

New Member Guide

What to expect as a new member: orientation, expectations, everyday membership questions.

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Welcome

How this knowledge base works and how to find your way around WMI.

Welcome

What the Knowledge Base Is and How It Is Organized

What this is

This is the Waukesha Makerspace (WMI) Knowledge Base: the place for how the space actually works. It holds finished reference material: safety rules, shop rules, how to use equipment, how the facility runs, and the policies the board has adopted.

Almost everything here is public. Anyone can read it, including people who are thinking about joining, so you can see how the space works before you sign up.

What is not here

Some things live in other places so there is only ever one copy to keep up to date:

- **Joining, membership rates and events:** waukeshamakers.com
- **Equipment inventory** (what tools we have and where they are): [Atlas](#)
- **Your certifications** (which tools you are checked off on): [Journeyman](#)
- **Day-to-day conversation, questions and announcements:** the WMI Discord (see [Getting Around](#))

Drafts, proposals and committee notes are not published here. A policy only gets a page once the board adopts it.

How it is organized

The Knowledge Base is arranged in shelves, each holding one or more books:

Shelf	What you will find
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Start Here	This New Member Guide: expectations, orientation, membership life and the FAQ
Safety	Shop Safety: general rules, PPE, hazards, emergencies and broken equipment
Shop and Equipment	Training and Certification, plus one book per shop area (Wood Shop, Metal Shop, Digital Fabrication, Electronics Lab, Fiber Arts, Flex Space) with an overview, equipment SOPs and maintenance
Facility	Facility Operations: hours and access, layout, shared spaces, cleanup, trash and materials
Community	Shop Rules, Volunteer Runbooks, and Classes and Instructors
Organization and Board	Founding documents, the board, meeting summaries, committees and adopted Policies
Members and Board	Member Access (visible to signed-in members only) and the Board Handbook (board only)

Signing in

You can read the public books without an account. Members sign in to see the **Member Access** book, which covers things like opening and closing the shop.

Reading an SOP is not training

Equipment pages explain how a tool works at WMI, but reading one never replaces hands-on training. You must be checked off on a tool before you use it. See **How Certification Works** in the Training and Certification book.

Spotted something wrong?

If a page is out of date or missing something, say so on Discord or tell a board member so it can be fixed.

Welcome

Expectations and Responsibilities

Waukesha Makerspace is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit run entirely by volunteers. There is no staff cleaning up after people or fixing things behind the scenes. The space works because members look after it and each other. This page sums up what that means for you.

Our mission

- Make tools, education and space accessible to all.
- Empower people to learn, share and create.
- Foster a kind and collaborative community.

Be safe

- **Get trained first.** All corded tools require training before use. Even experienced pros must complete training on certain equipment. See **How Certification Works**.
- **Inspect before you use.** We are hackers at heart, and equipment here may be modified beyond its factory state. Always assume a tool has been altered and check it thoroughly before use. Training gives you the inside scoop on how our tools differ from ones you may know.
- **Wear the right PPE.** See **Personal Protective Equipment** in Shop Safety.
- **Never use power tools while impaired:** after drinking alcohol, when drowsy, or otherwise not at your best.
- **Speak up.** If you see something unsafe, say something, kindly. We are all here to learn and keep each other safe.
- **Working alone is allowed,** but let someone know you are in the space, especially if you are doing something that could be dangerous. A post in #general on Discord works. See **Working Alone** in Shop Safety.

Take care of the space

- **Clean up after yourself.** Leave every area as good as or better than you found it.
- **Empty full trash cans,** and take food and food waste out of the building with you. See **Trash, Recycling and Hazardous Waste.**
- **Label everything you leave behind** with your name and the date. Anything left without a name is considered community property and may be used, moved or repurposed.
- **Store things only in designated areas or on carts,** and keep walkways clear. If a project is big, put it on wheels so others can move it. See the **Storage Policy.**
- **Keep the building secure.** WMI is not open to the public. Never leave doors unlocked or propped open.
- **Take initiative.** If you see something that needs doing, do it.

Respect each other

- Everyone is learning. No judgment.
- Assume good intent, and be patient and helpful.
- Many people in makerspaces are neurodivergent in some way. Personalities can clash even when everyone means well, so practice patience, empathy and clear communication.

Follow the shop rules

The full list of what is and is not allowed is in **Facility Use and Prohibited Activities** in the Shop Rules book. A few that new members most often ask about:

- No making guns or gun parts.
- Guests may tour but may not use any equipment. See **Guests, Family Members and Pets.**
- Tools may not leave the building without prior board approval.
- Donations of tools, equipment or materials must be approved by an area coordinator or the board **before** you bring them in. Do not drop off unapproved items.

Pay your dues and keep your profile current

Dues keep the rent paid, the lights on and the tools maintained. Manage your membership, payments and contact details in your member profile at waukeshamakers.com. Current rates are

always on the website. For help, email info@waukeshamakers.com.

Pitch in

This community only works if people help it work. Volunteers lead orientations, trainings, cleanups and events, and volunteering is a great way to meet people and build skills. Everyone has something to share. Ask in [#general](#) on Discord or talk to a board member to get involved.

Welcome

Getting Around

WMI runs on a handful of online tools. Here is what each one is for.

Discord: talk to people

Discord is the main place members talk, ask for help and get updates.

- **#general:** introduce yourself here when you join. It is also where you let people know you are in the space, and where you can reach a board member.
- **#members:** ask questions about tools and how to do things.
- Share your progress, ask for help and connect with other members.

You get connected to Discord at orientation. If you missed it, ask a board member.

waukeshamakers.com: your membership

The website is where you:

- Log in to your **member profile** to pay dues or make donations, set up or manage automatic renewal, update your contact information and change your membership level.
- Use the **Members Directory** (login required) to find other members and message them through their profiles.
- Find events, classes, open houses and current membership rates.

For help with billing, access or your profile, email info@waukeshamakers.com.

This Knowledge Base: how things work

Safety rules, shop rules, equipment SOPs, facility information and adopted policies. See **What the Knowledge Base Is and How It Is Organized**.

Atlas: what equipment we have

[Atlas](#) is the inventory of tools and equipment and where they live in the shop.

Journeyman: your certifications

[Journeyman](#) records which tools each member is checked off on. See **How Certification Works**.

Orientation

What happens at New Member Orientation and what to bring.

What to Expect at Orientation

New Member Orientation is your first step into the community. It is **required for all new members** before you use the shop or take part in community activities. It is led by a member volunteer.

Signing up

Orientation sessions are listed as events on waukeshamakers.com. To register you need the **registration code** from the confirmation email you received after applying for membership. If you cannot find it, reach out to a board member or contact us through the website.

If none of the listed dates work for you, check back; new sessions are added.

How long it takes

Plan on **60 to 90 minutes**.

What to bring

- A government-issued photo ID.
- Your completed liability waiver, or plan to fill it out on site. The form is the **WMI Participant Release Form**.
- Comfortable, closed-toe shoes. You may walk through active shop areas.
- Any questions you have.

What is covered

1. **Welcome and introductions.** Who we are, our mission, and a little history.
2. **Facility tour and safety essentials.** The conference room, the labs and shops, restroom and storage; where the emergency exits, fire extinguishers and first aid kit are; what to do in an emergency; how tool training works; and how to report accidents or near misses.
3. **Space operations and conduct.** Building security, prohibited activities, cleanup, storage and labeling, guests, commercial use and donations. These are written up in **Expectations and Responsibilities** and the Shop Rules book.
4. **Membership and access.** How your access works, how to pay dues and manage your profile, and how to connect with other members.
5. **Questions and wrap-up.**

Before you leave

- Make sure your **liability waiver** is signed.
- Get your **access set up**: your app access activated, or your key fob tested, depending on your membership.
- Get connected on **Discord**, the **Members Directory** and this Knowledge Base.

If you are using app access, watch for your activation email after orientation. You have a limited window (currently 5 days) to activate your account, so do not miss it.

After orientation

Orientation does not check you off on any tools. Before you use a tool, you need to be trained on it. If there is time at the end, ask whether a member familiar with an area can sign you off. See **How Certification Works** for the full process.

Membership Life

Guests, family, selling what you make, reimbursements, pausing or leaving.

Guests, Family Members and Pets

You are welcome to bring people (and animals) to the space, within a few rules that keep everyone safe.

Guests

- **Guests may tour the space, but may not use any equipment under any circumstances.** Only active members who have completed the proper training may operate tools and machines.
- **You are responsible for your guests** while they are in the space.
- The WMI Participant Release Form covers participants and their guests. Ask a board member if your guest needs to sign one.
- **Guests at conference room events** must stay in the conference room and restrooms and be accompanied by their host at all times. Guests may use tools at a hosted event only if that use is part of the event and the board has approved it in advance. See the **Conference Room Policy**.

To be confirmed: whether every guest must sign a release form before entering, or only in certain cases.

Minors

- **No one under 18 is allowed in the shop**, except during special events or with board approval.
- The board adopted a **Minor Safety Policy** on 2026-07-21 that covers minors in hazardous work areas. See **Minors in the Shop** in Shop Safety, and the full policy in the Policies book.

Family members

WMI offers family memberships. Current options and rates are on waukeshamakers.com.

To be confirmed: who a family membership covers, whether each family member must attend orientation, and how training applies to each family member.

Pets

- Pets must be **leashed or under your full control** at all times.

To be confirmed: whether any areas of the shop are off-limits to pets.

Making Things to Sell

This page will explain the rules for commercial use of the shop: making items to sell, which materials you may use for that work, and what WMI asks in return.

Until the board adopts a rule, the guidance given at orientation is: use your own materials for anything you sell, and it is good form (optional) to contribute 5 to 10 percent of your sales back to the space.

This page is being written. The board owns the commercial use rule and will publish it here once it is adopted.

Getting Reimbursed for Shop Purchases

This page will explain how to get approval before buying something for the shop, and how to submit receipts to be reimbursed. It will follow the Expense Reimbursement and Financial Controls policy, which is planned but not yet adopted (see the **Policy Register**).

This page is being written. Until it is published, ask the treasurer (treasurer@waukeshamakers.com) before you spend money on behalf of WMI.

Pausing or Leaving Your Membership

This page will cover what to do when you pause or end your membership: returning or deactivating your key fob, clearing out anything you have in storage, and what happens to your Discord access.

What we know today: if a membership is not renewed, access is paused after a 7-day grace period and the account becomes dormant. You can reactivate it later with a paid membership. Manage your membership in your profile at waukeshamakers.com, or email info@waukeshamakers.com for help.

This page is being written. Until it is published, email info@waukeshamakers.com before you leave so your fob and storage can be sorted out.

FAQ

Common member questions.

Member FAQ

Access and hours

When can I get in? Members with a paid Monthly or Annual membership have 24/7 access. New members in their introductory period get access through the mobile app. See **Hours and Access**.

Which door do I use? The rear door. The front door is only used for public events.

Can I let someone in who is not a member? You can bring guests to tour the space, but they may not use any equipment. Never leave a door unlocked or propped open. See **Guests, Family Members and Pets**.

Tools and training

Can I use a tool I already know how to use? Not until you are checked off on it here. All corded tools require training, even for experienced pros, because our equipment may be modified. See **How Certification Works**.

Where can I see what equipment we have? In [Atlas](#).

Can I borrow a tool to use at home? Not without prior board approval.

A tool is broken. What do I do? Stop using it, tag it out of service and report it. See **Tagging a Tool Out of Service and Reporting It** in Shop Safety.

Materials and storage

Can I use the shop's materials and scrap? Shop materials and scrap are for members with a paid Monthly or Annual membership. During the introductory period, bring your own. For anything you plan to sell, use your own materials. See **Consumables** and **Scrap, Shared Materials and Recycling**.

Can I leave my project here? Only in a designated storage area or on a cart with working wheels, labeled with your name and the date. Unlabeled items are treated as community property. See the **Storage Policy**.

Is the free shelf a lost and found? No. Anything on the free shelf is free to take. Items left there for more than two months are put into long-term storage or donated.

Can I donate tools or materials? Yes, but get approval from an area coordinator or the board **before** you bring them in.

Everyday life in the shop

Can I play music? Yes. On weekdays from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM keep the volume down for our neighboring businesses. Outside those hours, just be courteous to other members. See **Parking, Loading and Neighbors**.

Can I eat in the shop? Yes, but take your food and food trash with you when you leave. Food left overnight attracts pests.

Can I use the conference room? Any member can use it when it is free. Reservations are only needed for hosted events. See the **Conference Room Policy**.

Can I have packages delivered to the space? No. Do not use the space's address for personal shipments, forms or correspondence without board approval.

Membership and money

How much is membership? Current rates are always on waukeshamakers.com.

How do I pay dues or change my membership? Log in to your member profile at waukeshamakers.com. You can also mail a payment or use the secure drop box in the lab; put your name on it and a note saying what it is for.

What if my payment is late? There is a 7-day grace period before access is paused.

Who do I ask for help? Email info@waukeshamakers.com, ask in #general on Discord, or talk to a board member.

Safety

What do I do in an emergency? Call 911. Evacuate the building for fire, chemical spills or other hazardous conditions. See **Emergency Information** in Shop Safety.

How do I report an accident or near miss? Email info@waukeshamakers.com or message a board member in #general on Discord. See **Incident and Near-Miss Reporting**.

Is the space on camera? Yes. The space has security cameras for the safety of members and property. Footage is reviewed only when needed for security or an incident report.