

The Kiln Corner— Setting Up a Kiln

by Arnold Howard

Though I work for Paragon Industries, L.P., the information in this column applies to all brands of glass kilns. Feel free to send questions for this column no matter what brand of kiln you own.

I am setting up a glass fusing studio in our two-car garage. Will I need special ventilation in the garage?

Glass usually does not produce strong fumes in the firing room, so it would be okay to fire with the garage door open. If you use fiber shelf paper or glass paints, however, you should install the Orton Vent Master, which removes the fumes and vents them outdoors.

Does the room temperature affect the accuracy of a digital controller? For instance, does the controller's temperature change from summer to winter in an unheated building?

The digital controllers that I am familiar with compensate for room temperature as long as you stay within the range of 32°F to 158°F (0°C to 70°C). For instance, if your unheated room is 32°F (0°C) in the winter and 100°F (38°C) in the summer, the room temperature should have no effect on the controller temperature readings.

I am storing a digital kiln in a metal shed that gets up to 120°F (49°C) in the summer. Will this much heat damage the kiln's electronics?

Storing the kiln in a hot shed at that temperature will not harm the electronics. The controller is designed to operate at around 158°F (70°C).

Is it okay to locate a programmable kiln outside under a carport or covered porch?

As long as the kiln is protected from the weather and has a roof overhead, it is okay to keep it on a porch even in a humid area. It will last longer, however, if it is kept inside an enclosed building such as a garage. If you live in an area where water condenses on metal surfaces in the mornings, a kiln that is kept on a porch will rust.

Your kiln installation requirement is 12" of clearance around the kiln. Can the kiln be placed closer to a noncombustible surface such as a brick wall or washer?

No. The kiln requires 12" of clearance on all sides during operation to prevent heat from building up around the kiln. If your space is limited, you could position the kiln on a stand with casters. Then move the kiln away from the wall before firing. Casters are also useful in keeping the kiln out of the way when not in use.



It is okay to set up your kilns outside as long as they are protected from the weather. Shown here is Becky Johnson with students at the Creative Art Center of Dallas, Texas.



Installing the air intake cup for the Orton Vent Master, which removes fumes from the kiln

What type of floor do you recommend under a kiln?

Place the kiln on a concrete floor. Avoid wood floors and, of course, carpet. If you place a kiln on a concrete floor that has been finished with linoleum tile, place a fireproof material over the tile to protect it from discoloration.

Do you have a specific recommendation for setting up a kiln in a school?

In addition to following the standard kiln setup recommendations, please check the location of fire sprinkler heads. I know of schools here in Texas that flooded because a sprinkler head near the kiln turned on the fire alarm. Consider using a higher temperature sprinkler head in the kiln room or the type that senses smoke rather than heat. You could also install an overhead Vent-A-Kiln vent hood, which will lower the temperature around the kiln.

Arnold Howard writes instruction manuals and advertisements for Paragon Industries, L.P. His hobbies are glass fusing and karate. He also enjoys studying history and watching classic movies. You can reach Arnold at ahoward@paragonweb.com with questions for future columns. Sign up for his kiln newsletter at www.paragonweb.com.