

BASICS

Clay is formed when time and weather combine to disintegrate feldspathic rock. Clay particles are microscopic, platelike, flat, and hold water between themselves. The water lets the plates slip and slide together, giving clay its plastic or manipulative quality. The action of the plates and water also accounts for the problems encountered during the drying stages of clay. Clay is composed of silica, alumina, organic impurities, and small amounts of chemical oxides. The types and compositions of clay vary widely, so that different types are used for different purposes. Kaolin, Ball Clay, Fire Clay, Stoneware Clay, Earthenware Clay, Slip Clay, and Bentonite are some of the most common, and are usually mixed for a specific purpose into a "Clay Body".

Glazes are essentially glass, or silica, with additions of different chemicals to lower the melting point and to make the glass stick to the sides of the pot. The type and amount of chemical added depends on the firing temperature, color, and surface quality desired.

CLAY RULES

1. Soft clay cannot be attached to hard clay, and only pieces that are leather hard or wetter can be attached with much chance of staying together. This is due to the shrinking and flattening of clay particles as the water leaves during drying.
2. Pieces of clay to be attached must be scored with a needle, painted with slip, or slurry, to glue them together. Careful pinching and rubbing of seams may also join very wet pieces.
3. Clay pieces may be no thicker than 1 inch unless they are hollow, and if hollow spaces are enclosed, a pinhole must be made in the piece to allow gasses and trapped air to escape. Thicker pieces should be allowed to dry THOROUGHLY before firing.
4. Dry pots slowly, away from temperature extremes, to prevent uneven drying, shrinkage, and cracking. This is especially true of pieces, which have been joined, such as handles, slab pots etc.
5. Avoid stress when building or throwing clay pieces. Unnatural bending or forcing will cause particles to become unaligned, resulting in cracks, either in the drying or in firing.
6. Clay must be wedged before using to insure proper alignment of particles, create uniform texture, and most importantly, to drive air

bubbles out. Air bubbles cause clay to explode in the kiln, because of the air expanding with no place to go.

- 7. Unused clay must be covered and wrapped with plastic to prevent drying, or returned to the recycling container.**
- 8. PLEASE HELP CLEAN UP AND KEEP THE FACILITY IN AS MUCH ORDER AS POSSIBLE.**