ANSI Z535.6-2023 establishes how to present safety messages in installation manuals, user guides, and similar product instructions. Its purpose is to help readers recognize hazards and find the safety information when they need it. It covers printed materials and printable electronic documents, including PDFs

1. Organize safety messages by where they apply

Message Type	Purpose	Examples
Supplimental Directives	Explains how-to-use info	A direction to read all safety information before starting.
Grouped Messages	Dedicate a safety section	Material handling. electrical hazards, injury advisory grouped in a safety section.
Sectioned Messages	Addtress hazards throughout	Safety warnings in each installation section.
Embedded Warnings	Safety reminders at relevant steps in the main body.	Step requiring two people to lift assembly.

The standard does not require every document to include all four types. Their use depends on the information being communicated.

2. Choose signal word according to hazard

Signal Word	Meaning
DANGER	A hazardous situation that, if not avoided, will cause death or serious injury.
WARNING	A hazardous situation that, if not avoided, could cause death or serious injury.
CAUTION	Assess whether intended users can understand and apply the information.
NOTICE	Information addressing practices **unrelated** to personal injury but important to the task.

Signal words should reflect the actual hazard—not simply how much emphasis the writer wants. The safety alert symbol—the exclamation mark inside a triangle—is for personal-injury hazards and should not accompany property-damage-only messages.

3. Make the message actionable by stating what could go wrong and its prevention

a) The Hazard: **What could go wrong.**
b) The Consequence: **What injury or harm could result.**
c) The Avoidance Action: **What must the readr do to prevent it.**

Example: **WARNING — Falling panel hazard. An unsecured panel can fall and cause serious injury. Keep the panel supported until all specified retaining components are installed and secured.**

Our goal at Critical Reference is to provide our customers with professionally drafted documents that clearly address all potential product hazards following ANSI guidelines and responsible publishing criteria.

© copyright 2026 Critical Reference, LLC