

Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

Kiln Safety By Derek Neubauer

High schools, middle schools, and elementary schools utilize kilns in art curriculum on a routine basis. As long as basic safety precautions are in place, kilns can be safe to use. Kilns produce high temperatures and release volatile emissions into the air, many of which may be toxic. Proper installation of a kiln does not preclude the potential for serious burns from touching the outer surface of the equipment. Always review operating procedures before use and employ safe use procedures at all times.

Venting

- Vent kilns according to the manufacturer’s instructions with fumes directed outside the building.
- Always turn on your kiln hood or vent prior to loading with projects.

General Safety Tips

- Do not allow children near kilns.
- If the kiln is located in an area where children could gain access, install a gate device.
- Never open the kiln lid when the kiln is firing.
- Do not try to empty the kiln until the outside of the equipment has cooled.
- All kilns should maintain a minimum clearance per the manufacturer’s installation instructions.
 - (usually found on the side of the kiln or the manual)
- Do not plug an electric kiln in unless the circuit is in the “OFF” position.
- Turn circuit to the “OFF” position when the kiln

is not in use.

- Never allow the kiln top to be used as a workbench or storage shelf.
- After-hours firing should be discouraged. If firing is taking place, notify appropriate staff to monitor due to increased fire hazard.

Unsafe Practices

- Items placed in the access path to the kiln or the kiln room.
- Area around the kiln cluttered with combustible supplies.
- Wood shelves used for storage of ceramic projects.
- Wood cabinets located within the manufacturers’ suggested clearance from kiln.
- Unsupervised children near the kiln.
- Kiln room or area not properly marked.

Introduction to the ceramic arts as part of a school art curriculum can be fun and educational as long as proper safety measures are always employed. Remember to practice safety – don’t learn it by accident.

For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or sorr@cmregent.com.