

PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO MANUFACTURERS AND USER COMMUNITIES

GUIDANCE ON TRAFFIC SIGNS ON PRIVATE LAND



Introduction

An example of the humble stop sign.

Wherever you find vehicular traffic it is likely that there is a need for clear and recognisable signage to ensure the safety of road users. The purpose of a traffic sign is to warn and inform road users, this extends not only to public roads but also to private land as specified under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

A prime example of the need for traffic signage on private land is retail establishment car parks. As vehicular traffic must pass from the public highway into the private land and vice versa it is not only good practice to ensure that the signage is consistent with that found on public roads but it is potentially a matter of law.

This document is intended to give guidance on the use of permanent traffic signs on private land.

UK Standards

BS EN 12899-1:2007 is the UK designated standard that covers the technical aspects of fixed vertical traffic signs.

All permanent upright signs must have conformity assessment marking (CE/UKCA) to this standard, in accordance with the Construction Products Regulations.

The scope of this standard also states that the intended use of fixed signs is for the instruction and guidance on public and private land.

Law

The Traffic Signs and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) is a statutory instrument that describes the design, placement and other legal requirements for traffic signs in England & Wales.

Any permanent traffic sign placed in the UK must comply with the design requirements of the TSRGD and the technical requirements of BS EN 12899-1:2007.

As an example, the TSRGD expressly stipulates the size, shape and colour a stop sign must be, in this case, a red octagon.

This design is underpinned by the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals which describes the acceptable variants.



Until the TSRGD update in 2016 stop signs in the UK had to be individually approved by the Secretary of State for Transport. The responsibility for approving stop signs now rests with local authorities. Whilst the TSRGD prescribes that this sign must be red with white legend BS EN 12899-1:2007 will define what colour red is acceptable and other technical aspects of the sign.

The image below shows a type of stop sign found in a retail car park.



Whilst it can be argued that the above sign has a clear instruction it is not helpful to drivers.

Under TSRGD the prescribed lawful stop sign is a unique shape (the Octagon), this shape is clearly recognisable to the road user even if the text in the middle is not. For a traffic sign to be lawful and effective it needs to have credibility for the driver act upon the sign. In this case it is clear to the driver that the sign is not typical and as it is a rectangle, most would associate that to mean that it is simply for information only.

As this sign is intended to give guidance on private or public land then it falls under the remit of BS EN12899-1:2007 and as such should be CE/CA marked in accordance.

As the above statement deems it to be a permanent traffic sign then it also falls under the remit of the TSRGD, its size and shape are not in accordance.

Conclusion

For the avoidance of doubt and to give clear instruction to road users, all permanent traffic signs should be Conformity Assessment marked to the correct standard and comply with the TSRGD.

If you require further guidance on the use of road signs in public or private car parks please contact the Association or one of its members who will be able to advise fully on the requirements.

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