



ASCIP *RISK ALERT!*

Date: November 15, 2002

Attention: ASCIP Members

Subject: Management of Ceramics Kilns

ASCIP receives inquiries regarding the placement and use of both electric and natural gas fired ceramics kilns on a frequent basis. Ceramics kilns represent a potential risk to the health and safety of staff and students if not installed and maintained properly. Such equipment may also become a fire hazard if care is not exercised in both placement of the unit and its correct use.

Ceramics kilns in educational facilities have been implicated in a number of property losses at ASCIP member District sites. Old equipment lacking automatic safeguards, operational error, improper installation, and equipment failure during use have been contributing factors in these instances which resulted in the loss of valuable teaching facilities and materials.

Under current regulations, small non-industrial and educational ceramics kilns with less than 20 cubic feet of interior volume generally fall into the "hobby" kiln category. Such kilns must be installed in accordance with Section 920 of the California Mechanical Code which specifies the minimum requirements for such equipment. Larger kilns may need to comply with industrial safety and emissions standards. Fuel gas or electrical service to the kiln must also meet all applicable codes and regulations. When planning to install a new kiln, renovate an existing installation, or replace older equipment with new, every effort should be made to ensure all aspects of safety, health, and regulatory compliance. Any repairs to older kilns should be made in consideration of potential exposure to Asbestos which may be present in insulation materials or refractory cement.

Additionally, during ASCIP's comprehensive Loss Control & Safety Audits, our Auditors continue to discover certain art materials and ceramic glazes which are no longer permitted for use in California K-6 and grades 7-12 educational programs as mandated by California Education Code Section 32060 in its entirety. When heated to firing temperatures, certain older glazes produce chemical and/or metal fumes which are unhealthful. Ceramics kilns also produce carbon monoxide and other products of combustion as impurities are baked out of the ware being fired. Most of these older art materials and glazes have been replaced by new products which have been reformulated to eliminate many of the earlier problematic ingredients.

ASCIP members seeking assistance in reviewing art room, ceramics kiln, or art materials may contact ASCIP staff at any time to discuss specific issues of concern.

Reviewed July, 2006