



Torchworking

Working with live fire is always dangerous. The bigger the torch you work with, the more dangerous working with it will be. Taking a simple safety precautions can remove the danger.

Remember to POOP

If you're using a torch that uses both propane and oxygen, it's important to protect against flashback by always turning the torch on and off in the right order. That refers to the order in which you turn the propane and oxygen on and off.

TURN ON – Propane then Oxygen
TURN OFF – Oxygen then Propane.

Light the torch from below. When the gas is flowing, bring the lighter up slower from beneath to avoid having the jet of gas blow out the flame.

Touching the flame

Touch the flame with the glass. Just the glass. Touching it with your hand creates a nasty smell and often leads to foul language. Arrange your work area so you never have to reach across the flame.

Fumes

Melting glass in a flame can create fumes. You should be especially concerned about those created by intentionally fuming glass to create a metallic effect or when working with borosilicate glass.

Ventilation

Take care to be sure you have controlled ventilation to draw fumes away from you. It is ALWAYS better to have a ventilation system that pulls air than one that pushes it. A large slow moving fan is more consistent than a small fast moving one.

Eye Protection

There is a double need for eye protection when torchworking glass.

1. Sometimes the glass will crack and fling off a small chip of glass. A bit of glass projected into your eye will do damage but not necessarily permanent. A piece of glass hot enough to melt flesh is likely to cause permanent blindness.
2. The glare from the torch can damage your eyes. That's especially a concern when working with borosilicate glass.

Flammable Clothing

Do NOT wear clothing of any flammable material like polyester or nylon when working around a flame.

Hair

If you have long hair tie it back. The smell of burning hair can be distracting when you're trying to create glass art in the flame.

Arm Rest

If you work for long periods you should arrange some way to rest your arms. Working around fire with tired arms increases the likelihood you will come in too close contact with the flame.