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Pottery Equipment Maintenance and Safety Engineers

CLEAPSS Electric Kiln Regulations

CLEAPSS 4.003 Man Regs & COSHH Regs	CERAMICS: ELECTRIC KILNS	Applicable to: Electrically-operated pottery kilns	See also: 4.001, 4.002, 4.004, 4.005, 4.006

CONTROL MEASURES

Ensure kilns have a protective glass window, wear goggles giving protection from infra-red or use blue or smoked glass.

Use a pyrometer to determine the temperature inside the kiln.

Where possible, fit a heat lock to the kiln door, so that it cannot be opened until the temperature falls to a safe level.

Do not allow students to operate kilns. Ideally site kilns in a separate room, to which access can be restricted. If in teaching rooms, site kilns within a lockable cage, which can be opened from the inside.

Provide a warning sign when the kiln is firing, eg, a double bulb bulkhead light above the kiln or kiln room door, fitted with red bulbs and wired into the firing circuit, so that the light is automatically on when the kiln is on.

Only allow firing to be undertaken by adequately-trained operators. Ensure at least two people in a school are competent to supervise the firing process.

Site kilns with free air movement all around them (including above the kiln) and good access for servicing. Ensure kiln rooms have high ceilings and/or a heat shield and that adjacent floors, walls, ceilings and shelves, etc are made of (or covered with) non-combustible materials. Do not store any items, including paper, so close that they reach much above normal room temperature.

Place a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher just outside the kiln room or cage.

Ensure the kiln has a convenient means of isolation from the electrical supply and is protected from over-loads and short-circuit. Clearly label the main power switch.

Ensure wiring, control panels, etc are protected from mechanical and heat damage.

Ensure kiln doors are fitted with a fail-safe inter-locking device which turns off the power if the door is opened.

Alert the caretaker if left firing overnight and provide emergency contact details of the operator.

Ensure kilns are serviced regularly by a suitably qualified contractor, in accordance with the supplier's instructions.

Ensure that the kiln room is adequately ventilated, with opening windows or extractor fans. In most cases, there should be a canopy to duct heat and fumes directly to the outside.

Check whether any asbestos is listed in the Asbestos Register and, if so, place a warning notice that protective equipment may be required if dismantling.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Display operating instructions clearly in the kiln room. These should include start-up procedures, operating procedures, shut-down procedures and emergency procedures. If adequate ventilation requires windows to be open, write this in.

Keep a log of all firing processes and retain the log for subsequent inspection.

The kiln must be inspected regularly and kept properly maintained. Records of maintenance must be retained. Kiln operators should visually check the kiln furniture, brick work and framework to ensure they are in good condition. The kiln should be cleaned inside regularly. The grit and dust can be removed by an industrial vacuum cleaner fitted with a filter suitable for trapping silica dust. Do *not* use household vacuum cleaners, the dust filters are totally inadequate for containing silica dust.

See also: *Safe Use of Electric Kilns in Craft and Education*, HSE Information Sheet, Ceramics Information Sheet 3, HSE, 2003; free download from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ceis3.pdf.

Disposal

If an old kiln is to be disposed of, the Asbestos Register must be checked for the presence of asbestos and, if found, dealt with in a safe manner.