



POLICY ON EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT SIGNAGE

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document outlines the policy position of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) on signage that should be used in Australasia to denote Emergency Departments (EDs). It is a matter of public safety that if a facility is sign posted as an 'Emergency Department' or 'Emergency' then that the facility must comply with a minimum standard.

2. POLICY

Emergency care is provided by a wide range of facilities and providers from remote nurse run clinics, general practices, ambulance services, retrieval services through to EDs. EDs are dedicated hospital based facilities specifically designed and staffed to provide 24 hour emergency care. An ED cannot operate in isolation and must be part of an integrated health delivery system within a hospital, both operationally and structurally (refer to ACEM's P02 Policy on Standard Terminology and S12 Statement on the Delineation of Emergency Departments).

'Emergency' and 'Emergency Department' signage should only be used at facilities which comply with the minimum standards as defined in ACEM's S12 Statement on the Delineation of Emergency Departments.

The terms 'casualty', 'accident', 'accident and emergency' or 'accident and medical' are confusing to the public and should not be used at all by health care facilities. Such terms are misleading and health care facilities that display them may be mistaken as EDs.

3. PROCEDURE AND ACTIONS

ED signage should consist of the word 'Emergency' or 'Emergency Department' in white letters on a red background complying with Australian Standards - Safety signs for the occupational environment (AS1319). ACEM acknowledges that the symbols of the International Red Cross and the Swiss flag are protected symbols under Article 38 of the Geneva Convention.

Hospitals without an ED should have signage clearly indicating this. The signage should include details of the nearest available public and private ED.

Specialised EDs, such as paediatric, or eye and ear hospital EDs should have their area of specialisation clearly displayed.

4. DATES AND NOTES

Note: The current version (Mar-13) version of P20 is an amalgamation of P20 (Jul-06) 'Policy on Emergency Department Signage' and P45 (Jul-06) 'Policy on the Signage and Terminology of Non-Emergency Department Services'.

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