



Studio Policy Handbook

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1. About

Third Coast Clay flourishes on ceramic students, its monthly members, and its community of makers. We believe working in clay and learning together is what forms our strong group. Passion based teaching and inspired projects are encouraged at the studio while we all benefit from our shared experience and skills. Learning and growing together is how we will make Third Coast Clay a hub for Houston's clay community.

This handbook is a compilation of ceramic studio policies, procedures, and general information concerning the physical aspects of the equipment and use of space in Third Coast Clay studio (TCC). This handbook is designed for anyone who is a member doing work in this studio. Things do change in the studio from time to time related to core processes or re-organization of space or through modifications made by staff to efficiently accommodate the member and student use of the facilities. This handbook is not a "catch-all" and will not be applicable to any and all circumstances that arise. Please discuss specific circumstances with TCC Staff. Third Coast Clay is a community driven studio, so we need out entire community to help keep our space safe, clean, and organized.

A. Membership

Standard Monthly Membership is \$350 per month. Three-month commitment required.

Studio Membership Benefits:

Access to the Clay studio during class hours, this will expand as our studio grows!

Access to wheels, slab roller, tables, and other pottery equipment.

2 bags or 50 lbs. clay a month.

150 Glaze Firing Points a month

Use of glazes

One dedicated shelf, 18"x36"

10% off two Workshops Annually

Up to 50 hours a month in the studio (hours do not roll over)

Sales opportunity in the Spring Show

Intermediate skill level or 6 months of experience is expected for application. This membership is for independent working, no instruction is provided. All applications will be reviewed by staff before approval. Sessions will be booked through the online schedule system as well as an in-studio physical sign in/out sheet. Bisque firings are included, and 150 glaze points will be recorded by each member monthly. Points are based on the size of members' work (example: a medium coffee mug= 10 points). Memberships are non-refundable and non-transferable.

B. Member Cancellations

TCC requires a 30-day written notice of any membership cancellations. You can cancel by emailing us at the3rdcoastclay@yahoo.com. If you do not give the studio at least a 30day notice before your next payment date, you will be charged for the next payment period, and then your membership will be cancelled. You will still be able to utilize the studio up through the final day of your membership period.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the member to clear their member shelf and any personal belongings from the studio prior to their final membership period ending. All left behind items will become property of TCC.

2. General Studio Policies

A. Access

- i. Studio is open to members and students during regular class hours. Only employees and instructors are allowed on premises when closed.
- ii. Current Hours of Studio Access: Updated Jan/Feb 2022
 - Monday: 11am-1:30pm & 6pm-8:30pm
 - Tuesday: 11am-4:30pm & 6pm-8:30pm
 - Wednesday: 11am-1:30pm & 6pm-8:30pm

Thursday: 6pm-8:30pm

Friday: 11am-1:30pm

Sat/Sun: Weekend Hours will be added when work
exchange staff is available.

*Changes in hours will be posted on-site.

B. Guests

During this pandemic there is a no guests policy at the studio currently. Once we continue to move past this time then we will welcome a friend or family member to sit with you while you work or to see the studio. They will be able to observe only. Thank you for understanding and hopefully this policy will change over the coming year.

C. Cleaning

If clay touched it, clean it.

If anyone who uses the studio space, equipment, or any supplies, whether personal property or property of TCC, is responsible for the cleaning the space and supplies before leaving the studio. A ceramic studio can become a hazardous environment with dust and chemicals in the air without proper and continuous cleaning. We count on all our users to help keep the studio safe, clean, and organized.

See select following sections for details on how to clean in each area.

D. Safety

This manual provides detailed safety guidelines for each studio area and equipment. If you are unfamiliar with any equipment or processes, including, but not limited to slab rollers, extruder, glaze applications, sanding, clay recycling, please ask an employee, instructor, or fellow member for assistance.

E. Food & Drink

A microwave, refrigerator, coffee pot, & tea kettle are available to students, members, and teachers. If you use the microwave, you must wipe it out after each use. If you use any of the TCC mugs or bowls, you must wash them before you leave for the day. If you leave food in the fridge, you must put your name and date on it. Anything without a name will either become communal food or thrown away. Items left in the fridge untouched after two weeks will be disposed of.

Please place all food and drink trash in the large trash can under the kitchen counter. Clean up crumbs or spills immediately. If you have a particularly smelly food, we ask that you please dispose of it directly in the dumpster when finished.

Failure to follow the above food and drink rules may result in food and drink privileges being taken away.

F. Clothing

Clay, glaze, and other materials may contain strong colorants and may permanently stain clothing, so it is advised to not wear your best clothes to the studio. We recommend you wear old clothes, bring an apron or towel that can be left on our storage shelf. Shoes (non-slip, closed toe) must be always worn in the studio.

G. Storage Shelves

TCC Membership includes a storage shelf for personal use. If your membership is cancelled, your shelf must be cleared in the final day of your membership period. Any left behind items are considered property of TCC.

Be sure your name is on your shelf. See staff for labels if missing. You are welcome to store your personal tools, glazes, and work on these shelves. If you use TCC tools, please place them back where you found them. We want all members and students to have access to all our available tools. Please note that these shelves are not covered or closed, so leaving personal property is at your own risk. You are highly encouraged to put your name on all personal supplies and materials.

H. First Aid

TCC has a first aid kit available located in each bathroom to all studio users. If you need first aid, please find a staff member to assist you. If you experience an incident in the studio that causes you pain or injury, please complete an Incident Report Form, available from a staff member or instructor.

I. Internet, Music, Phones, Abusive Language

TCC is equipped with free wi-fi for members and instructors. The wireless password is located on corkboard in the kitchen.

Since membership is also during class times, please be considerate of radio volumes in the studio so not to disrupt the teaching process.

You are welcome to take phone calls in the studio, but please do not put any calls on speaker or video chat as the volume can be disruptive to others. Please be consciousness of others working in the studio and ongoing classes.

Abusive language to any staff, other members, students, or anyone else will not be tolerated.

J. Ceramic Tools

All members should bring their own personal basic tools. Feel free to utilize any TCC available tools, but place back clean and in their original location when done.

K. Excluded Equipment

While all smaller tools are available to members, the pugmill equipment is for staff use only. Any electric tools in the shipping container will be excluded as well (welders, band saw, drill press, etc.)

L. Sinks

Our studio has 2 sinks for cleaning and general use. Both sinks have sediment traps that collect debris before going down the drain. It is extremely important to understand that whenever possible, NO clay is put in the sinks.

M. Reclaimed Clay

We have a clay recycling system that allows the studio to reclaim used clay to make new clay for studio usage. What to do with clay that is no longer usable is the primary concern that sets the tone of how we clean and maintain the studio. Please place overly dry or wet scraps in the recycling cans. No floor trimmings/sweepings should go in the reclaim. Members should check to see that no tools end up in the reclaim as this causes injury to the staff recycling clay. If you are unfamiliar with our reclaiming process, please alert a staff member so we can give you a demo of how to properly recycle clay.

N. Firing Schedule

Firings schedules are subject to change based on the amount of work we have to fire. It is studio policy to not fire a kiln unless it can be completely filled with work. Please allow 2 weeks for your piece to be fired. Holiday seasons may make firing turnaround longer. If you have an excess of work or extremely large pieces, please allow more than two weeks for your pieces to be fired. Addition firings or “express” firings available separately.

O. Monthly Clay/ Glazing Points

Membership includes 50 lbs. of clay and 150 firing points each month to be tracked on a monthly sheet in the member room. 50 lbs. of clay can be either recycled or commercial clay and firing points are based on object size.

3. Studio Spaces

A. Hand building Tables

The studio has two main hand building tables and one small membership table for all ceramic classes and member. All tables are covered with a heavy canvas cloth that allows for water absorption as well as easy sponge cleaning. It is essential to maintain the work surface on these tables.

When working on these tables never use sharp knives or blades on the canvas surface. This will cut the canvas cloth. When cleaning, the first step is to scrape the excess clay from the surface using a plastic or wooden scraper. Never brush the clay off the table as this creates unwanted dust. The second

step is to wipe the table with a wet sponge to remove any remaining clay from the surface. After cleaning table, please wipe down chair and sweep any wet clay scraps around your area if they remain.

Do not store your work or tools on any hand building tables, any work left behind on tables will be removed and recycled.

Slab Roller

TCC has 2 large slab rollers in the space. Please roll out the desired slab, then move to a hand building table so other can also roll out slabs. Make sure clay is properly positioned between canvases on slab rollers. If unsure, ask! It should be cleaned using wet sponges when necessary, after use.

Wedging Table

The wedging table is for all classes and members for wedging new or recycled clay. If using porcelain or dark colored clay there are additional canvas covered boards under the table to use to help eliminate cross-contamination of colors. At the end of a class or session, please thoroughly scrape with plastic or wooden rib/tool then wipe with wet sponge. If you used the scale, please sponge clean as well. Do not leave bags of clay, tools, or other materials on the wedging table.

Extruder

Please sponge clean extruder and all die parts. Some die parts are small and easily lost.

Miscellaneous Hand building Supplies

Located on the pegboards and on the hand building shelf area, many items and tools are at the community's disposal to aid in the creative process. Plaster molds, rolling pins, banding wheels, rules and squares. Please wipe down any supplies and return to their storage location.

A note about heat guns: Heat guns can be used for speed drying the clay when working. They can get extremely hot; this is their function. They are not like a hair dryer and should never be touched when using and they should not be left plugged in. As with all equipment, the heat guns should be unplugged after being used, allowed to cool, and return to their proper location.

B. Throwing/Wheel Area

Wheels

The studio has 6 electric wheels in the membership space and 11 electric wheels in the classroom space. Most wheels allow for adjustment for clockwise and counterclockwise function. Currently members have access to only the member wheel space, and when we shift to open studio hours all wheels will be available at those times.

Bats

All wheel heads have bat pins that allow potters to use a bat as a throwing surface on the wheel. Please consolidate your work onto ware boards before you leave your throwing session, when possible, to conserve bats for others. Clean bats and place on the bat shelves.

Wheel Clean-Up

This area has the potential to become the dirtiest the quickest. Even with splash pans on the wheels, wet clay has the potential to be splashed on the wall and end up on the floor. Therefore, clean-up in this area needs to be strictly enforced. It is vital that each person wipe down the wheel completely, as well as the stool, spot sweep any trimmings, even spot mop spills. The more we clean the healthier that our studio will be.

C. Glazing Area

Commercial glazes and underglazes are available for member use within reason. Studio glazes are mixed in-house by staff only and labeled in buckets. Do not cross-contaminate the glazes. Be aware that there are a few clearly labeled non-food safe glazes in the studio for sculptural purposes only. Paintable wax can be found in jars on the glaze/underglaze wall. Please thoroughly clean wax brushes with hot soapy water.

If you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or breastfeeding you must use apron and gloves with any glaze. Please feel free to talk to a staff member about any concerns or to see the MSDS binder.

When finished glazing, please wipe everything down with a wet sponge and mop any spills. If you notice a glaze that is low (less than ¼ bucket), please alert staff.

D. Ready to Fire Shelves

Greenware Shelf

The greenware shelf is for students and members to put their work to be bisque fired on. The pieces may still be wet or cold, that is fine. Please ensure that your name, identifying stamp, or initials is on the bottom of each piece. Please allow up to 2 weeks for your items to be fired, but longer if there is an excessive amount of work, holidays, or larger pieces. If you have any specific firing instructions, you may place a note inside.

Glazeware Shelf

The glazeware shelf is for pieces that you have recently glazed that need to be glaze-fired. Once you have glazed your work and wiped down the bottom of all glaze, you can place your work to be fired even if its still wet. Please allow up to two weeks for your items to be fired, but longer if there is an excessive amount of work, holidays, or larger pieces. If you have any specific firing instructions, you may place a note inside. How you place your piece on the shelf is how it will be fired, so please be aware of lids on pots and stilt pieces accordingly.

Bisqueware/Glazeware Return Shelf

This shelf is where we unload works from the kiln in either bisque or glaze states. Please remove works promptly from this area as it gets easily congested.

Grinding or Sanding of Works

We do not have a grinder in the studio space for public use. We also do not allow any dry sanding of bisque or glaze in the studio because it creates a considerable amount of dust. If you wish to sand any pieces, please do so outside.

E. Kiln Container

KILN CONTAINER SPACE IS FOR STAFF ACCESS ONLY

Only staff, instructors and volunteers should enter the kiln room. NO students or members should put pieces directly in this space unless given permission from a staff member. Such permission is a one-time allowance and does not give the user access to kiln room in the future. If you are missing a piece or need something from the kiln room please ask staff or an instructor. If the kiln container door is open that does not mean anyone is free to enter.

4. Volunteering

TCC always loves to have an extra pair of helping hands around our studio! Our volunteers are a vital piece of our community, keeping the studio organized, clean, and running smoothly. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Lotus Bermudez or shoot us an email at the3rdcoastclay@yahoo.com. We do ask that you schedule your volunteer session with us in advance, and if you must cancel your session please contact us immediately.

(Updated 04/16/22)