



First and foremost, the darkroom is a laboratory. The photographic process uses various chemicals that can pose health hazards when not handled properly. Pay careful attention to all posted warnings and procedures, and familiarize yourself with the various chemicals and their safety risks. Below are some basic guidelines for safe practices.

SAFETY IN THE DARKROOM

- To protect yourself from possible bronchitis, sinusitis, increased allergic sensitivity, skin rashes and a host of other more serious conditions (that primarily come from long term and consistent unsafe exposure), please read and follow all guidelines for handling photo chemicals in the lab.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to any chemical in a darkroom before, it is extremely important that you consult a doctor before working, to determine whether it is safe for you to be re-exposed.
- If you have bronchitis, sinusitis, allergic-sensitivity, are pregnant or planning to be so soon, or are taking any medication (especially lithium carbonate based!) that you consult your doctor to make certain that it is safe for you to work around photographic chemistry.
- Please be aware of any medical history that may cause complications due to exposure to photographic chemicals. Please check with your doctor if you have the slightest doubt about your sensitivity to chemicals now, or if you notice even slight changes in your health over your time working in the darkroom.
- Use extreme caution when handling concentrated stock solutions. Always add measured water to the container first, before adding stock solution in the proper amount. This will help avoid splashing corrosive or acidic stock solution on your skin or eyes.
- Always use tongs when handling prints in trays, and consider using gloves whenever mixing chemicals. If any chemical splashes onto the skin, flush with plenty of water and wash thoroughly.
- The majority of chemicals used in the black and white darkroom are classified in the range of non-toxic to slightly toxic. However, black and white developers can be toxic, especially if when ingested or inhaled or when in contact with bare skin. Some, but not all, people are extremely sensitive to Metol, which is present in some developers and can cause severe skin reactions.
- MSDS sheets describing ingredients and safety hazards in detail are available for all chemicals supplied by NCD. See the binder labeled SAFETY in the classroom area.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- **INHALATION OF CHEMISTRY:** If symptomatic, move to fresh air. If having difficulty breathing, call 911. We are located at 1143 GALLATIN ROAD.
- **INGESTION OF CHEMISTRY:** Call poison control (800.222.1222) 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. **DO NOT** induce vomiting unless poison control tells you to. Never try to give liquids to an unconscious person.
- **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 develop symptoms, or if any change in skin condition occurs.

BLACK AND WHITE DEVELOPERS

- **Hazards:** Skin and eye irritants. Can cause allergic reaction and allergic sensitivity. Powdered forms can pose an inhalant risk. Especially hazardous in *stock* mixing stage.
- **Precautions:** Use gloves when mixing working solutions. Avoid skin contact with powders and solution and never mix powdered chemicals in an enclosed area.

STOP BATH

- **Hazards:** Concentrated stock solution is very corrosive if skin contact, inhalation or ingestion occurs. Continued inhalation of working solution can cause lung and sinus irritation.
- **Precautions:** Use goggles and gloves when measuring. Always measure water first, then add acid. If stock solution gets on skin, flush immediately and thoroughly with cold water. If stock solution splashes in eyes, flush immediately for fifteen minutes with cold water and seek immediate medical attention.

FIXER

- **Hazards:** Not significantly hazardous, but can cause irritation of skin and allergic reactions. Exhausted fixer can release sulphur dioxide, which can be irritating.
- **Precautions:** 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.

BLEACHES AND TONERS

- Hazards: Various. Some toners are non-toxic and others can be highly toxic.
- Precautions: Always carefully read the instructions on any toners before using, and follow all recommended safety guidelines. Do not use toners in the general work area. Instead please use the table in the back area.