



All water safety signage in New Zealand meets the standard AS/NZS 2416.1:2010. The signs contain symbols rather than words. They are based on internationally recognised symbols to inform people of water hazards. This means that international, non-English speaking visitors can easily understand them.

Councils work with community groups such as Surf Life Saving and the Harbourmaster's office when considering new signage. Surf Life Saving organisations can be contracted to complete a risk analysis of local beaches. Signage requirements can be part of their recommendations. The Department of Conservation uses these signs around their waterways.

Signs are important in promoting water safety as it is impossible to patrol potential dangers all of the time. There are three main types: information, hazard warning and prohibition signage.

Information signs can indicate the location of swimming and other aquatic activity zones extending from the beach into the water, for example when lifeguards are on duty. These are blue square signs with white pictograms.



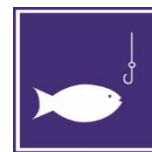
Wear a
Lifejacket



Board
Sailing
Permitted



Patrolled
Beach



Fishing
Permitted

Hazard warning signs are a black pictogram in a yellow diamond. These signs identify hazardous conditions, or a potentially dangerous situation and people should pay attention to them.



Caution
Shallow Water



Beware
Cliff Edge



Beware
Deep Water



Large Waves



Strong
Currents



Dangerous
Tides

Prohibition signs - The prohibition signs have the format of a red circle and red slash on a white background with a black pictogram. The pictogram symbolises the activity that is prohibited. See a few examples below.



Swimming
Prohibited



Diving
Prohibited



Boating
Prohibited



Fishing
Prohibited



Boogie boards
Prohibited



Personal
Watercraft
Prohibited



Surfing
Prohibited

The Auckland Council and Surf Life Saving Northern Region have worked together to install signage on the West Coast beaches of Piha, Muriwai, Karekare and Anawhata.

The signs have two primary purposes:

- To inform people about significant coastal hazards at the beaches
- To inform people about lifeguard and emergency services at the location

Each site has been risk assessed and the agreed signage placed at strategic locations as well as at the hazard itself. For example, there is signage at car parks and/or at pedestrian entry points to enable visitors to be informed of important information before undertaking aquatic activities.



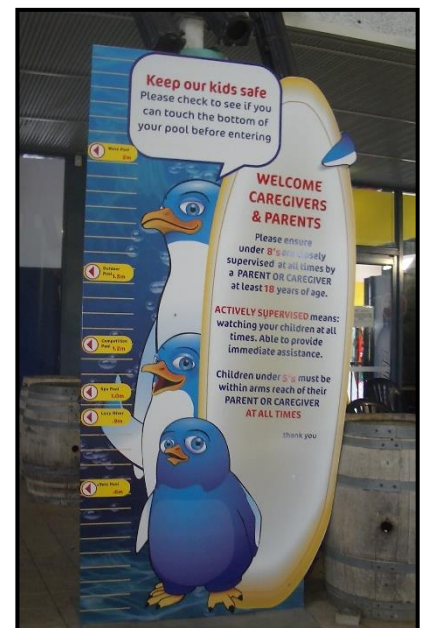
Water safety signage at public and school swimming pools

AS/NZS 2416.1:2010 sets out the requirements for signage at public pools including school pools.

Every pool should have their rules, emergency contacts, location of first aid kits, and pool depth clearly displayed. Public swimming pools have lifeguards working during their opening hours. This does not reduce the need for comprehensive signage. However, many pools do not use the standard signs, rather they have the rules written in words rather than images.



Signage (left and right) courtesy CLM Pools, Massey Park



Many school pools do not have depth signs as their pool is shallow and of even depth. A line on the changing shed wall or fence could be drawn to indicate the depth. This may be more meaningful for a five year old than the 2.0M sign (right).



The presence of signage does not make water environments safer. However, their presence should alert the public to the dangers and help them to be more careful when in, on and around the water.