



# Darkroom Safety

Before starting work in the darkroom and turning off the main lights:

1. Make sure all work surfaces are clean and free of debris, litter etc.
2. Put any bags or belongings, coats, jackets etc underneath the bay you intend to work in.
3. Remember the darkroom is a low light and even no light working environment. So be sure not to leave coats, bags etc. where they can be tripped over.
4. Do not take food or drink into the darkroom.
5. Check that the chemicals you wish to use are fresh, and not contaminated.
6. Check the labels of the chemicals before pouring them into the printing trays and before turning off the main white lights. (Note correct use of chemicals below)
7. Make sure all equipment you need is at hand.
8. While working in the darkroom do not play loud music or wear headphones, not being able to hear the fire alarm is a danger to you.

## Correct Use of Chemicals in the Darkroom:

Most common photographic chemicals can be used safely if simple precautions are followed. The following safety tips are applicable to most aqueous chemicals used in black-and-white photography. Always read the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for a specific chemical before use. (Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on all chemicals in use in the darkroom are available on request).

1. Always keep chemicals away from the dry benches and electrical appliances/ outlets.
2. Do not touch electrical equipment, enlargers, timers etc. with wet or damp hands. This is one of the reasons darkrooms are built with a dry bench area for enlargers etc. and a wet bench area for chemicals, printing trays, developing tanks, etc.
3. Do not walk around carrying chemicals in printing trays, developing tanks etc. The trays should always remain on the counter when they contain chemicals.
4. Always use tongs and/or gloves when handling photographic chemistry. Disposable gloves available on request. The only place that 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. Stop bath and fixers are acidic.
5. If mixing chemicals and when pouring chemicals, please wear the safety glasses provided in the darkroom. (Goggles are available on request).
6. Take care not to put your fingers in or near your mouth or eyes. If you get chemicals in your eyes via a splash or rubbing them, use the eyewash provided in the darkroom, then seek medical attention and always report any incident to a member of staff. Be sure to take the MSDS with you.
7. If you have a cut or graze on your hands, protect it with a latex glove.
8. Always wipe spillages instantly.
9. Always wash hands after using chemicals and especially before eating, drinking, or smoking.  
**DO NOT EAT, DRINK, OR SMOKE IN THE DARKROOM.**
10. Always wear safety goggles and gloves when mixing chemicals from concentrate.
11. Wear a mask if mixing powder chemicals.
12. If mixing water and acid, always add the acid to the water in order to prevent violent splashing: **WATER FIRST ACID ADDED SECOND**. Identify incompatible chemicals from MSDS, e.g. which ones react violently and/or release fumes when mixed. Do not mix acids or

bleach bath with developers or fixers – Sulphur Dioxide gas will be given off which can cause breathing discomfort, especially for asthmatics.

13. When pouring chemicals take care not to splash.
14. Dispose of chemical wastes properly in the labelled plastic disposal containers, located under the sink.
15. Never place hands into a tray of chemistry.
16. If you are pregnant or have any pre-existing health problems, seek medical advice before attempting any chemical processing in photography
17. Remember, people have varying sensitivities to chemicals. If you have had allergic reactions to any chemicals, you should pay close attention to the effects darkroom chemicals have on you and you should be extra careful about following all safety procedures.

### **Darkroom Rules:**

Darkroom use is contingent upon you completing a darkroom induction and demonstrating your understanding of and agreement to the information and rules set out.

### **Rules to Abide By:**

1. Report to staff then sign in (and out) – Use the binder in the darkroom. Please fill out all the information.
2. Film Developing – All done in the processing room at the sink area. No tanks, reels or trays left in the sinks. No chemicals to be left in the sinks or on the counter. Counters should be wiped clean once finished, and the sinks washed out.
3. Printing – All done in the darkroom at the sink area. Make sure to rinse each print in water before moving to the next processing tray. No chemicals to be left in the sink or on the counter. Counters should be wiped clean once finished, and the sink should be washed out. All used chemicals should be put into the appropriately marked waste chemical containers and not washed down the sink.
4. Only put completely processed and fully rinsed film and paper to dry.
5. Carry wet prints in a tray and leave in the designated drying area only.
6. Spillage – Mop it up!
7. Clean up your work area and anything you used.
8. Dispose of used / old chemicals in the proper receptacles. DO NOT put them back in the original chemical containers if they are no good.
9. NEVER leave an enlarger on when you are not using it.
10. For your protection: Do not leave your unexposed photographic paper open or laying out on the work benches. If you leave the room, even for a second, secure any light sensitive material.
11. Last person out checks the condition of the rooms: all water shut off; main power and lights in darkroom OFF.
12. Chemical contamination is a serious matter. It can destroy your film, your prints and your clothes. The importance of taking time to wipe clean the work area before and after you work cannot be overemphasised. Cleanliness is the only way to prevent contamination and insure print and negative permanence.
13. Never bring anything into the darkroom that is not necessary for the process.
14. Never bring chemicals into the darkroom that are not provided without the permission and instruction of an approved member of staff. **All outside chemicals must be approved before use in the darkroom.**

All darkroom chemical handling procedures and rules must be followed. Failure to do so will result in a ban from the Darkroom.

These guidelines are not designed to produce paranoia but to ensure your safety as well as those working around you. Remember that your eyes, lungs and skin are porous membranes and can absorb chemical vapours. It is your job to protect yourself.

### **Orientation**

Potential users must demonstrate sufficient darkroom knowledge/skills before receiving access to the darkroom and processing area and must undertake a darkroom induction. Shambellie House reserves the right to determine what skills are sufficient and to deny access to any person who is unable to demonstrate proper procedures, etiquette or usage.

### **Emergency Procedures:**

**ALWAYS NOTIFY THE ON DUTY STAFF MEMBER IF AN ACCIDENT/EMERGENCY OCCURS. NO MATTER HOW SMALL, ALL ACCIDENTS MUST BE REPORTED**

**INHALATION OF CHEMISTRY:** Remove person to fresh air and stay with them until you are sure they are ok. If symptoms persist contact your local GP.

**INGESTION OF CHEMISTRY:** Call emergency services on 999 and tell them what the person ingested and follow their directions.

**CHEMICAL SPLASH INTO EYES:** Immediately flush for 15 minutes with cold water at an eye station. If symptoms persist seek medical attention. If stop bath enters the eye seek medical attention immediately. Always remove and dispose of contact lenses immediately after eye contamination.

**CHEMICAL EXPOSURE TO THE SKIN:** Immediately flood skin with water until chemical is washed away. Seek medical attention if symptoms develop. (Rash or hives are typical symptoms)

**FIRE EXITS:** Make yourself aware of the fire exits and what you should do if the fire alarm sounds.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by all the guidance and rules provided for the safe use of Shambellie House Darkroom.

Date completed Shambellie Darkroom induction		
PRINT NAME		
Signed		Date:
Witnessed (Photographer of Shambellie House)		Date: