



Standard Practice for Pictorial Markings for Handling of Goods¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice establishes a set of symbols to be used for marking of packages or containers to indicate special handling and storage requirements.

1.2 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 996 Terminology of Packaging and Distribution Environments²

2.2 ISO Standards:

ISO 780 Pictorial Marking for Handling of Goods³

ISO 7000 Registration of Markings and Symbols³

3. Terminology

3.1 **Definitions**—General definitions for packaging and distribution are found in Terminology D 996.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Packages are often marked with handling instructions in the language of the country of origin. While this may safeguard the consignment to some extent, it is of little value for goods consigned to, or through, countries using different languages, and of no value at all if people unloading the packages are illiterate. Pictorial symbols offer the most likely means of conveying the consignor's intention and their adoption will, therefore, undoubtedly reduce loss and damage through incorrect handling. The use of pictorial symbols does not provide any guarantee of satisfactory handling; proper protective packaging is therefore of primary importance.

5. Symbols

5.1 **Display of Symbols**—Symbols may appear on a label or should preferably be printed directly on the package. It is recommended that printed symbols be painted, stenciled (see Note 1), preprinted or otherwise reproduced, as specified herein. Affirmative symbols need not be framed by border lines, but all negative symbols, that is, “DO NOT ...,” shall have borders with a slash mark across.

NOTE 1—For stencilling, the symbols may be provided with bars if required (see Appendix X1).

5.2 **Color of Symbols**—The preferred color for symbols is black. If the color of the package is such that the symbol would not show clearly, provide a panel of a suitable contrasting color, preferably white, as a background. Take care to avoid the use of colors that could lead to confusion with the labeling of dangerous goods. The color red may be used when increased emphasis is required to focus attention of package handlers.

5.3 **Size of Symbols**—The suggested sizes of symbols shall be 100, 150, or 200 mm (4, 6, or 8 in.). The size or shape of the package may, however, necessitate use of larger or smaller sizes for the symbols, scaled proportionately.

5.4 Number, Location, and Position of Symbols:

5.4.1 Use only those pictorial markings required for the package.

5.4.2 The number of identical symbols to be affixed to any package depends on its size and shape (see remarks column for each symbol).

5.4.3 When packages are formed into a unit load, locate symbols so as to ensure they are visible (see Symbol 2).

5.4.4 Give particular attention to the correct application of the marks. Faulty application may lead to misinterpretation. Apply Symbols 4, 6, 7, and 32 in their correct respective positions to convey their meanings clearly and fully.

6. Handling Instructions

6.1 Indicate handling instructions on packages by using the corresponding symbols given in the remarks column of each symbol. Symbol 1 contains two messages.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D10 on Packaging and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D10.11 on Terminology.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 15.09.

³ Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 W. 42nd St., New York, NY 10017.