



## Understanding HAZCHEM Site Signage and Emergency Action Codes

HAZCHEM signage can be confusing to people unfamiliar with the various symbols and codes used to convey important information quickly.

This short explanation is designed to give you the basics, so you know how to be safe when encountering any of these signs and have a general idea of what they mean.

### At the entrance

Often when you first enter a site that stores hazardous substances, you'll see a large sign at the gate with the warning "HAZCHEM", this will usually include a set of hazard diamonds and some emergency contact information, like the example shown here.

All businesses that store hazardous substances over a certain threshold are required to advise people that these are present by placing signs at every vehicle and pedestrian entrance.

The hazards diamonds are internationally recognised symbols that tell people the "Class" of hazardous substances on site.



For example: Below you can see the 'Class 3 Flammable Liquid', 'Class 6 Toxic Substances' and 'Class 8 Corrosive Substance' diamonds.



Emergency contact information normally directs people to call 111 in an emergency but may also include site specific contact details.

### On the building

As you get closer to where specific hazardous substances are stored, you'll notice that the signage gets more detailed like the example to the right.

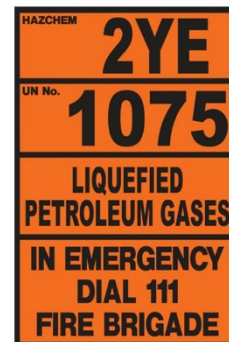
In this case the signage includes specific instructions to prevent harm, such as "NO SMOKING", "NO NAKED FLAMES OR IGNITION SOURCES" and "PROTECT DRAINS CONTAIN / CLEAN UP SPILLS"

It also includes the contact numbers for specialist advice and the regional council.



## On the container / tank

When you get to the container or tank holding the hazardous substances you will often see a placard that contains various numbers and codes. In the example here you can see the first line includes a code "2YE". This is HAZCHEM Emergency Action Code and is specifically designed to let emergency services / fire brigades know five pieces of vital information very quickly as shown below in the table and associated key.



HAZCHEM Emergency Action Code		ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
FOR FIRE OR SPILLAGE			
<b>1</b>	<b>COARSE SPRAY</b>	<b>DRY AGENT</b> Water <b>must not</b> be allowed to come into contact with the substance at risk. <b>V</b> Substance can be violently or even explosively reactive, including combustion. <b>LTS</b> Liquid-tight chemical protective suit with BA. <b>BA &amp; FIRE KIT</b> Self contained breathing apparatus and full fire kit for thermal protection must be worn. <b>DILUTE</b> Substance may be washed into the drain with large quantities of water. <b>CONTAIN</b> Prevent, by any means available, spillage from entering drains or water course. <b>E</b> People should be warned to stay indoors with all doors and windows closed. Evacuation may need to be considered.	
<b>2</b>	<b>FINE SPRAY (FOG)</b>		
<b>3</b>	<b>FOAM</b>		
<b>4</b>	<b>DRY AGENT</b>		
<b>P</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>LTS</b>	<b>DILUTE</b>
<b>R</b>			
<b>S</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>BA &amp; FIRE KIT</b>	<b>CONTAIN</b>
<b>T</b>			
<b>W</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>LTS</b>	
<b>X</b>			
<b>Y</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>BA &amp; FIRE KIT</b>	
<b>Z</b>			
<b>E</b>	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY HAZARD</b>		

The code "2YE" lets emergency responders know:

1. Fine spray / fog needs to be used to extinguish the fire
2. The substances can react violently or explosively
3. Self-contained breathing apparatus and full fire kits must be worn
4. Any spillage must be contained and prevented from entering drains or water course
5. There is a public safety risk and evacuation may be required

The second piece of information is the UN Number, which is an internationally recognised number for the specific hazardous substance and avoids confusion when chemicals may have several common names.

Next there is the common name for the hazardous substance, in this case it's Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

Finally, the emergency contact details.