Health & Safety

for classes and casual facility users
at Canberra Potters



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Pottery Workshops

At Canberra Potters we take the health of our staff, students, and visitors very seriously. All students are expected to be familiar with the information contained within this booklet and to adhere to requirements set out.

The pottery workshop can be a hazardous environment. To achieve a safe working environment, we ask that you listen and follow the instructions of our teachers and staff members. Be aware and follow safety protocols when using the workshops, glaze room, kiln shed and allied areas.

When we all work together, the risks we face can be mitigated.

Some risks include:

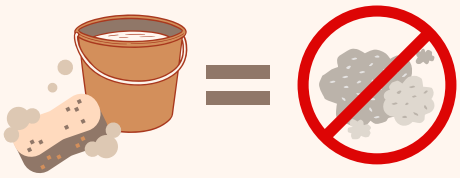
- Risk to lungs from extended exposure ceramic dust
- Exposure to toxic substances
- Risks from accidents and falls
- Risks from heavy lifting
- Fire safety
- Cuts and burns
- Electrical hazards

If you have additional access requirements for attending classes at Canberra Potters, please contact education@canberrapotters.com.au as soon as possible so we can work with you to make reasonable adjustments in the interest of your safety.

If you feel your ability to evacuate in the case of an emergency is limited or may be impacted, please talk to your teacher or a relevant staff member, and we can organise a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for you.

Due to the numerous risks associated with a working studio, the minimum age for children participating in supervised classes is 5 years and attending school. During special events such as ‘Fired Up’ or exhibition openings, children must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult.

DUST & CLEANING



Over time, breathing in dry clay dust can potentially lead to a serious lung disease called silicosis. There's no issue if we all work together to ensure we follow the appropriate health and safety practices during class.

Effective cleaning is part of the process of working with clay and attending classes. The last ten to fifteen minutes of all classes or self-directed sessions is designated for cleaning.

The following cleaning procedure applies to all workshops, the glaze room, and the raku area to minimise dust and to keep everyone healthy.

You are expected to:

- Clean their own workspace and/or wheel,
- Assist in cleaning the workshop at the end of class or session by wet wiping all workstations and equipment with a clean sponge or microfibre cloth,
- Spray surfaces with disinfectant (located in spray bottles in each workshop), then wipe with a clean sponge or microfibre cloth again,
- Dry off surfaces with a clean towel.
- Clean all tools in soapy water and dry before putting away.
- Regularly clean the sponge/microfibre cloth and towel you bring to class.
- Don't forget to check that shared equipment is clean, and that you've cleaned out the sink.

What we do behind the scenes:

- All workshops are wet vacuumed multiple times each week.
- All workshops have extraction fans installed which operate on a daily cycle.
- Deep cleaning of workshop spaces during term breaks.

If you notice an area that requires extra cleaning, tell your teacher or a staff member so it can be rectified.

Make sure you clean your apron/studio clothes regularly, as fabric holds dust too.

Minimising dust is our community goal!

SANDING

Any sanding of work, at any stage of the making process, raw, bisqued or glaze fired, needs to be done in a way that keeps dust to a minimum.

Dry sanding of clay and fired ceramics creates dust, and as such, is strongly discouraged at Canberra Potters. There are very few instances where you cannot alter your approach to make it a wet process.

We encourage all makers to do a final tidy up of their work with a damp sponge before pieces go up for their first firing.
This eliminates the need to sand the piece once out of the bisque firing.

After the glaze firing you can sand your work to make it smooth by placing your item in a bucket of water and using wet & dry sandpaper - Keep everything wet!! Wet sanding ensures that any clay particles created are suspended in water rather than floating in the air.

If you are carving through raw, dry clay to create patterns or texture, DO NOT blow the clay dust away. Use a dry paintbrush to gently knock the shavings off your pot onto your worktable or onto a damp microfibre cloth, then wipe the shavings up with your wet cloth.



If there's no way you can avoid dry sand your work, consult your teacher or a member of staff as to proper safety protocols.

GLAZES

All glazes at Canberra Potters are pre-mixed, in liquid form and ready for use. Canberra Potters glazes do not contain known toxic substances such as barium or lead, and once fired, all our glazes are food safe.

Before glazing, take a half-filled bucket of water and a sponge up to the glaze shed to use while glazing. These should be cleaned and put away at the end of your session.

Latex gloves are provided for use while glazing should you wish to use them. There are glazing tongs available above the wax station. If you get glaze on your skin, wash it off in a bucket of clean water promptly.

If you are pregnant, we advise you wear thick plastic gloves when glazing. There are no proven risks to the foetus from the materials used in our glazes, but we recommend that you exercise caution.

Glaze spills need to be cleaned up with a wet sponge. If spilt glaze dries, it will turn to dust. Please refer to previous section about dust and why we need to avoid it.

If you're enrolled in a Glaze Development course your teacher will go through all safety requirements, including compulsory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) prior to any dry mixing of glazes. Your teacher will also discuss how to test if a glaze is food safe.



There is a spray booth located in the raku area. This requires training to use. Please discuss with your teacher, the Technical Officer, or Workshop Manager, if this is something you would like to learn.

WAX

Hot wax is not permitted at Canberra Potters. Cold wax is provided in the glaze rooms as a resist.

Before using wax, put a layer of newspaper on the wax station. There are wax brushes in a wall mounted basket which you're welcome to use, please wash and return them when you're finished. Do not leave brushes in water or wax.

Please note, supply of cold wax has been challenging over the past few years.

We encourage you embrace other methods of cleaning up the base of your pieces when glazing, including using the carpet squares provided or a damp sponge.



TRIPS, SLIPS & SPILLS

Keeping walkways clear is an easy way to avoid trips and falls.

In the workshops, tuck stools back under the tables when not in use. Keep wheel stools tucked in tight to the wheel, or upside down on the wheel head if the wheel is clean and turned off.

In the glaze room, put lids back on the glaze buckets when not in use, and push them back under the table.

If you spill something on the floor, clean it up with a wet sponge to avoid a slip hazard. If it's a big spill, ask your teacher or a member of staff to get the Wet Vac out for you.



There are multiple power points in the workshops. Please use the closest power point for electrical items (e.g., heat gun) to avoid any electrical cord dragging across a walkway and becoming a tripping hazard.

Note: don't point heat guns at the thermal roof sensors!
This will activate the fire alarm.

Serious trips or falls resulting in injury must be reported to your teacher or a member of staff who will complete an incident report form.

MOVING OBJECTS & YOUR BODY

Taking regular breaks will help to avoid repetitive strain injuries.

If you've been in the same position for 20 minutes,
stand up, stretch and move around.

Lift heavy objects with care and avoid sideways twisting. If it's too heavy for you to comfortably lift, ask for help. If you'd like to borrow a trolley to move things, ask your teacher or staff member.



Sit correctly when using the potter's wheel,
and don't forget to stretch!

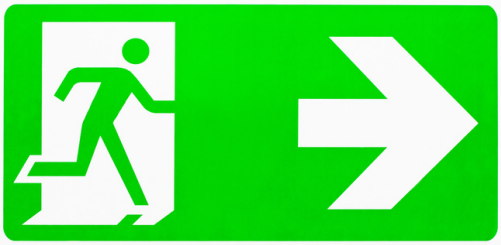


EMERGENCIES

In the case of an Emergency Evacuation, follow direction from your teacher or any staff on site. All teachers and staff are trained Fire Wardens.

Our Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is the carved wooden sculpture in the trees on the far side of the carpark.

Do not leave the premises or re-enter the building until the emergency has been cleared by the Fire Brigade in attendance or you're advised to do so by the Chief Warden.



FIRST AID

There are First Aid kits in Workshop 1 & 2, the glaze room, and the Foyer kitchen. Please tell your teacher or a staff member if contents are low or missing.

If you are cut, please ask your teacher or a staff member for assistance, and make sure your wound is properly disinfected and covered before continuing to work.

If you have an accident or near miss during class, tell your teacher or a staff member and they will complete an incident report form.
We can't fix what we don't know about.

Heat guns live in their purpose-built holders when they're not actively being used. Don't touch the end which emits heat just in case it is still hot from a previous user.



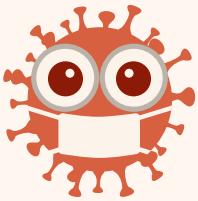
COVID SAFETY

Current health guidelines are strictly adhered to according to ACT Health. Updates on COVID19 can be found via www.covid19.act.gov.au.

Follow any health-related instruction from your teacher and Canberra Potters staff, observe signage around the facility.

Do NOT attend class if you are unwell. Your teacher will do their best to catch you up in following weeks.

We encourage all students and teachers to wear masks during classes.



PERSONAL & PROPERTY SECURITY

You are responsible for the safety and security of your personal items while at Canberra Potters.

Canberra Potters takes no responsibility for loss or damage to personal items, personal ceramic equipment and tools, or vehicles parked on site. We recommend you always keep your valuables with you and lock your vehicle.



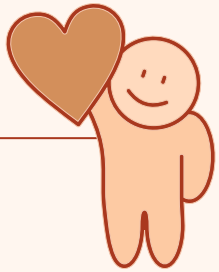
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

You MUST wear enclosed, sturdy footwear at all times while on Canberra Potters premises. Long hair and loose clothing must be tied back or tucked away when using the wheels, slab roller etc.

If you or your class is doing a raku firing. Your teacher will show you what PPE is required to ensure your safety.



BEHAVIOUR



As someone's mother once said,
treat others the way you wish to be treated.

All staff, students, members, and visitors are expected to behave with respect toward all people at Canberra Potters.

Our policy states that any behaviour that threatens, discriminates, defames, harasses, or endangers the wellbeing of another person or prevents them from accessing the facility safely may result in the withdrawal and termination of enrolment without refund.

FOOD AREAS

You may use a covered water bottle to ensure hydration during your session. Eating and drinking from uncovered vessels is NOT permitted in any of the workshops or in the glaze room. Food can be eaten in the tearoom or at the designated food tables in the courtyard.
Conversely, no clay is to be used in food and drink areas.

The tearoom, located next to Workshop 1, is available to students while in class. Please note there is a Tea & Coffee donation box on the counter. If you use the tearoom facilities, please put in some money so we can continue to supply tea, coffee, milk, sugar, dishwasher tablets, etc.

To keep this area clean and pleasant for everyone to use, any crockery or cutlery used must go in the dishwasher when you're finished with it.

ALWAYS wash your hands at the end of class or session,
and before eating/drinking.



ELECTRICAL ITEMS

If your electrical item doesn't have a current 'test & tag' tag on it, you cannot use it at Canberra Potters.

EQUIPMENT & RESTRICTED AREAS

If you don't have training or permission to use a piece of equipment, for example, a kiln. Don't use it!

All members using Canberra Potters kilns must have an up-to-date Kiln Licence. If you want to learn how to use a piece of equipment, ask your teacher or a staff member how to go about this.

You MUST NOT enter the restricted kiln area unless invited by a staff member or teacher.

FACILITY NOTES

Watson Arts Centre is an ACT Government facility and smoking onsite is not permitted. This includes all buildings and grounds.

Pets, including dogs on leads, are not permitted on site unless they're a licensed assistant animal.

Access to the workshops and glaze room outside of class is not permitted, unless you're a current financial member with an up to date orientation and have booked and paid for an access session through the website.

You're welcome to check the trolleys on the kiln shed veranda at any time for your fired work.

Contact Us

Please contact us with your enquiry, and the appropriate team member will respond as soon as possible.

02 6241 1670

admin@canberrapotters.com.au

We would love to hear your experience of your course at Canberra Potters. This QR code will take you to our online Feedback Form which will take no longer than 3 to 5 minutes to complete. Your feedback helps us continue to improve. Thank you for your time.

Canberra Potters
WatsonArtsCentre

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