

གསོ་བའི་འཕྲོད་བསྟེན་ཉེ་བ་ཚུ་གི་དོན་ལུ་  
བད་ཉོན་གྱི་ཚད་གཞི།

**Standard for Signages  
in Healthcare Centres**



**Department of Health Services  
Ministry of Health**

**2026**





## Foreword

As Bhutan's healthcare system advances in quality, scale and accessibility, the need for clear, consistent, and standardized signages within the Healthcare Centres (HCCs) has become critical. Effective display of signages ensures patients, visitors, and healthcare providers to navigate and facilitate efficiently. They enable timely access and support in delivery of high quality services.

Standardized signages are not limited to directions. signages are a fundamental element of patient safety, infection control, emergency preparedness, and operational efficiency. Well-designed and consistently applied signages reduce confusion, prevent delays, and promote calm, inclusive, and patient-friendly environments. In contrast, inconsistent or unclear signages can compromise safety, disrupt services, and create unnecessary risks.

This Standard for signages in HCC provides a mandatory framework for clarity, consistency, and accessibility across all the HCCs. It covers requirements for critical areas, including emergency exits, infection control zones, service points, and safety notices, and is founded on the principles of safety, efficiency, inclusiveness, and accountability.

This standard was drafted and developed through extensive consultations with stakeholders with support from a technical working group (TWG) and review sub-committee, and formally approved by the High-Level Committee (HLC). It is compulsory for implementation in all HCCs nationwide. Compliance will be monitored by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to ensure uniform application, thereby reinforcing commitment to a safe, navigable, and accountable healthcare system.



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## **1. Introduction**

As the healthcare system evolves, effective communication within the HCC has become increasingly important. Signages play a key role in guiding patients, visitors, and healthcare providers in complex environments, ensuring that everyone can access services confidently, efficiently, and with dignity. Currently, inconsistent signages across HCC have caused confusion and delays, highlighting the need for standardized and a unified approach.

To address the challenges, this document introduces the standard for signages in HCC in Bhutan. It provides a framework for designing and implementing signages that are clear, visually appealing, and culturally appropriate.

In line with the Health Services Rules and Regulations (HSRR) 2025, the Bhutan Healthcare Standard for Quality Assurance (BHSQA), and international frameworks such as ISO 3864 on safety signage, this standard is designed to ensure that signages strengthen patient-centered care, support emergency response, and uphold safety compliance. This standard provides administrators, HCC managers, and planners with guidance to ensure uniform, effective signages that enhance safety, efficiency, and the patient experience, while helping individuals navigate care with confidence and respect.

## **2. Purpose**

To ensure consistency, reliability and quality in the design and use of signages across all HCCs in the country.

## **3. Scope**

This standard shall apply to all categories of signages used in the HCC in Bhutan, including external signages, internal directional signs, safety signs, and informational signages.

## 4. Normative References

- 4.1. Royal Government of Bhutan. Healthcare Services Rules and Regulations (HSRR), 2025.
- 4.2. Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan. Bhutan Healthcare Standard for Quality Assurance, 2018.

## 5. Abbreviations

BHSQA : Bhutan Healthcare Standard for Quality Assurance

CMO : Chief Medical Officer

CDHO : Chief Dzongkhag Health Officer

DHS : Department of Health Service

EC : Editorial Committee

HSRR : Healthcare Services Rules and Regulations

HCC : Healthcare Centre

HLC : High Level Committee

ISO : International Organization for Standardization

MoH : Ministry of Health

MOICE : Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment

MS : Medical Superintendent

PHC : Primary Health Centre

QAC : Quality Assurance Committee

MD : Medical Director

QMC : Quality Management Committee

MOIC : Medical Officer In-Charge

THC : Thromde Health Centre

## 6. Definitions

**Bilingual:** The use or knowledge of two languages, Dzongkha and English, with the ability to communicate or express ideas in both languages.

**Editorial Committee:** Committee at the concerned HCC to verify and approve for final printing/ development and display of the signages.

**External Signages:** Signs installed outside the HCC to provide identification, directions, and essential information for patients, visitors, and staff, including the main HCC name and directional signs along the roadway.

**Information Signs:** Signs placed within or around the HHC to provide essential information about services, facilities, policies, or procedures. These may include directions, operating hours, service availability, instructions, and other guidance to facilitate smooth navigation and access to healthcare services.

**Internal Signages:** Signs installed inside the HCC to guide and inform patients, visitors, and staff. These include department, division, or unit names, room numbers, service directions, safety instructions, and other information to ensure efficient navigation, accessibility, and a safe environment within the HCC.

**Safety Signs:** Signs placed within or around the HCC to alert patients, visitors, and staff to potential hazards, indicate safety procedures, and provide instructions to prevent accidents or injuries. These include emergency exits, fire safety, biohazard warnings, and other precautionary or mandatory instructions to ensure a safe environment.

## 7. General Specifications for Signages

Sl. No.	Criteria	Standard Specification
1	Language	All signages must be bilingual – Dzongkha and English.
2	Font Type	Dzongkha: Jogyig (Wangdi29); English: Times New Roman
3	Pictograms/ Symbols	Where applicable, signages shall include universally recognized symbols and icons (e.g., colour codes, arrows for directions, icons for restrooms, elevators, hazards etc).
4	Contrast Ratio	Minimum 70% contrast between text and background, readable by any service user.
5	Material	Signages must use non-glare, matte-finish surfaces to avoid reflection and improve readability.
6	Accessibility	Consider placement of signages at appropriate heights and locations to achieve maximum possible visibility and readability.
7	Content	The information should be accurate, reliable and up to date. Only required information should be mentioned

## 8. Signage Categories and Colour Specifications

Sl. No.	Signage category	Colour
<b>External Signages</b>		
1	Main HCC signboard & directional signs along the roadway	Red background with yellow text (Public HCC only)
<b>Internal Signages</b>		
1	All other Internal Signages	Navy blue background with white text
2	Emergency Exits	Green background with white text (Refer ISO 3864- for safety signs)
3	Hazard Warnings	Yellow background with black text (Refer ISO 3864- for safety signs)
4	Prohibited Areas (e.g., Restricted Zones)	Red background with white text (Refer ISO 3864- for safety signs)
<p><b>Note 1:</b> Font size, spacing and signboard materials should be discussed, finalized and approved in the EC/QMC/QAC of the concerned HCC.</p> <p><b>Note 2:</b> The QAC/QMC of the concerned HCC may act as EC in absence of EC. For PHCs, THCs and Subpost who have no capacity to form an EC may seek approval from the EC of their concerned Dzongkhag lead hospital.</p> <p><b>Note 3:</b> External signages standards shall not apply to private HCC, which shall instead comply with the standards enforced by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MOICE)</p> <p><b>Note 4:</b> ISO 3864 is an international standard that provides guidelines for the design and use of safety signs in various environments, including workplaces and public spaces. The standard aims to ensure that safety signs are easily recognizable and understood, thereby enhancing safety and reducing the risk of accidents.</p>		

## **9. Monitoring and Supervision**

- 9.1. Monitoring and supervision for compliance to this standard shall be conducted as a part of regulatory inspection by the MoH.
- 9.2. The concerned heads/ in-charges of HCCs must ensure compliance to this standard through routine monitoring in their own settings.
- 9.3. The Medical Director/CDHO/MS/CMO/MOIC shall monitor compliance to this standard in the HCCs under their jurisdiction.
- 9.4. Any case of non-compliance to this standard will result in regulatory actions as per the HSRR 2025.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 10.1. Ministry of Health: Review the standard, establish feedback mechanisms to address any non-compliances and ensure regular monitoring and inspection.
- 10.2. Heads/in-charges of HCC
  - 10.2.1. All 10 bedded and above HCCs shall institute QAC/ EC for approving signage designs considering the requirements under this standard for their own HCC.
  - 10.2.2. QAC/EC of Dzongkhag Lead HCC shall verify and approve THC, PHC and Sub-posts level signages as per this standard.
  - 10.2.3. THC, PHC and Subpost In-charges shall plan and design their own signages and seek approval from their respective Dzongkhag Lead HCC QAC/ EC.
  - 10.2.4. All HCCs must plan and secure enough funds for developing the signages.
  - 10.2.5. Private HCC shall institute their own QAC/EC for approving their signages in alignment with all applicable standards.

## 11. Bibliography

1. Rodrigues R, Coelho R, Tavares JMRS. Healthcare signage design: a review on recommendations for effective signing systems. *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*. 2018;12(3):45–65. doi:10.1177/1937586718814822.
2. International Organization for Standardization. *Graphical symbols — Safety colours and safety signs — Part 1: Design principles for safety signs and safety markings*. ISO 3864-1:2011. Geneva: ISO; 2011.
3. Royal Government of Bhutan. *Healthcare Services Rules and Regulations (HSRR)*, 2025.
4. Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan. *Bhutan Healthcare Standard for Quality Assurance*, 2018.

## 12. Annexure: Sample Images

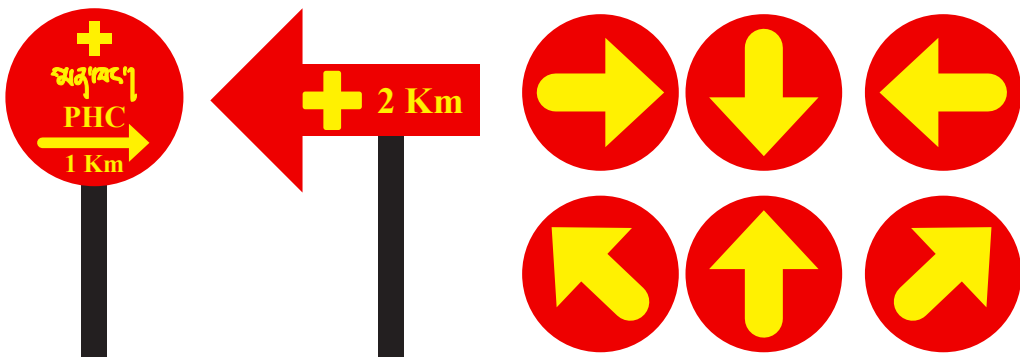
### 12.1. External Signages



Main HCC Signboard



Main Entrance and Exit Signages




Directional Signs along the Roadway

12.2. Internal Signages



རྒྱལ་ཡོད་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། གསོ་སྲིད་ལྷན་ཁག།  
 རྒྱལ་ཁབ་རྫོང་ཁག་ལས་ཁུངས་།

Royal Government of Bhutan  
 Ministry of Health  
 Punakha District Hospital



ནུབ་ལྷན་ཤིག་ཤུལ་ཚོ།

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རྫོ་མུ་ཚོ། 6 ལུས་ < ཚོ།

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ཉེ་མུ་ཚོ། 12 ལུས་ 1 ཚོ།

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ཕྱི་མུ་ཚོ། 6 ལུས་ < ཚོ།

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Visiting Hours

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Morning 6 am to 8 am

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Afternoon 12 pm to 1 pm

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Evening 6 pm to 8 pm

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Other Informational Signage

ལས་ཤུག་ལོག་ལེ་འཛིན།  
Nursing Superintendent

མཁོ་སྐྱེད་ལེ་ཚོ།  
Procurement Division


ལས་ཁང་ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་ལུས་ཚོ།  
Hospital Security Section

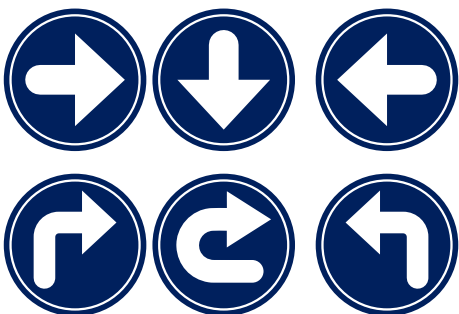
Department/Division/Unit name

འཕྲུལ་སྒོ།  
Entry Door

འཕྲོད་སྒོ།  
Exit Door

Internal Entry and Exit Signages





Numbering

Internal Directional Signs

### 12.3. Safety Signs

#### 12.3.1. Emergency Exit



#### 12.3.2. Hazard Warnings



#### 12.3.3. Prohibited Areas



## མཉམ་ཁུངས་ཀྱི་གྲོ་ཁྲུང་ལའང་རྟུགས།

### Hospital Emergency Codes



**CODE BLUE (Medical Emergencies)**



**CODE RED (Internal disaster)**



**CODE PINK (Internal Disaster)**



**CODE YELLOW (Internal Disaster)**



**CODE GREY (Internal Disaster)**



**CODE ORANGE (Hazardous spillage)**



**CODE PURPLE (missing person)**

