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MARKING GUIDELINES FOR THE HIKING ROUTE ALONG THE BALTIC SEA COASTLINE IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

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Baltic Coastal hiking route marking guidelines are made in Estonia – Latvia Programme from European Regional Development Fund project Hiking Route Along the Baltic Sea Coastline in Latvia and Estonia.

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Hiking routes and route marking

According to the European Rambling Association, the importance of hiking trails in the tourism industry has increased over the past century. The origins of route marking in Europe date back for 140 years. These traditions have been in place for decades in those countries that are proud of rambling traditions, and this is internationally known. Here in Latvia and Estonia we are beginners in this process.

Based on the previously described, the aim of these guidelines is to establish a unified marking system for hiking routes along the shore of the Baltic Sea in Latvia and Estonia. The guidelines are intended to be distributed to all institutions that are involved in setting up and maintaining the routes (state and local governmental institutions, coastline businesspeople, non-governmental organizations that operate near the seashore, etc.).

By planning and implementing route marking, it is important to remember that the main goal is to help travelers to orient in their way. Particularly in this route the main focus is on places where the route moves away from the shore and marked places where travelers can receive necessary services – a way out from the seashore to populated area where there are dining facilities, food stores, public transportation stops, etc.

It is important to make sure of the route marking to be well maintained that is based on successful co-operation among all involved parties – disabled persons, hikers, businesspeople, NGOs, state and local institutions and local residents.

The aim of marking is to help orientate in the specific route but it should not lower the quality of the landscape.

These guidelines are based on recommendations from Lis Nielsen, President of the European Rambling Association, and Guido Leibur, honorary member of the Estonian Rambling Association (Eesti Matkaliit). Furthermore, previously issued marking guidelines for long-distance routes in Europe were examined and additional information was collected during an experience exchange tour to the Netherlands in June 2017. In 2010 Latvian Rural Tourism Association “Lauku ceļotājs” issued marking guidelines for active tourism routes, providing useful input also in the creation process of these guidelines. Previous practical experience in route marking by the creators of these guidelines was found equally practical in the preparation process.

The marking guidelines reflects author's views and the Managing Authority of the Estonia-Latvia programme is not liable for any use that may be made of this information.

1. Symbols for route marking along the Baltic Sea in Latvia and Estonia

The symbol for route marking along hiking routes along the Baltic Sea in Latvia and Estonia is a three-line sign that is white - blue - white, with the blue line always between the white lines (Image 1). Measurement of every line is 150x30 mm with no space between them. To make sure of the measurements, special stencils need to be used (can be found in the attachment of the guidelines).



Image 1

If a route changes its direction, this sign is necessary before the turnoff (Image 2):

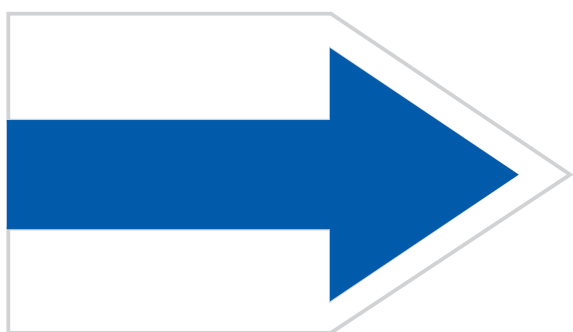






Image 2

To mark places where a hiker has gone in the wrong direction or where the route cannot be continued (private property, end of the route, dead end, etc.), use this marking (Image 3) at the appropriate



Image 3

location. Remember that primarily hikers need to be guided by using  and/or   signs, and the wrong direction sign  needs to be used only in cases when the previous signs are not enough to ensure successful orientation in the route.

Where possible, particularly in forested and populated areas, make the markings with paint, brush and stencils on trees, posts, large rocks and other visible surfaces. In places where this is not possible or it is prohibited, use special rainproof stickers (if there is an appropriate surface) or wooden posts with the white – blue – white symbol and can be stuck into the ground.

2. Color codes and description

To ensure that all markings are the same and to preserve the visual identity, a unified color code must be applied:



CMYK - 100 / 70 / 0 / 0
RGB - 0 / 77 / 158
PANTONE - 286



CMYK - 0 / 0 / 0 / 0
RGB - 255 / 255 / 255
PANTONE - WHITE

- The color can be either oil based or water based, if the latter is suitable for outdoor painting;
- Color should be applied with a brush, as in most cases trees will be used as marking objects.

If it is not possible to find the colors according to the given description, a color palette can be used to find a similar color and then it can be toned with a white color to get the needed blue color tone, see the next picture.

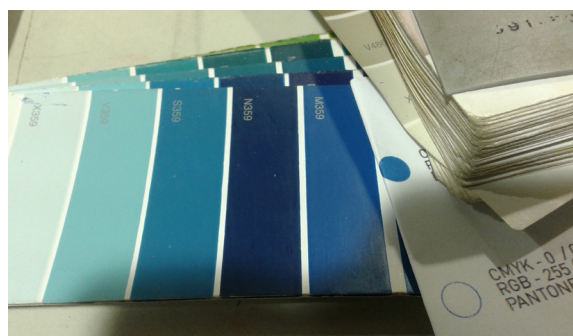


Image 4

From this particular color palette ("DEPO DIY"), color with the code M359 can be used.

3. Basic principles for marking

3.1. General guidelines

- The markings need to be seen clearly from distance. It is recommended to put them approximately 1,55 – 1,60 m above the ground;
- The route needs to be marked in both ways, preferably with a marking for each direction;



Image 5

To use the route in both ways, markings need to be applied in a way to be seen from both sides of the route.



Image 6



Image 7

On narrow trees or other surfaces with small circumference, the color has to be applied in a way that the color covers up all the circumference of the surface.



Image 8

If the surface is parallel to the route (for example – a sign or stone) and it is well seen from the route, it is enough to use only one marking sign.



Image 9

A stone that is parallel to the route. The marking can be in one plane (parallel to the route).

- The distance between two signs in a **complicated area** (populated places, forest route with many different trails, etc.) must be short enough so that the next sign would be seen from the previous one.



Image 10

The marking signs need to be in a distance so that the hiker cannot get lost. Most of them usually are on crossroads and on sidings of a trail. If there are no crossroads for a while, a confirmation sign needs to be applied.



Image 11

The sign needs to be well seen from a distance. Bushes, plants or other trees should not cover it. It is advised to do the marking in the middle of summer when nature is in its prime. A pine forest is the most convenient marking habitat.

- In cases when the route goes in a well understandable “corridor” (shore, forest road, trail, street in a populated area etc.), marking must be applied only in confusing places, like crossroads, trail sidings and places where the direction changes.
- Even at long distances, for example, by the shore where there are no crossroads, there must be **confirmation signs** which confirm that the hiker is on the correct route. These signs need to be applied at least once in 2 km.
- In places where there are informative stands with the route information, there must be a sign which indicates the nearest direction to the route.

3.2 Surfaces for marking



Image 12

Trees. Spruces, black alders and trees and bushes with sleek trunks are the most suitable for marking. Pine trees are the most common on this route.



Image 13

Stones. If possible, it is advised to choose stones with sleek surfaces which are located in open areas and are well seen (not covered by grass and bushes in summer).



Image 14



Image 15

Information stands, signs and similar objects. Paint must be applied in places where it does not interfere and cover already existing information. Prior approval by the object manager must be received.



Image 16

Infrastructure object in nature and populated areas. Prior approval by the object manager must be received.



Image 17

Houses, buildings etc. Prior approval by the object manager must be received, avoid any actions that would lower the value of the object.



Image 18

Road surface (asphalt). Prior approval by the object manager must be received.



Image 19

The bottom line (limestone). This principle applies only in few places in Estonia.

Surfaces for marking with stickers.

Use the same general principles mentioned before. Mainly use the surfaces of road signs and other existing direction signs, light poles, traffic light poles and other technical objects. Stickers must be applied in a way to be seen from both sides. Frequency of the stickers should be observed. Most importantly, the stickers must be correctly applied on the crossroads, as described above.



Image 20

The stickers show the direction and are well seen to the hikers coming from both sides.



Image 21

Crossed sticker under a road sign shows that the route does not continue in this direction.



Image 22

A sticker on a road sign (on the right from the bicycle symbol) shows that the hiker is on the correct route.

3.3. Marking on the crossroads

- It is important to pay particular attention to places where a hiker can miss the correct route. All crossroads must be marked in both directions;
- 10 m after each crossroad a sign confirming the right direction of the route must follow. Furthermore, additional sign must follow the previous one, in case the previous sign gets damaged/destroyed;
- If the route suddenly changes its direction, for example, from a shore inside the dunes, it is important to use an arrow which indicates the turning point. If possible, it is recommended to put the signs on natural elements, e.g., stones and similar items on the shore. If it is not possible, a special sign must be placed;
- It is highly important to clearly mark the places where the route goes into populated areas and vice-versa. It is possible to use already existing signs by adding the route markings (stickers or color markings, depending on the situation). In cases where there are no pre-existing signs to be used, it is recommended to set up a new sign.



Image 23



Image 24

4. Marking in places where it overlaps with previous markings

In cases where the route overlaps with other already marked routes, it is advised to use the same object for marking, if possible.

When using already marked objects (trees, stones etc.), a new marking must be applied in a way that would clearly indicate that there are two (or more) routes crossing this point. Previous markings or their parts should not be used for new markings.

In cases when it is planned to use industrial elements, e.g., light-poles, with existing previous markings, it is important to leave at least 1 cm space between the old and the new marking..



Image 25



Image 26

If at some parts the route overlaps with another route, the new marking needs to be applied above, below or next to the already existing sign, depending on each situation.

5. The process of marking

5.1. General guidelines

- In Latvia and Estonia **trees** (primarily, pine trees) and **stones** are the most commonly used objects for marking. It is forbidden to put marking on trees, stones, sandstone and dolomite outcrops and other nature and cultural history objects with a nature or cultural monument status. Likewise, it is not allowed to put markings on objects which do not have this status but have local significance and/or have an aesthetic or scenic value.
- If possible, it is recommended to put the marking on trees and stones which are well seen from distance, removing unnecessary bushes which might cover them. If there is a choice, apply the marking on trees which have surface as smooth as possible, for example, spruce, black alder etc. An ax and/or a saw must be used to remove unnecessary branches. Removing branches from trees with scenic value and a status of cultural monument is not allowed. Special ointment should be applied on places of the removed branches.
- Before applying the paint of the marking, the spot on the tree must be carefully **cleaned**. Use a simple drum brush for this purpose.

5.2. Applying paint on the surface

The **application** of the paint is done with two small brushes and a pre-prepared stencil (see the stencil in the attachment of the guidelines). One brush and one stencil are meant for the white color and the other for the blue color.

The marking symbol on the trees is painted around 1,55 – 1,60 m above the ground. As far as possible, all markings along the route should be made **at the same height**, so that a hiker would know where to look for them. This height is also practical for maintenance of the route – restoration of marking can be done by one person without any additional equipment.



Image 27

Two people should be involved in the marking process: one applies the white basic tone, and the other – the blue color line on it.



Image 28

Three different lines can be applied on the surface, but it must be done carefully and with a suitable brush, to avoid colors being mixed together.



Image 29

The stencil is needed to remember the size and proportions of the sign. Sometimes it might be difficult to apply the colour with a stencil, but it is useful as a benchmark.



Image 30

The colour needs to be applied with a brush at an eye level.



Image 31

Before marking the route, it is recommended to train on different surfaces to get the first skills. Spray paint can also be used, but one must make sure that it will not drain. A stencil is needed to apply the marking with a spray paint.

Inventory needed

- Colours;
- Easily sealable containers for color storage and carrying during the marking process;
- Several brushes;
- Stencils;
- Brush for surface cleaning;
- Work clothes and gloves;
- Colour solvent and rags;
- An old bag to carry the inventory;
- An ax and a saw to cut trees and bushes around the marking spot;
- A map with a clearly marked route or a person, who knows the the route well.

6. Marking maintenance and renewal



Image 32

Color, depending on the surface, remains in the nature for several years, but once in one to two years it is advised to inspect the condition of the object on which the signs were applied.



Image 33

Carefully recolor each line to remark the already existing sign.

7. Signs to sightseeing objects and service providers

- Signs indicating nearby objects of interest, resting areas and service providers should be placed along the route. Indication signs are required when the route goes out from large populated areas.
- In cases where the route goes along a populated area, one sign is required from the route to the center of the populated area and it should display information (shown in pictograms) about services a hiker can receive.
- In case when a sightseeing object or a service provider is not on the main route, marking leading all the way to the object should be applied.

8. Marking ethics and cooperation with all partners

It is recommended to involve the local population in the marking process - entrepreneurs, local government and tourism information center employees, representatives of the planning regions, local associations, enthusiasts and also hikers who are the main users of the route.

People who apply marking should be familiar with the route. They can divide into several groups and divide the labor to make the process faster and more effective. In linear routes it is important to rethink logistics so that they can be transported to the start point at the end. Before proceeding with the marking process, they must hear the instruction.



Image 34

Local residents involved in the marking process.



Image 35

Instruction before the marking.

We respect existing laws and ethics in the marking process. Do not use vast trees, old trees, great stones, nature objects that have the status of cultural monument (protected natural object) and other objects with cultural monument status or other significant status as objects for marking. Do not mark the parts of the route that passes through the beach, but mark the exit from the beach and the places where the route goes back to the beach. When marking, we evaluate whether the quality of the place/landscape is not reduced. We use a creative approach and logic in the labeling process.



Image 36

The birch is not a good surface if the marking contains white colour.

Contact information

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List of information sources

Den Norske Turistforening, Friluftsrådernes Landsforbund, Innovasjon Norge (2013). Merkehandboka. Håndbok for tilrettelegging av turruter i fjellet, i skogen og langs kysten.

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Smaļinskis, J., Jakovela, A., LLTA “Lauku Ceļotājs” (2010). Vadlīnijas aktīvā tūrisma maršrutu krāsu marķējumam.

Available: https://www.daba.gov.lv/upload/File/VienotaisStils/IADT_VienStils_2011_05-markejums-takas_LC.pdf

Colours in the pictures (there are yellow and red colour some places in the pictures) has illustrative meaning and they picture the main principles.

Photo: Juris Samaļinskis, Raiminds Rāts (cover). Examples from Latvia, Estonia and Netherlands are used.

Attachment – marking sign stencils



Marking sign 150x90mm

Blue colour stencil, 1:1 (190x130mm)

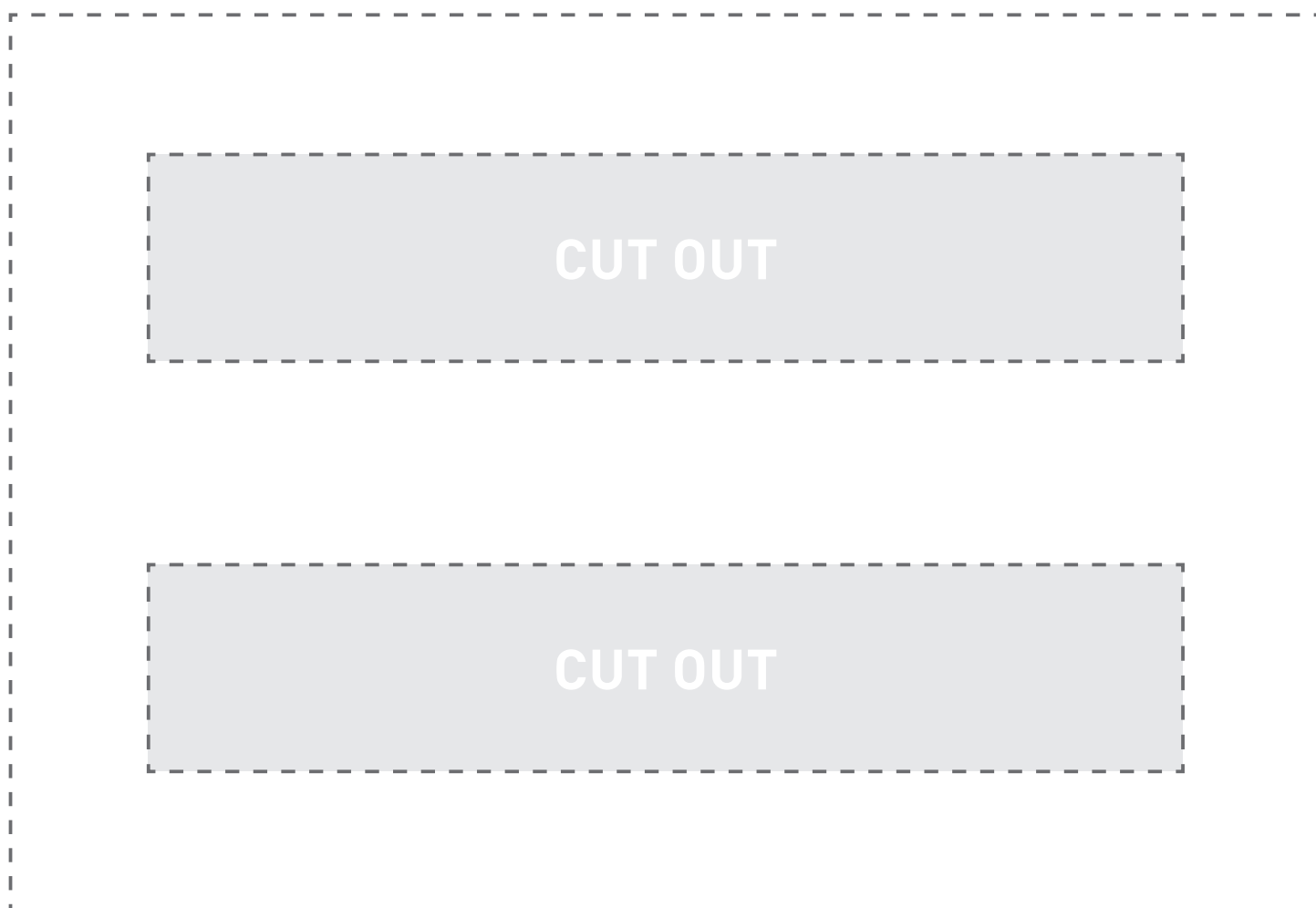
CUT OUT

Attachment – marking sign stencils



Marking sign 150x90mm

White colour stencil, 1:1 (190x130mm)



Attachment – marking sign stencils



Marking sign 150x30mm

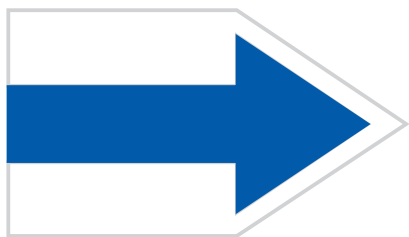
White colour stencil, 1:1 (190x70mm)

CUT OUT

Blue colour stencil, 1:1 (190x70mm)

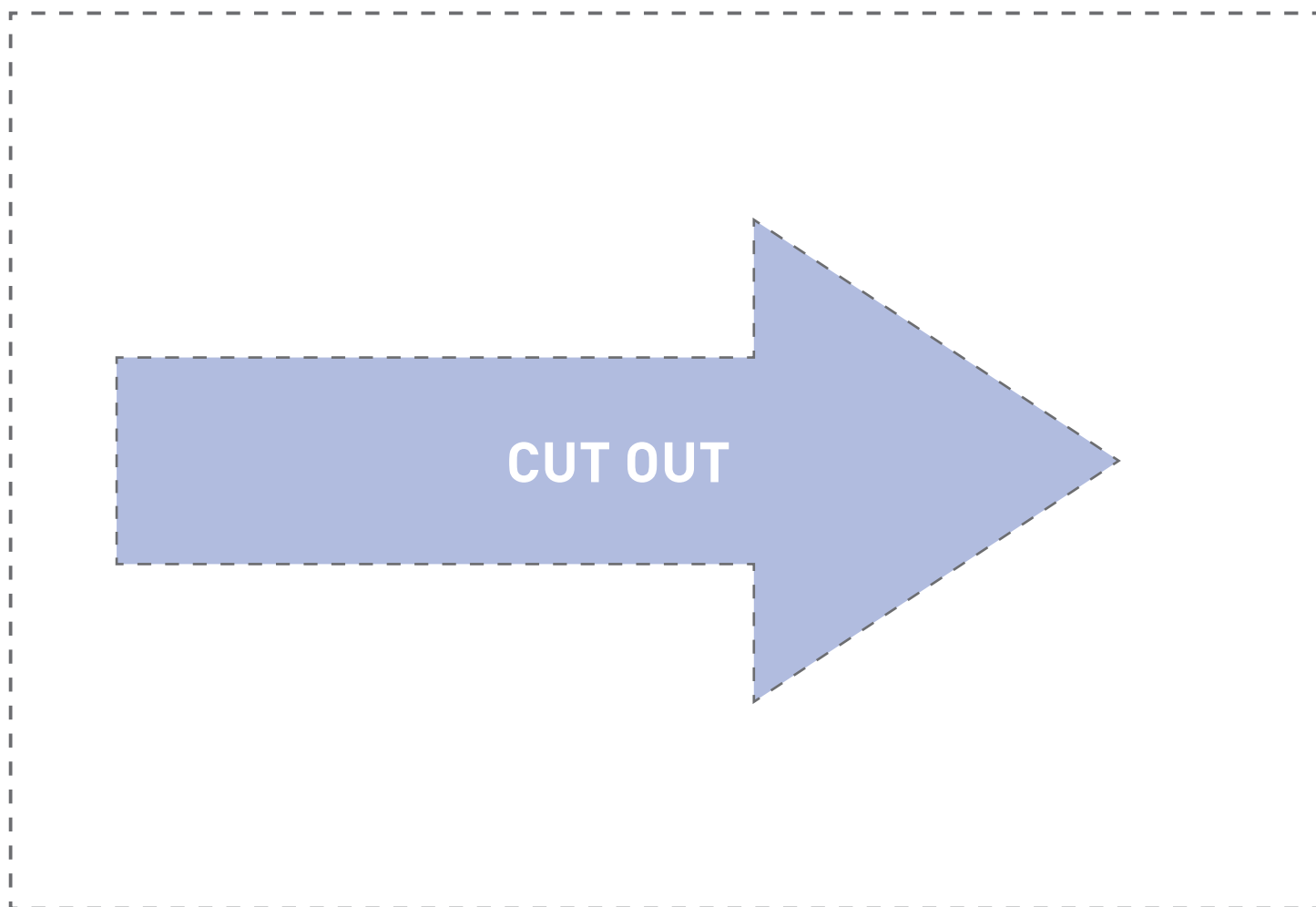
CUT OUT

Attachment – marking sign stencils

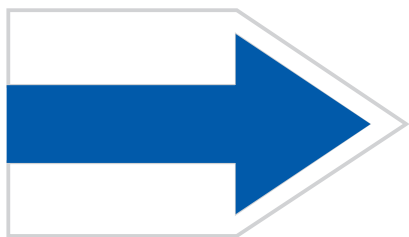


Marking sign 160x90mm

Blue colour stencil, 1:1 (146x70mm)



Attachment – marking sign stencils



Marking sign 160x90mm

White colour stencil, 1:1 (90x160mm)

