



Pickling Safety Checklist

By Charles Lewton-Brain

- ✓ Wear eye protection, gloves, and an apron when pickling.
- ✓ To avoid splashes and mists, do not quench metal in pickle. Rather, quench it in water: Hot acids can give off evil mists and vapors, and they can also burn your skin and eyes if they splash.
- ✓ A jeweler I know, John Burgess, once suggested that baking soda nicely absorbs any spilled chemicals, including pickle: It neutralizes acids and forms a paste with other chemicals, allowing for easy cleanup.
- ✓ Always use local exhaust ventilation or place the pickling bath in front of a window exhaust fan. Cover the pickle pot when not in use.
- ✓ A Sparex pickle is preferable to sulfuric acid; when placed in water, Sparex (sodium bisulfate) breaks down to form a constant dilution of about 5 percent sulfuric acid. Also, since sodium bisulfate is stored as dry granules, it is safer to keep in the shop than liquid sulfuric acid. Other substitutes for pickling solutions include household vinegar and salt, or fresh lemon juice and salt.
- ✓ Add acids to water, rather than the other way around; that way, only the water will splash. If acid or Sparex does end up on your skin or in your eyes, rinse immediately with water. An eyewash station can be installed onto a sink tap.