

The Melbourne Camera Club

Darkroom Use Guidelines

The Darkroom has been established as a facility for club members to process their own work. These guidelines are intended to encourage safe practices and ensure that the darkroom is maintained as a facility that can be shared and enjoyed by all interested members.

These guidelines also constitute a reference point for best practice behaviour in the Darkroom and should be seen against the *Facility Use Agreement* that you must sign. The Darkroom is a resource of the club not a service to members.

General Points on Responsibilities

Please remember that the *Facility Use Agreement* and the procedures outlined in this document must be followed, or penalties may be imposed.

Booking Darkroom Time

The first steps

- Your very first step is to sign the current “Facility Use Agreement” form. Once this is signed you will be registered as a user and will be given permission to make bookings on the system.
- You need to familiarise yourself with the darkroom booking system at www.bookings.melbournephoto.org.au.
- If you are not a current darkroom user you will need to obtain a key (for the outside gate) from the MCC Treasurer and pay a \$50 deposit.
- You will also need the access code (for the darkroom door) which you will get from the Booking Coordinator when you register.

Each session costs \$10 for upto 6 hours or \$20 from 7 to 12 hours (or the fee defined on the Dashboard of the Facilities Booking System). The appropriate Fee is payable on booking any part of a session.

While there are prescribed restrictions on length and frequency of bookings, it is within Coordinator’s discretion to ensure fair access for all.

Chemicals and paper

All members need to provide their own chemicals, paper and other materials and supplies.

If you wish to leave your chemicals in the Darkroom Annex you must provide a plastic crate that is the size of a standard milk crate. All chemicals *must be in containers that are clearly marked with the contents and that **do not have labels showing previous use*** – eg. as drink bottles.

Getting Access

Once you have time booked the next step is to get access.

To get access to the darkroom you have to go through 2 entry points:

1. The Outside Gate

- Use the key to open the outside gate.
- This is an emergency exit so it opens outwards. Unlock the lock and pull the gate open.
- Be sure to lock the gate from the outside when you leave the property. NEVER leave the gate unlocked.

2. The Darkroom Door

- The darkroom door is opened by entering **the access code** you have been given.
- To exit through this door you simply open with the handle.

- When you leave the property make sure this door is closed

Other access-

I. The Side Door from the courtyard

This door has a keycode lock. You will be given the door code so that you can access the kitchen and the inside toilet should you need to do so.

II. Ferrars Street Door

This door is normally closed and should only be used for health and safety reasons. Should you open it for any reason, please make sure that it is closed when you leave the Darkroom. **There is no key available to allow re-entry should you close it while outside.**

Getting Started

Mains Power

- When you enter the darkroom the power will be switched off.
- As you step into the darkroom on the left there is a series of circuit breakers that control the power for the darkroom. To turn the power on, move the yellow circuit breaker up to the up position.
- When leaving the darkroom please ensure that yellow master switch is in the off position (down).

Hot water

- There is a water heater under the sink that has to be **manually turned on and off**. This should not be turned on during summer unless you have need for a significant amount of hot water.
- There is an electric kettle in the annex that is intended for general use. Do not put any contaminated water in that kettle.

Lights

- Once all the master circuit breaker is on then the lights can be turned on.
- The switch for the main room lights and the safelights are at the door (the red light is marked).
- There is additional fluorescent light at the far end of the darkroom for reviewing prints. The switch for it is the centre switch between the power points.

Ventilation

A ventilation system sits above the sink. This is always turned on when the master switch is thrown.

Heating

There is a small heater in the darkroom/annex that can be used when required

Enlargers

The enlargers all switch on at their own respective power points either directly or via a controller. If available, see equipment operating instructions, otherwise, prior to booking, seek verbal instructions from the coordinator.

Working in the Darkroom

If you wish to play background music keep the volume to a level that will not interfere with the comfort of other member who might be using the studio because the walls between the two areas are thin.

There are two discrete sections of the darkroom – the wet bench and the dry bench.

Wet Bench

- This is the whole area along the far wall of the bench and sink.
- All pouring of chemicals is done in the sink, chemicals in trays are kept in the sink
- The 8x10” trays hold up to 800 ml of chemicals; the 16x20” trays hold up to 2 litres of chemicals
- All measuring jugs and thermometers are kept on shelves on the end wall
- A 16x20” wash tray is supplied. It is recommended that you wash resin coated papers for at least five minutes in the print wash tray, (fibre based prints need at least 30 minutes).
- Please think about conserving water when you are washing and do not leave the water running all the time
- There is a print dryer for *resin coated paper only* under the bench to the left of the sink area. Heat it up for 5 minutes prior to use. Fibre based prints can either be dried on the drying racks in the Annex or taken home to dry. Please do not leave prints to dry in the darkroom.

Dry Bench

- The enlargers sit on the dry bench
- The drawers under the dry bench have sliding lids. The aim is that when you close the drawer, the lid will also close and will be light tight. You can use these drawers to store unexposed paper while working.
- In the first drawer there are additional lenses for the enlargers, screwdrivers and other supporting materials for printing

Additional Facilities

You will not normally have access to the club rooms and the ladies toilet. Ladies will have to use the men’s toilet cubicle. Should there be any problem with the outside toilets, extract the front door key from the lock-box and use the inside toilet.

There is a kettle in the Annex for making tea and coffee. DO NOT place any chemicals or contaminated water in that kettle.

Visitors accompanying you

If anyone accompanies you in the darkroom, whether they are a member or not, they **must sign in** on the log-in sheet (not the darkroom use log sheet). This is found in a folder with other information on the bench just inside the door from the Annex.

Cleaning Up & Leaving the Darkroom

The following checklist is a reminder of what needs to be done when leaving the darkroom:

- If you are storing your chemicals in a crate, then please make sure that all bottles are within the crate and that the crate is safely stacked with the others.
- Rinse, wipe and return all measuring jugs, thermometers and tongs to the appropriate shelves.
- Rinse, wipe and store all the trays vertically under the wet bench
- Leave the wash tray vertically in the sink to dry

- Wipe down the wet bench and sink to ensure it is completely clean
- The towel/tea-towel materials that you use in the darkroom should be rinsed out in HOT water, wrung out and then hung over the edge of the sink or pegged onto the lines. There is no laundry service.
- Please sweep the floor and mop any wetness
- Collect and take with you all your negatives, prints, paper and other materials – you can leave prints on the drying racks in the Annex but you accept this is at your own risk.
- If you are in on a Sunday, check if the garbage bins need to go out and put them out if need be.
- If you are in on a Monday check if the garbage bins need to be brought in.
- Fill in the **Darkroom Use Log Sheet**. The only piece of equipment you need to specify is the enlarger you used (Ilford, LPL or Omega).
- Leave your money in an envelope, clearly identified with your name and the date of booking the payment is for, in the cash box – or you can pay as soon as possible via electronic transfer.
- Switch off the mains power
- Make sure the darkroom door is closed
- Be sure to lock the outside gate when you leave the property.

Occupational Health & Safety Issues

- The large double door in the Annex leads outside to Ferrars Street. It is not an official safety exit because it opens inward but please recognise it as a potential safety exit.
- There is a first-aid kit in the annex.
- There is a spill kit in the darkroom in case you have a major spill of chemicals. Please make yourself familiar with its method of use.
- There are Material Safety Data Sheets in the MSDS folder in the darkroom. Please be aware of what is stated about the chemicals you are using.