

GENERAL SAFETY FOR THE ARTS

(For assistance, please contact EHS at (402) 472-4925, or visit our web site at <http://ehs.unl.edu/>)

Artistic activities such as photography, ceramics, woodworking, painting, cutting/welding, sculpting, etc., can pose many hazards. A detailed analysis of potential hazards is beyond the scope of this Safe Operating Procedure (SOP). Rather, this SOP is intended to provide general safety guidance. Therefore, this SOP should be used in tandem with other SOPs that are specific to the hazards associated with certain processes (e.g., welding/cutting, use of power tools, etc.).

- Ensure that all persons working in the studio are aware of general emergency procedures related to evacuation, injury, severe weather, fires, bomb threats, etc. These procedures are printed in the orange pages of the Centrex.
- Review the work to be done to identify potential hazards and develop plans/procedures to minimize hazards. See EHS SOP, **Job Safety Assessments**.
- Observe good housekeeping habits.
- Do not engage in running, jumping, or horseplay in studios or other areas.
- Select tools and equipment, and design work spaces with ergonomic considerations in mind.
- Do not overload electrical outlets or use extension cords as a replacement for permanent wiring. When extension cords are used, ensure that they are in good condition and of the appropriate gauge and design (i.e., grounded) for the equipment to be used. In wet or outdoor areas, use GFI protected outlets.
- Do not block electrical panels or fire sprinkler heads. Maintain a minimum of 3' clearance to electrical panels and 18" for sprinkler heads.
- When working with non-powered knives, razor blades, or other sharp tools, use proper storage and disposal techniques. Store sharps in a manner that protects against injury (i.e., in a sheath or case; with the cutting edge withdrawn into the tool, if so designed; etc.). If using a razor blade, use a handling tool (i.e., box cutter housing, etc.). When using sharps, cut away from the body and use leather or metal mesh gloves to protect the hands, and avoid distractions. Dispose of used sharps in a rigid container or thick box labeled "sharps."
- Prevent falls by wearing sturdy shoes with slip resistant soles, cleaning up liquid spills promptly, keeping the floor area clear of tripping hazards, using properly rated ladders and step stools in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and keeping this type of equipment in good condition. Use handrails when going up and down stairs.

- When working at heights above 6', it may be necessary to use appropriate fall arrest equipment. This is especially applicable when preparing for theatrical productions, when it may be necessary to adjust lighting or install scenery at elevated heights.
- Many art materials such as thinners, paints, solvents, glazes, fluxes, etching compounds, etc. are hazardous. Always read and have available Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for the products used. In many cases, special ventilation (i.e., paint booths, snorkel hoods, enclosed ventilated cabinets, etc) are required to conduct the work safely.
- When using potentially hazardous chemicals, the correct ensemble of personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used. Depending on the nature of the hazard this may involve one or more of the following items: chemical resistant gloves, outer garment (smock, lab coat, etc.), goggles or safety glasses, and face shield. See EHS SOP, ***Personal Protective Equipment for Chemical Exposures***.
- UNL employees who use a respirator (including dust masks) must be medically qualified, trained, and fit-tested. These qualifications must be repeated annually. See EHS SOPs regarding respiratory protection
- Wash hands and other exposed areas of the skin after removing personal protective equipment and before leaving the work area.
- Wash hands prior to eating, drinking, or smoking. Do not consume food or beverages, or use cosmetic products in work areas where they can become contaminated with dust or toxic materials.
- Ensure that the area of use is equipped with a properly functioning eyewash and safety shower and that these devices are tested routinely (weekly for eyewash and annually for safety shower).
- Ensure that chemicals are stored in groups by compatibility and in structures designed for safe storage (i.e., flammable cabinets, etc.). See EHS SOP, ***General Guidance for Chemical Storage***.
- Dispose of all spent and unwanted excess chemicals and certain manufactured articles (i.e., fluorescent lamps, batteries, electronic equipment, etc.) via EHS. See EHS SOP, ***Hazardous Material Collection Procedures***.
- When welding, brazing, or cutting, follow the recommendation in EHS SOPs, ***General Safety Tips for Welding*** and ***Fumes and Gases from Welding and Cutting***. In some cases, a hot work permit may be required. See EHS SOP, ***Hot Work***.
- Most powered equipment pose special hazards and require guarding, as discussed in the EHS SOP, ***Types and Points of Hazardous Machine Operations***. In addition, powered equipment can be become energized unexpectedly and is therefore subject to Lockout/Tagout requirements. See EHS SOP, ***Equipment and Tool Safety for the Arts*** and the EHS Program Document, ***Lockout/Tagout***.
- When working with noisy equipment or in noisy environments, hearing protection may be necessary. See EHS SOPs, ***High Noise Areas*** and ***Personal Hearing Protection***.
- Prior to installing any combustion source (i.e., kilns, generators, etc.), consult with EHS to determine if there are permitting requirements related to the Clean Air Act.

(Created 8/01; Revised 4/05)