



The Almonte Studio Potter's Handbook

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The Studio Potter's Handbook

Welcome to the Almonte Potters Guild! (APG)

The APG welcomes all levels of potters, from the novice to the experienced.

The guidelines outlined in this handbook are intended to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment of the studio.

Who We Are

The Almonte Potters Guild was founded by a group of like-minded artists in September 2002. With their combined resources and donations from friends in the community, a pottery studio was opened in the heart of Mississippi Mills.

The APG was incorporated as a non-profit organization on January 20, 2021 operating with a Board of Directors (BOD) who are elected at the Annual General Meeting. It is recommended that as many members as possible serve some time on the BOD.

As of June 2024, the APG has 37 studio potter members of all skill levels. The APG provides a shared communal space for potters. It is organized as a co-operative where each potter respects and cares for the studio and equipment as if it were their own.

The studio's day to day operations are dependent on the hard work and commitment of all of its studio potters who share the responsibilities of operating and maintaining the studio facilities.

The APG offers courses and workshops for all levels of experience throughout the year. Free in-studio workshops are occasionally offered for APG Studio Potters.

The APG participates in community events such as the Mississippi Mills Art Romp (previously known as The Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour) as well as in several independent APG Pottery Sales throughout the year which coincide with events in the area (like the Cheerfully Made Christmas Market).

Our Values

At the Almonte Potters Guild, we strive to have a Guild which fosters community, education and integrity.

We endeavour to embrace the following:

- Collaboration
- Personal Growth
- Respectfulness
- Inclusivity
- Competence

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Our Vision

To provide a healthy and appropriate studio environment to better serve our students and studio potters.

Our Mission

Almonte Potters Guild, a non-profit corporation, provides a friendly and creative studio environment that is run on a basis of cooperation and mutual respect and promotes artistic, educational and technical development of ceramic arts in Mississippi Mills and surrounding areas.

Facilities and Equipment

- 4 Electric (Oxidation) Kilns
- 9 Throwing Wheels
- Hand-building Area
- Slab Roller
- Wedging Table
- Glaze Area
- Studio Potter and Student shelves to store work in progress
- Common shelves to hold green ware, bisque and glaze ware
- Extruder
- Pug Mill
- Studio glazes, slips and stains are available for use, as well as some commercial glazes
- Moulds/forms, basic trimming tools, bats

Tools

APG studio potters are expected to use their own tools. We offer a basic tool kit for purchase.

Clay

Only clay purchased from the APG is permitted for use in the studio. We offer a variety of clays, from porcelain to stoneware. Recycled clay is also available to purchase. When purchasing clay, please indicate the type of clay in the e-transfer. Once you have removed the clay from the shelf, submit your e-transfer to manager@almontepottersguild.com. When using clay for a workshop, please email almontepottersguild@gmail.com with the number of bags and the type of clay.

The profit that is made from the sale of the bags of clay goes directly to paying the costs for glaze making ingredients, firing expenses, electricity charges, kiln maintenance and kiln repairs.

Clay bodies may change based on availability.

Obligation of the Studio Potter

As the smooth running of the Guild is dependent on each studio potter doing a task, every studio potter is required to complete task(s) that contribute to the daily operation, maintenance and upkeep of the

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studio on a regular and ongoing basis, with no exceptions. Failure to contribute can result in a loss of firing privileges.

Studio Packages

- The number of Studio Membership Packages is limited by the size of our space and shelf availability.. Prospective studio potters must fill out our online application form and be 18+ years old. When shelves become available, the applications will go through a review process and will be accepted depending on the number of points they have received in the review process. Pottery skills, years of experience, references, APG studio courses taken, etc are some of the factors taken in consideration in this process.
- All new studio potters must fill out and sign a Studio Potter Waiver and Studio Potters Responsibility form and attend a studio orientation before beginning work in the studio.
- All hours purchased with a studio hour package must be used within the stated time frame. Hours cannot be carried over to the next membership.
- Studio potters will be given a 30 day notice from administration of when their hour package is to expire. If the studio potter is not going to renew their hours they must notify administration before their hour package expires.
- Studio potters who pay by installment and payments are in arrears, APG will notify the studio potter and will terminate their membership.
- APG offers an Installment plan for 120-hour and Unlimited packages.
- All studio potters must track their hours each time they are in the studio, using the APG Studio Hours Logbook. (not applicable for Unlimited Packages)
- Work completed at home is logged as 2/3 time. (For example, 3 hours of work at home is logged as 2 hours in the book.)
- Studio Potters are given a key to the studio. The studio is open 24/7 hours/days a week excluding during class and workshop times.
- All Studio Packages are non-refundable. In the case of 120 Hour and Unlimited packages, a studio potter can request a refund if their request is for reasons beyond their control. The BOD will evaluate all requests on a case-to-case basis.

For the 120 Hour package, the rate of refund will be \$40/month + \$25 Administration Fee. (Refunds are based on the number of months that the studio potter occupied a shelf, not on the number of hours used.)

For Unlimited Packages, the rate of refund will be \$85/month +\$25 Administration Fee

Studio Procedures

- Each participant is responsible for cleanup of all equipment, tools, and areas of use for that day.

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- **Food is not allowed in the studio area but can be consumed in the office area. Please clean up when done.**
- Studio potters are responsible for keeping their shelf from being compromised due to overflow and weight. Studio potters should not touch items on any other studio potter or class shelves. Do not use the studio class overflow shelves.

Cleanliness and Health & Safety go Hand in Hand

- It is your responsibility to clean up after yourself – no one should have to do it for you!
- There are several potential health hazards related to pottery. It is important to be well informed and avoid hazards where possible. A clean studio is a healthy studio.
- Information on the raw materials used at the APG can be found in the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (red) binder located in the kiln room and on our website.

Keep the Dust Down

- The biggest health threat in a pottery studio is clay and glaze dust.
- Clay is partially made of silica and exposure to large amounts of silica can lead to silicosis, a serious and progressive lung disease. Silicates are essential in making both clays and glazes, but by using best practices in our studio we can minimize our exposure.

Things to do to minimize exposure in the studio

How one works in the studio affects everyone else and we all need to do our best to keep dust to a minimum. Leave workspaces cleaner than when you started working.

- Leave enough time at the end of each session for cleaning.
- Avoid creating clay or glaze dust at every step of the process; no sweeping as it will kick up dust.
- Always clean WET; use clean water, a sponge and a mop.
- Wipe down common areas after each use and clean up any clay and glaze from tools, bats, floors, wheels, tables and your shelves.
- Only wet sanding is allowed; wear an appropriate P-100 mask; masks worn for Covid-19 are not adequate.
- Do not throw clay in the sink as it will clog up the drain; slip and trimmings should be put into the slurry bucket by the sink provided in the back room. Discarded greenware go into the bin underneath the pug mill. Do not wash clay covered hands, tools, etc. in the bathroom sink.
- Glazes may contain colorants or metallic oxides that can be toxic; wear gloves and apron when glazing; wash your hands thoroughly after glazing
- Avoid staying in the back (kiln) room while kilns are firing; the ventilation fan should always be turned on when the kilns are in use.

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Kilns

- The kiln technicians are responsible for loading, unloading and firing the kilns. Studio potters and students are not allowed to load, unload or operate the kilns.
- We do our best to have a minimum of one bisque and one glaze firing per week, however, studio potters should allow approximately two weeks for their work to be fired.
- Pottery pieces made in classes, workshops, and summer camps will take priority.
- Large items, flat plates, and tall pieces will take longer to fire. These larger pieces also slow down the firing process for everyone, as fewer items can be placed in the kiln.
- If you need something fired by a specific date, please leave a note for the kiln technician in your piece and they will try to accommodate your request.
- We will fire additional kilns for Christmas and studio sales.
- Pieces that need to be re-fired will be done so at an additional cost of \$2 per piece unless it is the fault of the studio.

Bisque Firing

- We bisque-fire to Cone 05.
- Only work that is ready to be bisque fired should go on the common green-ware shelves. Your wet pots should remain on your own shelf until fully dried.
- Thicker pieces take longer to dry and will therefore have a longer wait before being bisque fired.

Glaze and Glaze Firing

- We fire to Cone 6 Oxidation.
- Wax must be applied to the bottoms of pots as well as 1/4" up the side of each piece to resist glaze while dipping. Do not apply glazes to surfaces which will touch a kiln shelf.
- Ensure residual spots of glaze are sponged from the bottoms of your pieces. If the glaze is not fully removed from the bottom of your piece, or applied too thickly, they will not be fired.
- Use ceramic cookies to catch any glaze drippings when using commercial glazes or any glaze that you think might run onto the kiln shelves.
- Do NOT alter glazes (i.e. add or remove water) or cross-contaminate glazes by double-dipping wet pieces.

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Ready to Fire

- If you make oversized pieces, please note that we will take extra care that they are fully dried before firing. This means they will take longer to move through the firing processes.
- During the holiday season, there is an increased volume of small ornaments. In order to not disappoint anyone, all Christmas ornaments must be ready to be fired by the end of November.

Workflow

- Be aware of how much space you're taking up. Complete pieces in a timely manner so that pottery in progress does not take up communal shelf space for prolonged periods of time.
- Please glaze your pots as soon as possible and remove fired pieces from the studio's communal shelves to allow space for newly fired (bisqued and glazed) items.

Making Large Quantities of Work

- The APG studio does not have the capacity to accommodate the production of large quantities of work.
- The studio cannot be utilized as a replacement for a commercial studio to support individual business endeavors.

Other

- As in any communal studio, accidents, mistakes and mis-firings happen. Every precaution will be taken to ensure the best possible outcome for your pieces. There is no compensation for damaged or misfired works.
- Abuse, violence, and hateful and/or discriminatory language/action are not tolerated.
- We reserve the right to revoke all privileges of any studio potter who does not follow the policies, rules and procedures as listed throughout this handbook.
- We reserve the right to decline renewal of studio hours if studio potters are non-compliant.
- We reserve the right to modify these policies at any time. By continuing to use the space, you agree to be bound by such changes.

Our main goal is to provide a safe and creative space where we can all grow in our craft and feel happy and fortunate to practice pottery. These guidelines will keep the studio functioning in a way that serves everyone.