

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Art

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
PAINTING AREAS

Introduction

The artists' materials you use carry inherent risks to your health and the environment. The paints, no matter what the medium, all contain pigments which if ingested or absorbed through the skin can cause damage to your health, and, if disposed of improperly, can damage the environment. Solvents such as mineral spirits or gum turpentine pose similar hazards. The policies outlined below will help you mitigate these hazards, and will not interfere with your creativity. Please follow them.

For instructions about brush washing and disposal of solvents, paints, rags and paper towels, and failed art works, please see the attached document, "Painting Clean-up Procedures."

Vapor control

Do not breathe solvent vapors in a closed or unventilated area. Small cans of solvent next to your painting table pose little harm, unless the room is small or poorly ventilated. Do not leave large containers of solvents uncovered.

Never spray anything in the studios, including fixatives, paints, or varnishes. If a spray booth is available, use it. If not, do all spraying out of doors.

General health and safety concerns

Use common sense and good hygienic practices in your painting studio.

1. Do not point brushes with your lips.
2. Do not eat or drink while painting: paint on your hands can be transferred to your mouth.
3. Be sure your work space is adequately ventilated: 10 complete room air changes per hour.
4. Model heaters must be of a certain approved type. See the health and safety person.
5. No household electric devices may be used in any studio. Any electric device must have a three-pronged, grounded cord and a holographic UL-approved seal. Multiple-outlet adaptors/powerstrips may NOT be used as a substitute for a three-pronged plug. Extension cords are for temporary use only, and must be unplugged when not in use.
6. If you suspect an allergy to any paint or solvent, stop using the material until you have confirmed your susceptibility by consulting a doctor familiar with art material toxicology. You may be able to substitute another material for the one causing

problems.

7. Gloves are good protection for your hands, but you must use the correct glove: latex gloves do not work. Nitrile gloves are generally the most effective barriers against solvents and paints.

8. Barrier hand creams will also protect your skin, but they must be reapplied every hour to maintain their effectiveness.

9. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap, water, and a scrub brush. You may use hand-cleaners for washing up prior to using soap, but be sure the hand-cleaner does NOT contain a solvent.

10. See the UNCG Safety Health and Manual, and Material Safety Data Sheets, at “<http://uncg.edu/sft/>” from an on-campus computer, for more information.

For further reference, see:

“<http://www.epa.gov>” and “<http://www.osha.gov>”