Frequently asked questions

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How do I become a member?

1. Go to https://www.bellinghammakerspace.org and click "Become a Member".
2. Pick the membership tier that best fits your needs.
3. Fill out the registration form and click "Become a Member". You will be redirected to Paypal for payment.
4. Once you complete your registration, you'll get a welcome email . Click the link for EventBrite and sign up for a makerspace orientation session.

What tools can I use?

The makerspace classifies tools into two categories: simple and complex.

Simple tools are those that require no in-person training, are often portable, and would cause limited or minimal injury or damage if misused. Examples of simple tools include:

- hand sewing equipment, such as needles and thread
- basic hand tools such as screwdrivers, hammers, tape measures, speed squares, etc.
- cordless drills
- the Cricut vinyl cutter
- crafting supplies such as paper, glue, tape, acrylic or tempura paint, etc.
- computer lab computers and laser printers
- cleaning equipment and supplies

Any member can use simple tools at any time.

Complex tools are those that require training, are usually not portable, and would cause significant damage or injury if misused. Members **must** be trained and certified by an area lead prior to using complex tools. Examples of complex tools include:

- the laser cutter or engraver
- 3D printers
- any woodshop power saws, planers, jointers, or sanders
- any metalworking or jewelry making equipment
- sewing machines
- the upright vinyl cutter
- the X-Carve and Shapeoko CNC wood milling machines
- hot-air rework equipment
- any other equipment marked with a "Training required" tag or sticker

All complex tools are marked with "Training Required" stickers. If you have any questions about simple vs. complex tools, please talk to a staff member, area lead, or board member.

When can I use my key card to get in?

Members have key-card access via the back door 7 days a week during normal Bellis Fair mall hours.

This includes days when we are not staffed or the mall is closed for holidays.

What's the wifi password?

SSID	**bmswifi1**
Password	**makestuff**

What is new member orientation?

If you are a new member, orientation is mandatory. We do this in order to ensure that all members understand our safety procedures, the general layout of the shop, and who to contact if there's a problem.

If you are a returning member (e.g., you paused or cancelled your membership and are now rejoining), you do **not** need to retake your orientation if less than 6 months has passed since you were last a member. If more than 6 months has passed, please sign up for an orientation session as a refresher on shop policy and procedures.

Member orientations are free, and are held on the following schedule:

- first and third Saturdays of every month at 12pm
- second and fourth Sundays of every month at 4pm

This allows us to most efficiently schedule staff time, and also gives you a chance to meet other new members. If you cannot make a scheduled orientation session, please email info@bellinghammakerspace.org to schedule an orientation session with a staff member.

Can non-members use makerspace tools?

No. Only members are allowed to use makerspace tools.

Can I borrow a tool?

Members may not borrow or take home tools for personal use.

Members *may* take some makerspace equipment off-site for use in educational, community outreach, or publicity events (e.g. a community block party, school presentation, Maker Faire, etc.) under the following conditions:

1. They have received prior written authorization from the area captain in charge of that tool area OR the operations manager;
2. They return the equipment within 24 hours of the event;
3. All equipment is returned with a detailed report of any damage or consumable expenditure; and
4. They take at least 2 photos that can be used by the social media team (post in #social-media on Slack).

Members who take equipment off-site without prior authorization will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of membership.

I need to leave my project overnight. How do I do this?

If the project is smaller than a pizza box:

Fill out a parking permit card with:

- your first and last name
- phone number,
- email address,
- description of the project
- when/how it can be safely moved
- when you will be back to retrieve it (no later than 72 hours)

Leave the parking permit card attached to your project. Leave the project in an unobtrusive location, such as one of the round tables in the classroom area.

If the project is larger than a pizza box:

Get prior approval (in person, via email, or on Slack) from one of the following:

- the operations manager
- an area captain
- a board member

Fill out a parking permit card with the information above, along with the name of the person who approved your permit.

Visibly attach the permit to your project and place the project in the parking lot (back corner behind the bathroom and cleaning closet).

Any projects left for more than 72 hours will be placed in locked storage until the owner contacts the operations manager. Any projects left for more than a month are subject to appropriation by the Makerspace, and will be disposed of in whatever manner seen fit by the operations manager.

Where do I find X?

1. Search this wiki.
2. Ask in the #general channel on Slack.
3. Ask another member in person.

Once you find it, add a page here in the appropriate book. :)

Does the makerspace own a Wowbagger XL 7000 (or any other tool)?

It's entirely possible! We own lots of tools that are used by our members every day.

The best way to find out is to search this wiki, then ask in the #general channel on Slack, then ask a human being.

There's an urgent problem at the makerspace. What do I do?

First of all, if the problem will not:

- immediately threaten anybody's health or safety
- destroy the building in the next 24 hours
- destroy anybody's personal property in the next 24 hours
- destroy any makerspace property in the next 24 hours
- get exponentially worse in the next 24 hours

It is not urgent.

If the problem meets any of these criteria, please do one or more of the following:

1. Contact anybody on the phone list. The phone lists can be found
    1. by the back door
    2. at the front desk
    3. on the bulletin board by the woodshop door
2. Call Bellis Fair Mall management. They can be reached at (360) 671-5895. Their offices are over by JCPenney.
3. Call 911.

How do I re-activate my membership?

If you want to reactivate your membership, simply log into Memberpress (https://members.bellinghammakerspace.org) and either unpause your membership or sign up for a new subscription.

If you want to activate your membership for only one month, just pay for one month. Otherwise, set up recurring payments.

How do I cancel my membership?

1. Log into the member management system.
2. Click "Subscriptions"
3. In the menu next to your membership, click "Pause" or "Cancel".
4. Email treasurer@bellinghammakerspace.org to let them know you're stopping your membership. This lets us know to deactivate your keycard.

I am a retired master craftsperson. Do I still have to take tool orientation classes?

Yes.

Here's why:

1. Our insurance carrier requires us to train members in our safety and security procedures.
2. You may have used your tools, but you haven't used *our* tools in *our* shop. To ensure that everybody can safely use the tools, we need to make sure everybody takes the same orientation class.
3. Orientation isn't just about teaching you to use the tools -- it's also about teaching you when you **shouldn't** use the tools. For example, certain types of wood will trigger the safety sensor on our SawStop table saw, which will render it inoperable until a new cartridge can be installed. Tool orientation classes cover these types of scenarios, as well as what to do when you find a tool in an inoperable or dangerous state.
4. If you don't have time to do something correctly, when are you going to have time to do it again?

I am giving someone a gift tomorrow and I really need to use a tool to finish it. Can I join and finish my project this afternoon?

Short answer: no.

Long answer: Every single time we've tried this, it's ended with a ruined project and everybody frustrated. We simply cannot sign up, onboard, and train every member who walks in the door, help them with their project, and also expect to get anything else done.

That's why we've moved to scheduled orientations and tool training sessions; it's a much more effective use of everybody's time, and it lets our staff and volunteers plan ahead to accommodate the needs of the community.