

## PROTECT YOUR PETS AND CHILDREN

“ALL SUBSTANCES ARE POISONS; THERE IS NONE THAT IS NOT A POISON. THE RIGHT DOSE DIFFERENTIATES A POISON AND A REMEDY.”  
--PARACELSUS (1493-1541)

Carefully planning your studio inventory in advance will enable you to choose less toxic alternatives to supplies that may be hazardous to you, your family, your pets, and the environment. Take appropriate measures if you are unable or unwilling to use less toxic materials. These measures include: personal protective equipment, such as gloves and respirators; ventilation systems to draw toxic fumes away and out; storage of materials that is informed by the type of materials; proper use, such as using using wet materials (ceramics) versus dry; and lastly, cleanup and disposal. Using wet cleaning methods to keep dust down, putting caps on containers to prevent fumes from escaping, and storing flammable rags in metal cans. Any art supplies that you no longer need should be disposed of at a Household Hazardous Waste Collection or facility.

A non-toxic dose for an adult human could be a toxic dose for an animal or a small child. It's important to remember labeling risks are generally evaluated for a 25 year old, 180 pound man.

Birds, small animals, children, and those with compromised immune systems are particularly susceptible, due to their low tolerance threshold. Sensitivities and susceptibilities vary based on a number of factors, including age and weight. Acute and/or chronic exposure to chemicals effects humans and animals differently.



A small dose could  
have a big impact.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT PPE

Reducing exposure to chemicals protects against both acute and chronic adverse health effects. Limiting exposure to products which are known to produce chemical sensitivities before developing sensitivities makes sense.

## FIRE HAZARDS

Rags should be hung out to dry, then reused or discarded. Rags that are heaped can spontaneously ignite and burn down your studio and/or house. Linseed oil, lacquer thinner, and citrus solvents are notoriously susceptible to spontaneous ignition.

## STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

Keep compatible materials together. Conversely, keep acids away from bases and solvents. Bleach, hydrochloric acid, and ammonia should be stored separate from each other. Products which are flammable or combustible should be stored away from ignitable sources (such as a kiln) or products. Store all chemicals upright. Avoid metal lids on containers containing acids.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [CapeCodExtension.org/artist](http://CapeCodExtension.org/artist)
- Local health department
- Art school or college

Visit [www.capecodextension.org/artist](http://www.capecodextension.org/artist) for a short video on ventilation, personal protective equipment, and URLs, books, videos, fact sheets, and other information related to art studio safety.

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# HIDDEN HAZARDS IN THE ART STUDIO

Oil-Paint  
Acrylics  
Watercolors  
Ceramic  
Glazes  
Heavy Metals  
Pickling Liquids  
Adhesives & Solvents  
& More

LEARN ABOUT SAFER ALTERNATIVES,  
LABELING, SAFETY DATA SHEETS,  
VENTILATION, DISPOSAL, & MORE

PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY,  
& YOUR PETS FROM POISONING.

## USE LESS TOXICS

Art materials can be toxic to humans, animals and the environment. Hazards are found in fumes, dusts, and liquids. Less toxic or non-toxic alternatives are available for most consumer-grade art products. Labeling and Safety Data Sheets are good guides when navigating the intricate nature of the industry.



Always check your labels when purchasing new supplies. There is a non-toxic equivalent to most consumer grade products. Less toxic doesn't mean non-toxic. However, *"If it doesn't work, don't buy it."*\*\*

Art supplies can be very toxic. There are many supplies that are non-toxic or less toxic. Being well-informed by labeling and safety data sheets will aid in your choice. Some of the toxic supplies involve chemical solvents, such as methyl alcohol and toluene, which emit VOCs (volatile organic compounds); oil-based paints and water colors can contain coloring pigments from toxic metals, such as nickel, cadmium, arsenic, and lead; oil-based paints are also very flammable. Pastels can contain toxic pigments as well.

There are less toxic or non-toxic alternatives for most art products. Finding the "greener" product is as easy as looking online, talking with fellow artists, using reference books, such as "Artist Beware," by Michael McCann, or with your art association.

Look for water-based paints, pencils over markers, heptane over hexane in adhesives and avoid solvent-bases glues as they are flammable, emit VOCs, and have a narcotic effect. Try Spike Lavendar Oil over Turpentine, ferric chloride over Dutch mordant, pre-mixed clay over powered clay, and liquid chemistry over mixing developing chemicals.

\*\*Dave Waddell, Health and Safety Investigator III, King County, Washington.

## LABELS

Labeling is the industry's way of supporting artists to making informed choices on the materials used in studio. Being an informed consumer will enable you to make healthy choices for you, your family and pets, and the environment.

There are many types of labels on consumer-grade art products. Understand that products labeled for professional use are less carefully labeled than consumer products. Professional products will contain more toxic constituents.

A "Health Caution" label means a product is more toxic than the non-toxic version of the same product.

"AP" label is certification of non-toxicity by the Art & Creative Materials Institute and is evaluated by toxicologists. This label does not mean the product does not contain toxins, but that no toxins are "in sufficient quantities to be toxic or injurious to humans." This label is applicable to both children and adults.

"CA Prop 65" label warns of the danger of cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. If you see this label on art supplies that you are interested in buying, consider look for a less toxic alternative.

"CL" seal indicates the product contains ingredients which are toxic or hazardous but can be used with caution. You may consider finding a less toxic alternative to this product.



PROPERLY RELIABLE MATERIALS WHEN PUTTING INTO A SECONDARY CONTAINER!

## CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES

Reduce your exposure to products that will generate chemical sensitivities. There are many resources available online for chemical sensitivities. One that is recommended is the Wood Database:

[www.wood-database.com/wood-articles/wood-allergies-and-toxicity/](http://www.wood-database.com/wood-articles/wood-allergies-and-toxicity/)

## SAFETY DATA SHEETS

Label warnings are not always sufficient to get enough information in evaluating whether you want to use that product in your studio. The consumer should look at additional information posted in product catalogue and Safety Data Sheets for a full description of associated risks.

A safety data sheet is available online for every art product that is sold. A SDS is a document that describes in detail all information available on the product, including first aid and fire fighting measures.

## THREE ROUTES OF EXPOSURE

### INGESTION

Contaminated food and/or water source; licking fur, feathers, or skin. Storage and proper disposal are important to protecting your pets, family, and the environment. Proper ventilation and appropriate cleaning techniques are key as well.

### INHALATION

Toxic vapors, fumes, smoke, powders, and dust can contain toxic heavy metals and chemicals. Be mindful of ventilation, consider using wet processes vs. dry, and evaluate how you clean your studio space.

### ABSORPTION

Exposure to chemicals through the skin. Proper labeling and understanding the risks associate with the products you are using will allow you to assess your PPE needs.