give operating instructions, emergency procedures, emergency telephone numbers or to reinforce the critical role that the lock-out tag holds within a facility's lock-out procedures. One of the most blunt instructions is: "You are Fired if You Remove this Tag Without Approval". See Figure A17.

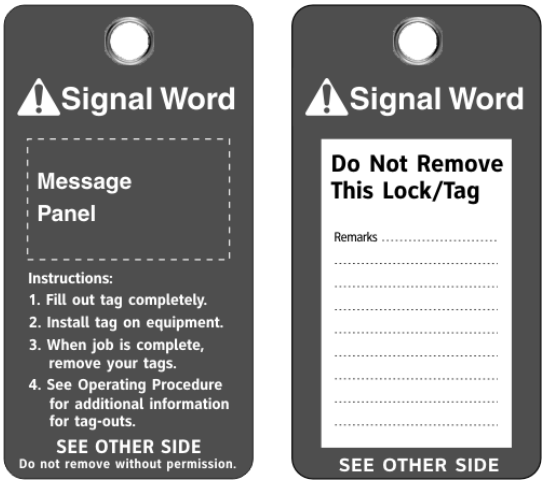


Figure A17
Examples of tag backs.

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Annex B
(Informative)
Previous Formats for Signal Word Panels

The following formats for signal word panels were used in earlier editions of this standard and were allowed as an alternate to the preferred panel format in the 1998 Edition. Existing stocks of safety tags procured to meet the previous editions may continue to be used and applied. However, these formats shall not be used for the procurement of new safety tags, safety signs, barricade tapes, or labels.







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Revisions 2006

The ANSI Accredited Standards Committee Z535 plans to issue the next revisions of the Z535 Standards (.1 through .5) in December 2006. In order to meet that deadline, the committee developed the following tentative timetable:

All proposed changes are due:	June 30, 2004
Revisions will be finalized for letter balloting:	April 11, 2005
Letter balloting will be completed by:	July 18, 2005
Public reviews will be completed by:	March 1, 2006
Drafts will be ready to submit to the publisher:	May 21, 2006
Published:	December 15, 2006

All proposed changes must be submitted by June 30, 2004. Any proposals received after that date will be deferred to subsequent revisions. In order to facilitate the next revision, proposed changes must be submitted on a form for that specific purpose, which is on the back of this page. Please send this form to:

Secretary, ANSI Committee Z535
National Electrical Manufacturers Association
1300 North 17th Street, Suite 1847
Rosslyn, VA 22209

ANSI Accredited Standards Committee Z535

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On Safety Signs and Colors

F O R M F O R P R O P O S A L S

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Rosslyn, VA 22209

Date_____ Name_____ Telephone #_____

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Representing_____
(Please indicate organization or self.)

1. a. Standard Title_____

   b. Section/Paragraph_____

2. Proposal recommends (check one):
   - ☐ New Text
   - ☐ Revised Text
   - ☐ Deleted Text

3. Proposal (Include the proposed new or revised text, or identify the words to be deleted.)

4. Statement of the Problem or Substantiation for the Proposal

5. Check one.
   - ☐ This proposal is original material.
   - ☐ This proposal is not original material; its source is as follows:

_____

_____

(This original material is the submitter's own idea based upon his/her own experience, thought, or research, and to the best of his/her knowledge, is not copied from another source.)

I agree to give NEMA all and full rights, including rights of copyright, in this proposal, and I understand that I acquire no rights in any standards publication in which this proposal in this or another similar or analogous form is used.

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Signature

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