

# **SAFE AND HEALTHFUL DARKROOM PRACTICES**

While the majority of the black and white chemicals are in the range of non-toxic to slightly toxic to most people, black and white developers are in the range of slightly toxic to toxic, especially if these developers are ingested, inhaled or come in contact with bare skin.

Please follow these rules for handling photo chemicals in the lab. It is vital to your health that you follow these rules! We all want you to stay healthy and live a long, productive life as an artist.

These guidelines are not designed to produce paranoia but to ensure that you have a long and safe adventure in uncovering the many possibilities that are available in the realm of photography. Remember that your eyes, lungs, and skin are porous membranes and can absorb chemical vapors. It is your job to protect yourself.

1. Keep all chemicals off your skin, out of your mouth, and away from your eyes. If you get any chemicals on your skin, flush the area immediately with cool running water.
2. You must use tongs when processing black and white paper. The only place you may use bare hands is to remove prints from the water bath or to wash prints. Developers are toxic, especially if absorbed through the skin over long periods of time.
3. Only an instructor or student aid (who has received the proper training) may mix chemistry. If you need chemicals mixed, seek out the instructor.
4. Clean up any chemical spills immediately! Wipe up with paper towels, cleaning until you are certain the chemicals are gone. Chemistry dries, turns to powder, gets on clothes and books, and then into your lungs or absorbed into your skin.
5. No eating or drinking in the lab.
6. Wash your hands thoroughly after you are finished in the lab.
7. Do not mix or pour chemicals at eye level, as a splash could be harmful.
8. Always pour acids slowly into water; never pour water into acids. Wear protective eyewear when mixing acids.
9. Avoid touching any electrical equipment with wet hands.
10. Keep your workspace clean and uncontaminated.
11. If you have any pre-existing health problems, seek medical advice before attempting any chemical process in photography.
12. Remember, people have varying sensitivities to chemicals. If you have had allergic reactions to any chemicals, you should pay close attention to the effects that darkroom chemicals have on you, and you should be extra careful about following all safety procedures.

## BASIC SAFETY PROCEDURES SUMMARY

### WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF THESE EMERGENCIES:

•**INHALATION OF CHEMISTRY:** get person to fresh air, and send someone for the school nurse.

•**INGESTION OF CHEMISTRY:** notify the instructor immediately, he will call poison control and tell them what the person ingested and follow their directions to help the person. Check the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for a complete breakdown of any chemicals we use if poison control needs more data.

**The MSDS are located in the white binder in the bookcase near the telephone in the front of the classroom.**

DO NOT induce vomiting unless poison control tells you to.

•**CHEMICALS SPLASHED INTO EYES:** Immediately flood the eyes with cold water and continue to flood them for 15 minutes. Seek medical attention immediately.

•**CHEMICALS SPLASHED ON SKIN:** Immediately flood skin with water until chemical is washed away. Seek medical attention immediately if you sense you need it, or if any change in skin condition occurs.

## HAZARDS POSED BY DARKROOM CHEMISTRY

### BLACK AND WHITE DEVELOPERS

Hazards: Skin and eye irritants. Can cause allergic reaction and allergic sensitivity. Especially hazardous in stock mixing stage.

Precautions: To mix stock solutions wear goggles and gloves. Use gloves when mixing working solutions. Avoid skin contact with powders and solution.

### STOP BATH

Hazards: Concentrate is highly toxic by skin contact, inhalation or ingestion. Continued inhalation of working solution can cause severe sinusitis and bronchitis.

Precautions: Only lab assistants and instructors can mix stop bath.

**Always measure water first, and then add acid.** Always pour acids slowly into water; never pour water into acids. Do not mix or pour chemicals at eye level, as a splash could be harmful. Wear protective eyewear when mixing acids.

If you splash stock solution on skin, flush immediately and thoroughly with cold water. If you splash stock in eyes, flush immediately and fifteen minutes with cold water and seek immediate medical attention.

### FIXER

Hazards: Not significantly hazardous, although may cause irritation of skin and allergies. If splashed on skin rinse thoroughly with cold water. If splashed in eyes flush immediately and for fifteen minutes with cold water and seek medical attention.