

Safety Savvy Co.

Safety made simple for makers.

Studio Safety Starter Checklist

A room-by-room walkthrough for home and small pottery studios — from setup to first firing and beyond.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

- **Walk your studio** with this checklist **before your first firing**, when setting up a new home studio, and **quarterly** after that.
- **Check off** each item you can honestly confirm. Unchecked items become your safety to-do list — tackle the highest-risk ones first: dust control, kiln ventilation, and fire safety.
- **Date each walkthrough** and keep completed copies. They document your due diligence and show insurers, landlords, or inspectors that safety is a habit, not an afterthought.

1. SILICA DUST & AIR QUALITY

- ☐ I use **wet methods** (sponge, wet mop, wet wiping) for all cleanup — I never dry sweep or blow dust around with compressed air.
- ☐ Dry clay, glaze powders, and plaster are mixed in a designated area, with dust kept down (adding water first, pouring slowly).
- ☐ I use a **HEPA-filtered vacuum** for dust pickup — never a standard shop vacuum that blows fine particles back into the air.
- ☐ Surfaces are wiped down regularly and floors are mopped wet, not swept dry.
- ☐ I wear a **NIOSH-approved respirator** (N95 minimum for light dust; P100 half-face for mixing dry materials) for dusty tasks.
- ☐ Food and drinks stay out of dusty work areas, and I wash my hands and face after working with dry materials.

2. KILN SAFETY

- ☐ The kiln sits on a non-combustible surface with the **manufacturer's recommended clearance** from walls and anything combustible.
- ☐ Kiln fumes are vented — a kiln vent hood or powered exhaust moves fumes outdoors, and the room is not sealed up during firing.
- ☐ Firing schedules are **monitored** — I check the kiln periodically during a firing rather than leaving it entirely unattended.
- ☐ I wear heat-protective gear (high-temperature gloves, eye protection) when peeping into or unloading a warm kiln.
- ☐ The kiln is unplugged or its breaker is switched off when not in use, and cords show no cracks, fraying, or heat damage.
- ☐ Nothing flammable is stored on or above the kiln, and the area around it is kept clear.

3. GLAZE & CHEMICAL SAFETY

- ☐ **Safety Data Sheets (SDS)** are on hand for every glaze, underglaze, and raw chemical I use — and I can put my hands on them in under a minute.
- ☐ Every container is labeled with its contents; mystery buckets get relabeled or discarded.
- ☐ I know which of my glazes are **food-safe and which are not**; materials containing lead or cadmium are identified and handled with extra care (or avoided).
- ☐ Glazes are mixed in a ventilated area while wearing a respirator; I avoid eating, drinking, or touching my face while handling raw materials.
- ☐ Chemicals are stored in sealed, labeled containers, out of reach of children and pets, and away from heat sources.

4. VENTILATION

- ☐ The studio has **general ventilation** — fresh air comes in and stale air goes out (windows on opposite sides, an exhaust fan, or HVAC air exchange).
- ☐ Dusty or fume-producing tasks (mixing, spraying, kiln firing) get **local exhaust** — a vent hood, kiln vent, or spray booth exhausting outdoors.
- ☐ Ventilation equipment is checked and cleaned on a schedule (fan blades, ductwork, filters).

5. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- ☐ I own a **properly fitting respirator** and do a user seal check every time I put it on — nothing (including facial hair) breaks the seal.
- ☐ Chemical-resistant gloves are used for mixing glazes and handling raw chemicals; heat-rated gloves for kiln work.
- ☐ Safety glasses or goggles are worn for grinding, drilling, mixing dry materials, and any splash risk.
- ☐ An apron and closed-toe shoes are standard studio wear.

6. ERGONOMICS

- ☐ My wheel height lets me throw with a neutral spine — no hunching or over-reaching.
- ☐ Wedging happens at counter height, driving with body weight behind the motion rather than bent wrists.
- ☐ I take **regular breaks** to stand, stretch, and rest my hands and back — especially during long throwing sessions.
- ☐ Heavy bags of clay are lifted with bent knees and a straight back, and stored at waist height where possible.

7. FIRE & ELECTRICAL

- ☐ A **fire extinguisher** is mounted within easy reach, inspected annually, and I know how to use it (PASS: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep). A Class ABC extinguisher covers kiln and electrical fires.
- ☐ The kiln is on a **dedicated circuit** sized for its amperage; breakers are labeled and accessible.
- ☐ Combustibles (paper, cardboard, solvents, fabric) are kept well away from the kiln and other heat sources.
- ☐ Extension cords are heavy-duty and temporary only — never run under rugs or across walkways.

8. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- ☐ A **stocked first aid kit** is accessible, and everyone who uses the studio knows where it is.
- ☐ Emergency numbers (poison control, fire department, an emergency contact) are **posted visibly** in the studio.
- ☐ A spill kit (absorbent material, gloves, bags, dustpan) is ready for glaze or chemical spills.
- ☐ Someone knows when I am firing or working alone — I have a check-in routine for solo studio time.

WHAT'S NEXT

Count your checks. **Every unchecked box is a to-do item** — start with dust control, kiln ventilation, and fire safety, the three areas that protect you most. Revisit this checklist **quarterly** and before any new process (a new kiln, new glazes, a new studio space).

For a deeper, room-by-room safety review, take the **Pottery Studio Safety Assessment** at SafetySavvyCo.com.

Studio walkthrough date: _____ Walked by: _____