



BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## Safety in the School of Art

It is the policy of Ball State University's School of Art, along with the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Office, to take all available steps to ensure a learning community that is free from recognized threats to health and safety. This applies to all of our faculty and staff--and, of course, our students. Instruction in, and awareness of, chemical and physical safety is integral to all of our art programs and is intended to prepare our students for the safe and environmentally sound practice of the arts throughout their education and careers. Art creation and study are traditionally viewed as non-hazardous occupations. Unfortunately, this common misconception fails to recognize that an artist may encounter many of the same hazardous materials and operations that are found in industrial applications or laboratories including solvents, dusts, fumes, mists, dyes, and a variety of physical hazards including machinery with moving parts, noise, sharp objects and extreme heat.

Whether your work is in the Visual Arts or the Performance Arts, your artistic endeavors may expose you to a number of fire, physical, and health hazards and may negatively impact the environment. Many of these hazards are often overlooked but may be minimized or avoided simply by becoming aware of them and exercising caution or following proper procedures. Other hazards may require building modifications or the use of protective equipment to reduce the hazards or your exposure to them. This website and the EHS staff offer valuable resources to raise your awareness of hazards and to ensure the proper protection from them--without impeding the artistic process or learning experience.

Toward that end, the following links, policies, procedures, or other guidance is provided to the School of Art community. Specific safety guidance and procedures, however, will be related by the faculty or instructor for the particular School of Art class or activities being undertaken.

### References

**Art Safety Video** – This brief, yet informative, video provides an excellent overview of the health and safety hazards associated with art programs in educational institutions: [Creating Art Safely - a six step process on Vimeo](#) The video, entitled, *Creating Art Safely: A Six-Step Process* was produced in 2003 by the Rhode Island School of Design with some funding by United Educators.

**Safety Guide for Art Studios** – Published by United Educators and written by a Certified Industrial Hygienist at Yale, this guide is straight-forward and covers most of the studio art processes in use at Ball State University.



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**Art and Craft Safety Guide** – Developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in partnership with the Art & Creative Materials Institute (ACMI), Arts, Crafts & Theater Safety, Inc. (ACTS), and the National Art Education Association (NAEA) this guide provides good safety information for artists in a variety of endeavors.



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**ACMI Certified Materials** – A list of over 60,000 products labeled by the *Art & Creative Materials Institute* as non-toxic – a good place to look for product substitutions to lower exposure risk. [Certified Products Search Tool \(acmiart.org\)](http://acmiart.org)

**Chemicals and Hazardous Materials** - Many visual art techniques involve the use of chemicals. Because chemicals can be particularly hazardous to human health and the environment if mishandled, they should be used with caution. When possible, those chemicals, materials or techniques presenting a lower hazard should be utilized or substituted. The *BSU Hazard Communication Program*, and the *Spill Prevention and Response Plan* are relevant to chemical safety in all academic and facility practices throughout the University. Additionally, Ball State is in the process of implementing the *Risk and Safety Solutions* chemical inventory program that will track inventory, as well as provide readily available health and safety information on many chemicals and products.



(Double Click on Images)

<https://app.riskandsafety.com/>

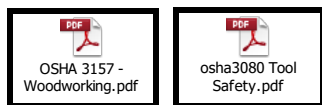
**Handling Art Wastes** – General information on the identification and handling of wastes can be found in the *BSU Waste Management Guide*. A rather thorough U.S. EPA funded document entitled, *Environmental Health and Safety in the Arts*, provides information on chemical hazards, waste characterization and storage, particularly regarding regulatory and safety requirements in the identification, handling, necessary training, and disposing of hazardous wastes.



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Many wastes generated in art studios and workshops constitute hazardous wastes which require knowledge and caution in their recognition, accumulation, labeling, and disposal.

**Woodworking Safety**- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has two reference documents on general tool safety and woodworking that cover the identification of hazards and methods to control those hazards. Portions of these guidance documents apply directly to art endeavors involving woodworking, foundation creation, and working with tools in general.



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**Welding** – The hazards of welding include eye damage, inhalation of metal fumes, high reactivity of compressed gases, and fire potential. This link takes you to the American Welding Society's page of fact sheets on welding safety. (Scroll down to see the list of fact sheets.)

<https://www.aws.org/standards/page/safety-health-fact-sheets>

**Theater Safety** – The following link to Princeton University EHS provides a broad overview of safety concerns for people working in theater. Topics covered include stage safety, elevated platforms, scaffolds, ladders, rigging, electrical systems, and lighting.

[Theater Safety | Office of Environmental Health and Safety \(princeton.edu\)](#)

**Ball State Art Safety Manual** – While still under development, this Manual will provide an overview of potential health and safety hazards in the various art media studios and workshops, and the associated Ball State protective policies and procedures. It is designed to supplement-- **not replace**--the more specific safety instructions or procedures in the various syllabi or safety rules related by faculty and instructors for particular workshops, studios, or other artistic endeavor.

**Other** – The BSU EHS Office can provide information, written plans and procedures, and training for a number of other programs, both mandatory and voluntary. Details on many of these programs may be available on the EHS Office Website.

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| • <i>Respiratory Protection</i>            | • <i>Ergonomics</i>                             | • <i>Infection/Exposure Control</i>          |
| • <i>Fall Protection and Ladder Safety</i> | • <i>Chemical Hazards and Safety Procedures</i> | • <i>Hand Tool Safety and Machine Safety</i> |
| • <i>Fire Safety</i>                       | • <i>Job Hazard Assessments</i>                 | • <i>Lock Out/Tag Out</i>                    |
| • <i>Hearing Conservation</i>              | • <i>Spill Control and Response</i>             | • <i>Personal Protective Equipment</i>       |
|  |   | • <i>RSS Chemical Tracker</i>                |