

Edinburgh Photographic Society darkroom (EPSD) guidance Sept. 2026

- The use of EPSD is open to all members who have purchased a darkroom subscription and life members. The darkroom fee is currently set at zero.
- EPSD is to be used only for the handling of light-sensitive materials and the development and printing of silver-gelatine film and paper
- EPSD is not to be used for commercial purposes. It is run by the members who use the facility, all of whom have a responsibility to keep it in good order (and safe)
- Members need to speak to the EPS darkroom lead before being approved to have unsupervised access to the darkroom. Those without prior experience will be required to attend an induction session. Contact email : darkroom@epsoc.org.uk

Booking the darkroom

- Sessions are booked online via the EPS home page login. Usage of the darkroom will be kept under review with the aim of ensuring fair access to the facilities for all darkroom users. Members not complying with this guidance may have darkroom access withdrawn. These guidelines are for the safety of all users.

Using the darkroom

- Members are reminded that equipment is valuable and expensive. Great care should, therefore, be exercised in its use. Common sense is required in the darkroom this includes no drinking or eating.
- None of the Society's equipment may be removed from the darkroom.
- Please report any issues with the equipment /room/ other users.

Environmental darkroom

- The chemicals used in EPSD are the choice of the individual user. There is a mass of information and opinion online regarding choices available and the pro/cons covering photographic qualities and environmental sustainability.

Safety

- Darkroom chemistry is safe to handle with minimal precautions. The chemicals involved are no more toxic than domestic cleaning products so do require common sense when used. Safety in the darkroom is responsibility of all users.
- All chemistry used must have a relevant Safety Data Sheet (SDS) placed in the darkroom diary (immediately outside the darkroom)
- **Glacial acetic acid** and **pyro** containing film developers are not allowed as they are of questionable safety. **Sulphide** and **polysulphide toners** are not allowed in the building because they fog paper and can cause extremely unpleasant odours throughout the whole building
- Ensure that the extractor fan is turned on when the darkroom is in use.
- Please remove from the darkroom any of your own chemicals that you bring with you. They must not be stored in the darkroom.
- Waste developer and fixer should be placed in one of the marked brown containers. Remember **fixer lasts many sessions** depending on the extent of use etc. The simplest test for fixer viability is the clip test using a scrap of film undeveloped 35mm emulsion. A clearing time of less than 60 seconds is acceptable for good fixer.
- Avoid chemicals coming into direct contact with your skin as many are skin irritants. Disposable nitrile gloves are kept in the darkrooms for use and are **highly recommended**. There are paper towels in all the darkrooms, please use them to clean up any spillages. Please consider mopping the floor etc after you have finished.
- Face/eye protection is recommended when handling chemicals.
- Chemistry is prone to staining clothing. It is recommended that aprons be worn.
- Small torches are provided in the darkroom for use in case of power outage.

Tidying up after using the darkroom

- Any member's property left lying around the darkroom risks being disposed of.
- Recover enlarger with its dust cover.
- Darkrooms users are expected to leave the darkroom in a clean and tidy condition. For example, dishes must be thoroughly washed and neatly stacked, spilt chemicals must be mopped up and all taps and switches turned off. This includes the heated bench, Kodak safelights and fan heater !!!
- **If turn everything off and unplug the tray warmer and water bath heater**

Other information and useful links

These links are from Ilford. They have the very best pedigree in darkroom work and should be considered the absolute experts as it's backed up by decades of research !

Safety and waste chemical disposal

<https://www.ilfordphoto.com/health-and-safety/safety-data-sheets-ilford-photochemicals-made-use/>

<https://www.ilfordphoto.com/health-and-safety>

Getting started

<https://www.ilfordphoto.com/category/learning-zone/beginner-series/>

<https://www.ilfordphoto.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Processing-your-first-black-and-white-film.pdf>



What's in EPSD

It's a fully equipped unmanned mono darkroom which has all the essential equipment to allow for processing of B&W film and silver gelatin darkroom prints. A recent addition is some limited facilities to allow success colour film and paper development. B&W chemicals are provided at cost but you bring your own. EPSD has no staff and is the responsibility of the members. A few lockers are available to rent each year for a nominal sum. These are located outside the gents toilets. Nitrile gloves are provided. There are pods for emergency eye washing in the unlikely event of eye contamination.

Film

- Large number of Paterson style tanks, and Jobo 1500 tanks (35mm and 120). The Jobo 1540 multitank combination allows for the three 35mm rolls or two 120 rolls at one time.
- Paterson Orbital (non motorised) for large format negative processing (4x5, 5x7, 8x10)
- Measuring cylinders 45ml to 2000ml, funnels etc
- Cinestill TCS1000 - water bath heater*
- Digital thermometer
- Film clips, heated film drying cabinet.
- Ilfotec LC film developer /stopbath/fixer (£5 charge per session if these are used , includes recycling costs)
- Recycling containers for waste developer and fixer - taken periodically to Stills
- Simon Foster (orange) 4x5 and 5x7 Platypus film drying racks.

Printing

- Three enlarger bays, with enlargers (Durst, LPL and DeVere) covering 35mm, 6x6 and large format (up to 4x5). A mix of colour and B&W enlargers are available. Lenses used include quality optics by Durst, Schneider, Nikon, Rodenstock.
- Wide variety of sizes of easels (LPL, Durst etc)
- Microfocus aids, lens /glass cloth , rocket blower
- Ilford MG developer, Ilfostop, Rapid Fixer (£5 charge per session if these are used , includes recycling costs)
- 8x10 inch print tray warmer 150watts* *
- Paterson Thermodrum (for 8x10 RA4 colour printing)
- Ilford MG RC deluxe V - 10 sheet packs of 8x10 cost £10
- Below lens Ilford MultiGrade filter set for the DeVere enlarger.
- Paper trimmer, scissors
- Extra long heated wet bench (remember to turn off after use)
- Cascade archive print washer (16x20inch)
- Washing line for drying (RC and FB) (*please remember to collect prints when they are likely to have dried*)
- RC vertical printer drying rack plus the Simon Foster Platypus for small print sizes.

Colour processing

- Recent additions to the darkroom of sous vide heater and Paterson Thermodrum and Paterson Orbital have recently allowed members to try C41 and RA4 processing. EPS doesn't provide colour chemicals or paper although it should be noted that colour developer can be recycled in the waste developer container and Blix in the waste fixer container. Recycling costs £2/litre.

* *The Cinestill sous vide heater must be used in accordance to manufacturers instructions. It must NOT be turned on until it sits in a water bath to the minimum level marked on the column. The latter gets hot and should not be touched as burns might result. It must only be connected to the mains with the supplied RCD circuit breaker. It must be unplugged after use , not just turned off !!*

* * *Print tray warmer must be used with the supplied RCD circuit breaker. It must be unplugged after use , not just turned off !! It can heat a 9x12 tray to around 30c if required or maintain a consistent 20c when set low Use digital thermometer to achieve desired temperature.*

You will need to bring and take with you when finished.

Film, paper, chemicals, your own chosen personal protection (eye, cotton gloves, apron etc). blower brush , red light darkroom torch , depending on your personal preferences etc. If in doubt about how to safely and effectively use equipment ask first (darkroom@epsoc.org.uk)

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