

How to Level a Kiln

by Arnold Howard

Photography Courtesy of Paragon Industries, LP.

Though Arnold Howard works for Paragon Industries, L.P., the information here applies to all brands of glass kilns. Feel free to send questions for this column no matter what brand of kiln you own.

How important is it for a kiln stand to be level?

It's very important for the kiln stand to be steady and level. A kiln that rocks when you lean against it can develop cracks due to uneven stresses against the firing chamber. If the kiln is unlevel, glass projects can also become distorted. However, the smaller the kiln and the smaller the glass pieces that you make, the less critical it is that the kiln is level. This would apply, for example, if you have a small tabletop kiln such as the 8" x 8" (203 mm x 203 mm) Caldera or SC-2. Here are some tips for making sure that your kiln is level.

1. Place a spirit level on the kiln floor, checking the level from front to back and side to side. Adjust the kiln until the bubble is centered between the two lines in the spirit level.

To check the accuracy of your level, place it in the kiln and note the position of the bubble in the glass tube. Turn the level 180 degrees so the side of the level that was on the left side of the firing chamber is now on the right side. The bubble should be in the same position as before.

2. To level the kiln, place a shim under the appropriate kiln stand leg or legs. If your kiln has leveling feet, turn the adjustable leveling bolts with a box-end wrench to change the height of the stand legs. Take your time when leveling the kiln. Once it's level and steady, tighten the leveling feet lock nuts.

3. If your kiln has casters but no leveling feet, place a shim under the appropriate caster or casters to level the kiln. The shims should be large enough to keep the kiln level should the casters move. The shims should be sheet metal of about 8" x 8" (203 mm x 203 mm) in size. Once the kiln is level, lock the casters.

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Arnold Howard writes instruction manuals and advertisements for Paragon Industries, L.P. His hobbies are glass fusing and karate. He also enjoys studying history and watching classic movies. You can reach Arnold at ahoward@paragonweb.com with questions for future columns. Sign up for his kiln newsletter at www.paragonweb.com.



Place the level on the kiln shelf and take readings from several directions.



After adjusting the leveling feet, tighten the lock nuts. Also lock any casters that are resting against the floor after you have adjusted the leveling feet.