



Hazardous materials, equipment and processes

This guide is for all studio users at Sunken Studio and contains guidance on the most common hazards you are likely to encounter as a member, the risk level (how likely the hazard is to cause harm).

Most activities at Sunken Studio can be safely undertaken by pregnant women during early stages of pregnancy. As the pregnancy progresses some tasks may become more challenging like sitting for prolonged periods, working at a potter's wheel or manual handling tasks. In these cases an individual conversation with your tutor or a member of staff will identify the mitigation strategies for you and your baby.

Hazard: inhalation of ceramic dust.....	4
Exposure scenario.....	4
Risk level.....	4
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	4
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	4
Recommendations.....	4
Hazard: prolonged sitting without back support, sometimes in a compact positions.....	5
Exposure scenario.....	5
Risk level.....	5
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	5
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	5
Hazard: exposure to toxic substances.....	6
Exposure scenario.....	6
Risk level.....	6
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	6
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	6
Recommendation.....	6
Hazard: exposure to bacteria.....	7

Exposure scenario.....	7
Risk level.....	7
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	7
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	7
Hazard: injury due to slips and falls.....	8
Exposure scenario.....	8
Risk level.....	8
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	8
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	8
Recommendation.....	8
Hazard: injury due to heavy lifting.....	9
Exposure scenario.....	9
Risk level.....	9
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	9
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	9
Recommendation.....	9
Hazard: electric shock and fire.....	9
Exposure scenario.....	9
Risk level.....	9
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	9
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	10
Hazard: cuts and burns.....	10
Exposure scenario.....	10
Risk level.....	10
Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by.....	10
You can further mitigate this hazard by.....	10

Hazard: inhalation of ceramic dust

Inhaling ceramic dust on a frequent basis can cause lung damage, or Silicosis (referred to as Potters Lung in the factories of Stoke on Trent). Silica is a component of all ceramic materials including clay and glaze. The particles are very small and sharp and can damage the alveoli in your lungs preventing them from working properly, leading to reduced lung capacity.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students while working with wet clay, dry clay, bisc. ware and glaze.

Risk level

- medium (prolonged exposure over time is the key factor, and therefore most actions taken here are to protect staff as well as students and members).

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- high use areas of the studio are wet cleaned daily to remove clay and prevent dry clay becoming airborne.
- the studio uses a H-rated vacuum cleaner to remove any dust or fine clay particles which have dried out.
- different zones in the studio are deep cleaned on a regular basis to prevent dust from building up.
- your tutor or studio staff will demonstrate best practice while glazing to reduce your exposure to airborne silica.
- students are provided with aprons made from synthetic tyreline. Tyreline does not absorb dust, dust sits on the surface and is less likely become fugitive/airbourn - aprons are washed after every use.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- following the guidance of staff and tutors.
- avoiding sanding bone dry or bisc. Work.
- avoid overhandling of dry glazed pots.

Recommendation

Follow the guidance from your tutor or studio staff to minimise your exposure to airborne silica. This should provide pregnant women with sufficient protection while working as a member or as a student in a class. Please notify your tutor of any concerns or preexisting conditions especially those affecting the lungs e.g. asthma.

Hazard: prolonged sitting without back support, sometimes in a compact positions

You may need to sit for prolonged periods while working on a project. This can become uncomfortable as a pregnancy progresses. It can exacerbate existing back pain, and compound pressure on internal organs.

Throwing on a potter's wheel can be particularly uncomfortable for those late on in pregnancy as the stools and wheels are low to the ground, and you may need to lean over the top of the wheel to control the clay.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- low to medium depending on how advanced the pregnancy is, and the level of existing back pain.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- sessions are structured to encourage regular movement around the studio.
- courses involving the potter's wheel cover posture.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- taking breaks, stand and move around regularly.

Recommendation

Students and members in the advanced stages of pregnancy should avoid working on a potter's wheel. Please notify your tutor or a member of staff if you have existing back pain and they can demonstrate best practice posture and build in breaks for you to stand and stretch to minimise the risk of exacerbated back pain.

Hazard: exposure to toxic substances

Some substances used in ceramic materials are known to be harmful. Most notably barium and lead.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- low.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- not using lead or barium in any house glazes.
- preparing COSHH substance sheets for all materials used on site.
- mixing house glazes in a designated mixing area (staff only) - so members and students are not exposed to any of raw minerals or oxides in powder form where they are more easily inhaled or ingested.
- providing soap, clean warm water and paper towels.
- providing a designated glaze area.
- providing mixing sticks, blungers, and dipping tongs so you can avoid submerging your hands in glaze.
- providing emergency eye wash.
- providing rubber gloves for anyone with sensitive skin or exposed cuts or grazes on their hands.
- providing glaze tongs which remove the need to get glaze on your hands.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- not eating or drinking while working in the studio.
- washing your hands before eating.
- following the guidance of staff and tutors for best practice techniques while glazing.
- wearing your apron to avoid splashes of dry glaze remaining on your clothes.

Recommendation

Students and members late on in pregnancy will be exposed to minimal risk while glazing if following the guidance above and that of staff and tutors. If you have particular concerns please speak to a member of staff. If you are in a multi week class which includes glazing but would prefer not to glaze, a member of staff will be able to glaze your pots for you.

Hazard: exposure to bacteria

Clay is recycled and may contain bacteria.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- low.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- providing soap, clean warm water and paper towels.
- providing plasters to prevent cross-contamination.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- not eating or drinking while working in the studio.
- washing your hands before eating.
- covering cuts and grazes with plasters and/or sterile gloves.
- wearing an apron.

Recommendation

Students and members late on in pregnancy will be exposed to minimal risk while glazing if following the guidance above and that of staff and tutors. If you have particular concerns please speak to a member of staff. If you are in a multi week class which includes glazing but would prefer not to glaze, a member of staff will be able to glaze your pots for you.

Hazard: injury due to slips and falls

Slipping on a wet floor, tripping on an uneven surface or falling from a ladder or step are all potential hazards.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- low to medium depending on the stage of pregnancy.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- providing a designated coat rack to store coats and bags.
- storing deliveries on arrival.
- keeping walkways clear.
- providing low level storage facilities to avoid the need for lifting while using ladders.
- running cables from the ceiling or under benches to remove trip hazards from trailing wires.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- wearing appropriate footwear. Sturdy trainers or boots with good grip are ideal. Open toe footwear like sandals or flip flops are not allowed.

Recommendation

Expectant mothers late in pregnancy are particularly at risk of slips and falls, this can be mitigated as outlined above but we ask mothers to take into account their own specific circumstances before using the studio.

Hazard: injury due to heavy lifting

Lifting heavy objects can cause lower back issues or exacerbate pre-existing conditions.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- low to medium depending on the stage of pregnancy.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- wheeled dollies for moving heavy items around the studio.
- glaze buckets are kept on wheeled dollies for ease of use.
- clay portioned into 3kg 'slugs' or 12.5kg bags.
- class preparation minimises heavy lifting required by students.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- requesting assistance when you need to move heavy items.

Recommendation

If you are considering attending a class while pregnant we recommend that you still be comfortable lifting around 3kg at waist level. If you are considering attending the studio as a member while pregnant, bear in mind that if you choose to use fresh bags of clay instead of the recycled slugs of clay these bags weigh 12.5kg.

Hazard: electric shock and fire

Using electrical equipment, and proximity to water sources.

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- medium.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- all electrical equipment provided by the studio is PAT tested annually in accordance with regulations.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- reporting damaged equipment to any member of staff immediately.
- only use PAT tested equipment.

Hazard: cuts and burns

Cuts from sharp tools, fractured or broken pots. Burns from the kilns or heatguns

Exposure scenario

- all studio users, members, and students.

Risk level

- medium.

Sunken Studio mitigate this hazard by

- damaged pots, which have stuck to shelves and become fractured and / or sharp, are stored separately - members are notified. When you collect these pots we advise on the damage, what likely caused it, and how to handle and or dispose of the pots.
- damaged kiln shelves and furniture are processed by staff before being put back into use.
- damaged tools are repaired or removed from the studio where they present a risk.
- kilns are kept cordoned off and only operated by staff.
- first aid kits are kept on site with disinfectant wipes, eye wash and plasters. If the eye wash is empty use fresh running water from the taps nearby.

You can further mitigate this hazard by

- allow heat guns to cool before returning to storage.
- notify staff of damage to tools or equipment.
- bring work gloves if you are planning to work with very sharp tools.
- remove broken pots from the studio and dispose of them safely at home.
- avoid throwing if you have existing cuts or abrasions on your hands. Wear washing-up gloves to protect injuries.
- cover all cuts to prevent cross contamination.