

Australasian College  
for Emergency Medicine

# Emergency Department Signage

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Policy P20

## Document Review

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Timeframe for review: Every three years, or earlier if required.  
Document authorisation: Council of Advocacy, Practice and Partnerships  
Document implementation: Standards and Endorsement Committee  
Document maintenance: Policy Officer, Policy and Research

## Revision History

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Version	Date	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
1	Mar 1999	First version
2	July 2006	Revised document
3	Mar 2013	Revised document
4	July 2019	Content revised and new template adopted

## 1. Purpose and scope

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

## 2. Policy

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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 [Policy on Standard Terminology](#) (P02) and [Statement on the Delineation of Emergency Departments](#) (S12)).

'Emergency' and 'Emergency Department' signage should only be used at facilities that comply with the minimum standards as defined in *Statement on the Delineation of Emergency Departments* (S12).

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

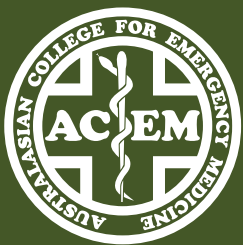
## 3. Procedure and actions

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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 EDs.

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



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