

RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF ART MATERIALS IN THE RESIDENCE HALLS

The Massachusetts College of Art and Design is committed to meeting indoor air quality and chemical safety laws and standards. To do this, we must restrict the use of art materials and other products which are flammable, toxic, or which produce airborne dusts, gases and vapors.

Many toxic art materials can be used safely if special forced-air ventilation is used. Open windows do not provide this kind of ventilation, nor do the ventilation systems in the residence halls. For this reason, only art materials which do not need special ventilation can be used in the residence halls.

MATERIALS WHICH CANNOT BE USED OR STORED

- **Solvent or Solvent-containing Products:** Solvents are organic chemicals which usually dry very quickly and can dissolve or liquefy many glues, paints, and inks. Examples are turpentine and lacquer thinner. Examples of solvent-containing products include rubber cement, alkyd paints and sellac.
- **Aerosol Spray Cans, Airbrushes, or Paint Sprayers:** Products which create mists are unacceptable. Although personal use of cosmetic sprays is not banned, residents should keep in mind that studies of beauticians and others exposed to these aerosols show an increase in allergies and lung diseases.
- **Flammable Materials:** Almost all solvents, solvent-containing products and aerosols are flammable. These and other flammable products cannot be stored in the residence halls.
- **Caustic, Acid, or Irritating Materials:** Materials which can damage the eyes or skin are not permitted in the residence halls.
- **Dusts and Powders:** Products or processes which create dust such as mixing powders or sanding are prohibited. This especially applies to powdered products containing highly toxic ingredients such as ceramic glazes and metal enamels. Clays may be used if they are kept wet and are cleaned up carefully. Keep in mind that many dusts contain a significant percentage of very toxic particles which are too small to be seen with the naked eye. These dusts can contaminate clothing, rugs, and living areas without being obvious.
- **Burned or Heated Materials:** Materials such as wood, plastic, or solder flux must not be burned or heated to decomposition in the residence halls. When a substance burns, literally thousands of toxic chemicals can be created. Especially unacceptable are craft products which are designed to be heated in kitchen ovens. Kitchen equipment and utensils should not be used for art products.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS WHICH CAN BE USED

- Most water-based paints and inks – check ingredients, though, because they may contain highly toxic solvents which mix with water.
- Small amounts of acrylic paints – they do, however, give off ammonia and formaldehyde so quantities needed to paint large canvasses cannot be used.
- Dustless brands of chalk and conte crayons, (oil sticks and crayons.)
- Water color markers and markers containing only grain alcohol solvent.
- Glue sticks, water emulsion glues such as Elmer's, white pastes, and double sided tapes (for paste-up and mechanicals).
- Non-hardening clays and regular clays if kept wet and carefully cleaned.