

Safety Color Code for Marking Physical Hazards

Description:

Use of the safety colors red and yellow are reserved for marking specific physical hazards in workplaces, as set out in this OSHA standard.

Regulatory Reference

29 CFR § 1910.144 Safety color code for marking physical hazards.

Applies to:

The safety color code standard applies to all workplaces where specified physical hazards exist or specified equipment and fire fighting apparatus is located.

General Requirements:

Safety colors red and yellow are reserved for the following marking purposes.

- (1) **Red.** Red shall be the basic color for the identification of:
 - (a) Fire protection equipment and apparatus.
 - (b) Danger.
 - (i) Safety cans or other portable containers of flammable liquids having a flash point at or below 80 °F, table containers of flammable liquids (open cup tester), excluding shipping containers, shall be painted red with some additional clearly visible identification either in the form of a yellow band around the can or the name of the contents conspicuously stenciled or painted on the can in yellow.
 - (ii) Red lights shall be provided at barricades and at temporary obstructions.
 - (iii) Danger signs shall be painted red.
 - (c) Stop. Emergency stop bars on hazardous machines and stop buttons or electrical switches which letters or other markings appear, used for emergency stopping of machinery shall be red.
- (2) **Yellow.** Yellow shall be the basic color for designating caution and for marking physical hazards such as: Striking against, stumbling, falling, tripping, and "caught in between."

Training Requirements:

There are no specific training requirements for this OSHA standard. It is good practice, however to include the importance of understanding and maintaining hazard markings in general safety training.

Maintenance and Review

When maintenance, especially painting of equipment such as pump and compressor controls, is planned and performed, care should be exercised to ensure that safety color-coding is maintained. OSHA inspectors have been known to issue citations at bulk plants where the stop buttons on pump and compressor starters have been painted white or aluminum, and start/stop instruction plates have been removed or painted over as well.

Documented periodic facilities inspections are a good practice to ensure that fire extinguishers, flammable liquid safety cans, and other designated emergency equipment are properly color-coded. Marking areas with yellow where slip and tripping hazards are likely is a good practice as well.