

SIGNS NOW UK – HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

As a sign maker we face a number of particular risks in our business that require us to regard health and safety as a major business priority:-

- Many of the signs we install are at a considerable height above ground. We have to use skilled installers and access equipment for this work.
- Very often our work can put us in the way of our customer's staff or in the way of the general public. We need to exercise care in our working environment.
- We make over 95% of our signs in-house which requires us to operate machinery in our workshop. This requires great care.

For these reasons we have to take the issue of health and safety very seriously.

We are proud to declare that since we started fitting our first sign in 1997 we have never had an accident that needed to be notified to the HSE. In that time we reckon that we have installed signs for over 6,000 customers.

We believe that there are a number of good reasons for this excellent track record:-

- 1 We have worked with a **specialist consultant** over the years to ensure that we keep up-to-date with health and safety legislation and best practise.
- 2 We have a clear written up-to-date **health and safety policy**. This is not just a piece of paper. It is a serious declaration of intent by the Signs Now Board.
- 3 We are firm believers in communicating our policy and our practise to our staff. **Staff communication** is carried out weekly and annually.
- 4 It is vital that all our staff receive regular and effective **staff training** in health and safety matters.
- 5 By the nature of our business each and every job tends to be different. For that reason we have become adept at **risk assessment**.
- 6 In the course of our work we utilise a number of chemicals and consumables that are potentially hazardous to health. For this reason we maintain and update a **COSHH** file at every Signs Now branch.
- 7 With regard to the machinery we operate in the business we have worked with our specialist consultant to devise safe methods of working on these machines – **method statements**
- 8 We regard health and safety as an integral part of our **business activity** and, therefore, it is on the agenda at board meetings and regularly reported upon.

We believe that our health and safety system is one of the best in the industry:-

- We have a clean accident record
- Our system was audited and approved before we became a member of **Constructionline (Appendix A)**



- Our system was audited and approved before we became a member of **CHAS (Appendix B)**



- Our system was audited and approved before we became a member of **SAFE Contractor (Appendix C)**



Furthermore our system has been audited and approved by a number of public sector organisations:-

West Midlands Police
Cornwall Council
Shropshire Council
University of Nottingham
Teeside University
Guinness Housing Partnership

Birmingham Airport
Shropshire Council
Borough of Hackney
Balfour Beatty
Bristol University
Bristol City Council

Luton College
DTZ
Carillion
Danaher & Walsh
Sandwell Council
Trafford Council

It gives us peace of mind and we hope it gives you the assurance that Signs Now operates a robust and effective health and safety system.

1 HEALTH & SAFETY CONSULTANCY

For many years we have operated a consultancy agreement with Duo Solutions Limited – a firm specialising in HR Management and Health & Safety Management.

Duo Solutions have worked closely alongside Signs Now and have developed a detailed knowledge of our business, our people and our way of working.

Our primary contact is with Clive Billington (CMIOSH – see **Appendix 1.1**) and (EOHSM – see **Appendix 1.2**)

Clive has the following functions to perform for Signs Now:-

- To review the Signs Now health and safety system each year and ensure that it reflects recent legislation and advice on best practise.
- To attend two Signs Now Board Meetings each year to advise the Board on necessary enhancements and changes.
- To audit the operation of the health and safety system – are we doing what we say we do?
- To provide advice to Signs Now on particular contracts we may win where our normal health and safety system may need adaptation.
- To organise and carry out regular training courses for Signs Now staff. We agree and pursue a calendar of training activities each year.

2 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Signs Now has a written health and safety policy statement and a range of policies and procedures to make sure that the policy works properly. A copy of our policy can be found in **Appendix 2.1**.

It has the following key elements:-

- 1 There is a clear written policy statement. This policy is signed by director Bill Dunphy who is personally responsible for health and safety matters in Signs Now.
- 2 Therese Dunphy, a director, is the company's Health and Safety Officer. She monitors the staff training records of all employees and she tracks and reports on accidents.
- 3 The Signs Now Board sets targets for health and safety performance each year and adopts a calendar of health and safety initiatives to improve the system.
- 4 At each Signs Now branch there is a weekly staff meeting where Health and Safety is always on the agenda. This allows the company to update staff on such matters and it allows the staff to provide their own feedback and ideas on the subject as well.
- 5 These meetings are minuted and reported upon in the weekly staff newsletter.
- 6 All new Signs Now staff are undergo a rigorous induction into the company which includes all health and safety matters relevant to their job.
- 7 Each Signs Now employee has a Staff Training Record which is a written summary of all the knowledge, skills and qualifications they have relevant to their job. Health and safety figures prominently on this record.
- 8 All staff undergo an annual performance appraisal and this takes account of their training record. Through this process we identify individual training requirements.
- 9 Signs Now keeps an Accident Book at each branch and the Branch Manager is required to document and report all accidents and near-misses that may occur. These stats are collated by the Health and Safety Officer and reviewed by the board on a 3 monthly basis.
- 10 We regularly conduct risk assessments of our regular activities and that has highlighted a number of areas where there is an above normal risk. In such cases we have documented safe ways of working – Method Statements – and we ensure that all relevant staff are trained and tested in their knowledge of this working.

3 STAFF COMMUNICATION

When an employee starts with Signs Now they undergo a rigorous induction programme into the company where health and safety is given top priority.

As part of their induction they will be issued with a **Health & Safety Staff Handbook (Appendix 3.1)**. As part of their induction staff are tested on their knowledge of the staff handbook.

Each employee is issued with a **Staff Training Record** (see an example in **Appendix 3.2**). Signs Now has a policy of conducting staff performance appraisals twice each year. During this appraisal the staff record form will be closely scrutinised – Is the record up-to-date? Does any of the training need refreshing? In respect of their job have they got all the training they need? In respect of their career plans is there any training they would look to undertake?

In each Signs Now branch there is a **Weekly Staff Newsletter** (example in **Appendix 3.3**). Health and safety is always on the agenda for the meeting. The company will use meeting to pass on health and safety information – changes in policy, HSE bulletins and fliers, etc. Staff are encouraged to express any concerns they have in the meeting and they are encouraged to suggest improvements via the **Bright Spark** scheme.

At each Signs Now branch there is a **Health & Safety Notice Board** to display key information relevant to our staff.

For each job in Signs Now there are **Method Statements** – safe ways of working. These documents will accompany the work and the employee is expected to know the method statement for that work. Staff are tested periodically on their understanding.

Signs Now provides PPE to staff at no cost to the staff. An **equipment register** maintains a record of the equipment in issue and notes times when equipment needs to be checked.

Since the company started in 1997 we reckon that we have installed signs for over 6000 customers. In that time there have been some minor accidents but nothing that had to be notified to the HSE. More than anything else we believe this is due to careful recruitment of staff, a safety-first culture in the business and a well-run staff training programme.

4 STAFF TRAINING

We are very committed to health and safety training. In 2009 we organized the following courses for all relevant staff across our 5 branches:-

- Training on the use of the CAT and generator (external course)
- Manual Handling Training (internal course given by our consultant)
- Asbestos Awareness Training (external course)
- Risk Awareness Training (internal course given by our consultant)
- Working at Heights (internal course given by our consultant)

Several of our staff gained their CSCS cards in 2009 and several achieved NVQ qualifications in safety related subjects.

For 2010 we have courses planned for PASMAR qualification, a management safety course, first aid training, and tool box talks. In addition we conduct, every year, a test on the company's health and safety system. Staff know that they have to study hard for this test. The results are published across the group and nobody wants to fall below the required standard.

DATE	COURSE	ATTENDEES	TRAINER
December 2009	Chapter 8 Temporary Road Working	Fitters from all 5 branches	Duo Solutions
May 2010	Working at Heights	Fitters from all 5 branches	Duo Solutions
July 2010	Tool Box Talk	Fitters and Makers from all 5 branches	Nova
December 2010	CAT and Generator Training	Fitters from all 5 branches	Clive Billington
February 2011	Management Training	All Branch Managers	Clive Billington
May 2011	Launch of new Signs Now H&S Policy	Fitters and Makers from all 5 branches	Clive Billington
September 2011	Asbestos Awareness Training	Surveyors/ Fitters from all 5 branches	DMW
December 2011	Risk Assessment Training	Surveyors and Fitters from all 5 branches	Clive Billington

Signs Now is unusual by insisting that all our sign installations are carried out by our very own fitters.

We believe this is the best way of controlling the sign quality for the client and the safest way of working with the client, their staff and their customers.

A Signs Now installer has to be highly qualified. Typically our people hold the following qualifications

- An IPAF license (for working on access equipment)

Appendix 4.1



- A PASMA license (for building scaffold towers)

Appendix 4.2



- A CSCS Card

Appendix 4.3



5 RISK ASSESSMENT

The nature of our business involves risk – visiting different clients, working on different sites, installing different kinds of signs. No two jobs are the same.

For that reason we insist on a risk assessment being carried out for every job. Before the installation crew appear on site, a Sign Now Surveyor will have visited and will have completed a **Standard Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 5.1)**

We believe that this is sufficient for the vast majority of jobs we undertake.

However, there are times when we have to work outside the usual conditions – for example on a construction site or in a shopping centre. In these cases we will complete a **Generic Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 5.2)**

Furthermore we will prepare a **Client Method Statement** where we can demonstrate that we have taken account of the specific demands of the job (example in **Appendix 5.3**)

All our fitters and surveyors have been trained, by Clive Billington, in how to conduct a proper and thorough risk assessment.

6 COSHH

In the course of our business we do use chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials.

We have worked with the suppliers of these materials to gather the appropriate data sheets for each item. From that we have been able to carry out a COSHH assessment in order to provide simple guidelines for how to use the material safely, how best to store the material and what to do in the event of an accident.

The assessment and the guidelines are kept in a **COSHH File** which is prominently located in each Signs Now branch.

All staff are trained in how to access and use the COSHH File.

An example of a COSHH sheet is shown in **Appendix 6.1**.

7 METHOD STATEMENTS

There is a huge variety of work for a sign maker but we can readily identify a number of risky activities that we undertake on a regular basis:-

- Installing signs at a height
- Using access equipment
- Fitting window graphics
- Fitting vehicle graphics at a client's site

Signs Now makes most of its own signs in-house and this involves the use of powered equipment and this involves risk

- Panel Saws
- Spray paint booth
- Mitre saws
- Laser Engraver
- CNC Router

For each of these activities Signs Now has worked closely with our safety consultant and with the equipment supplier to establish the safest methods of using the equipment. These are written up in a **Method Statement** – an example is shown in **Appendix 7.1**