

Safety Silly or Safety Sensible

Promoting safety is admirable but there are some that propose such overly zealous narrow and rigid safety “rules”, their claims are often likely to scare people away entirely or can cause them to question the credibility of many safety precautions.

Some such warnings are more fear-mongering than safety alert and should be addressed with a bit of common sense practicality.

Never use an extension cord on a kiln.

- If the wire is of sufficient size, an extension cord can be put on anything. You can get industrial extension cords for as much as 100 amps.

Never fire your kiln unattended.

- Unless you have foolishly installed your kiln too close to something combustible, there's no reason to be concerned about what might happen. Kilns are specifically designed to tolerate high heat for extended periods. If your kiln over fires to it's highest possible temperature and stays there for many hours, all that will happen is you'll use up a lot of electricity until you turn it off. If you bought a kiln with a digital controller, use the controller for what it was intended – to eliminate the need to babysit your kiln.

Do not run a 15 amp kiln on a 15 amp circuit.

- If the kiln draws too much power for a 15 amp circuit it will trip the 15 amp breaker and disconnect the electricity. If you keep trying to draw too much power, all that will happen is you'll keep tripping the breaker. That's what the breaker is for.

Exhaust vent fans must be minimum 125 cfm for every sq ft of hood area.

- Fumes from torching or soldering can be nasty but this isn't biohazard that requires a sealed controlled flow chamber. The objective is to have fans big enough to remove the fumes – not big enough to vacuum inhale your tools. There are lots of ways to make sure you are safely removing noxious fumes without resorting to industrial capacity fans.

Propane tanks should never be inside..

- In many places it's prohibited and will void insurance coverage, but in some places it's a perfectly legal and perfectly acceptable practice. Propane cylinders have been used inside buildings by thousands of people in thousands of places for dozens of years. Safety in handling propane tanks depends more on how you handle them than where.

Flashback arrestors should always be used.

- These are not needed on surface mix torches. Waste of money to buy and waste of time to install.

It's a good safety practice to wear a safety belt but you don't need a NASCAR standard roll cage for driving to the grocery store.