

# Epilog Helix Laser Cutter Policy

## About the Epilog

The Epilog Helix Laser Cutter is a laser cutting and etching machine that can accommodate projects with dimensions up to 18"x24". It uses raster image files to etch designs, and vector image files to cut through materials. It also features a rotary attachment to etch curved surfaces. CorelDraw is a powerful graphics design software that is available for use in making laser projects.

There are few libraries in the United States that offer free access to the Epilog Helix Laser Cutter--your library is one! We need your help to keep this machine accessible to everyone in the community. The Epilog Helix Laser Cutter retails for \$17,000. Repairs are costly, and we cannot replace this machine if it is permanently damaged.

We require patrons who improperly use the machine, fail to follow policies and procedures, or make mistakes that cause unnecessary wear and damage to the machine to re-certify. If issues persist after re-certification, we may ban patrons from use of the machine.

## Age Requirements

Age 18+

## Consumables

You must supply your own consumables for use with the Epilog Helix laser cutter. STEAM Central staff will need to inspect your material to ensure it can be cut safely in the machine.

## Certification Requirements

- The Epilog requires a certification class and appointment before use.
- Epilog Laser Cutter Certification Class is required for basic usage of the long arm:
  - Pre-requisite: Niche Academy on-line certification
  - Hands-on, in-person certification
- **Class participants are required to complete the Niche Academy tutorials before the hands-on certification appointment.**
- If more than 6 months have passed since a patron's last use of this machine, they will be required to re-certify to refresh their skills and knowledge.

## Allowed Materials

These materials are safe to use in this machine, with a maximum dimension of 18"x24", and a maximum material thickness of 8.5". The laser can cut through up to ¼" through cuttable materials. Please consult

the table below to see which materials can be engraved and cut, and which are only able to be engraved.

<b>Material</b>	<b>Engraving</b>	<b>Cutting</b>
Wood	X	X
Acrylic	X	X
Fabric	X	X
Cardboard	X	X
Matte Board	X	X
Pressboard	X	X
Rubber	X	X
Cloth	X	X
Leather	X	X
Cork	X	X
Marble	X	
Painted Metals	X	
Glass	X	
Coated Metals	X	
Ceramic	X	

If a material is not listed above, please check with a STEAM Central staff member to verify whether it may be compatible with our laser cutter.



## **Disallowed Materials**

These materials are unsafe to use in this machine. They may be extremely flammable, or can emit harmful gases. You may not use the following materials under any circumstances.

- PVC
- HDPE (milk bottle plastic)
- Polystyrene foam
- Fiberglass
- Polypropylene foam

## **Before Use**

Every patron is required to pass a certification course for this equipment before a reservation can be made.

Once you have passed a certification course for this equipment, you can schedule an appointment through the Acuity Scheduling software on the Tom Green County Library website, located at the following link: <http://tgclibrary.com/steamcentralreservations.asp>

Upon arriving for your reservation, you must show a STEAM Central staff member the material you intend to cut. If the material cannot be correctly identified, you will not be able to use material in laser cutter.

During your reservation, you will have access to a STEAM Central laptop with a copy of the graphic design program Corel Draw. You can use Corel Draw to make adjustments to your designs and create vector graphics for cutting. You will also use Corel Draw to submit your designs to the laser cutter for engraving/cutting. The password for logging into the laptop will be: steam2016

You may bring your design on a flash drive, retrieve it from an email or cloud storage site, or download it from the Internet. STEAM Central staff do not provide designs or make any guarantee that your design will be suitable for the laser cutter.

Inspect the Epilog Helix laser cutter, the laser filter cabinet, the air compressor, the laptop, and all power cords before use. If any of the power cords are damaged or the machine is not working as expected, notify a STEAM Central staff member immediately.

## **During Use**

You are required to watch over the laser cutter during the entirety of the engraving/cutting process. If you need to leave the laser cutter at any time, you must pause the laser cutting job and notify a STEAM Central staff member on the status of your job and that you will need to leave the space.

Notify a STEAM Central staff member if your material is not cutting properly, or if you see an abnormal amount of smoke and/or flames.

**In the event of material catching fire, call a STEAM Central staff member over to the laser cutter immediately and begin following these steps:**

1. Turn off the laser cutter and the air compressor. If the fire does not go out after a few seconds, move to the next step.
2. Grab a water bottle and spray the material. If possible, try to move the laser cutter's arm out of the way to avoid getting moisture on the laser cutter lens. If the water spray is not enough to put the fire out, move to the next step.
3. Remove the fire blanket from the column next to the laser cutter and drape it completely over the machine to smother the fire. If necessary, grab the fire extinguisher and spray the fire as well. If the fire does not go out after using the fire blanket and fire extinguisher, get a safe distance away from the fire and follow all directions from the STEAM Central staff member present.

**After Use**

When the engraving/cutting job is done, remove your material from the laser cutter.

Remove any debris or scraps leftover from your material from the machine and throw them away.

Turn off the laser cutter, the laser filter cabinet, and the air compressor.

Exit the Corel Draw program, and save your design if necessary. NOTE: Designs saved on the STEAM Central laptop are subject to periodic deletion, so make sure that you have a copy of your design backed up if you will need to use it again in the future.

Log out of any accounts on the laptop before powering it off.

Inform a STEAM Central staff member that you are finished, and return any STEAM Central supplies that were used during your reservation.

**For further information:**

Please contact a STEAM Central staff member via phone at (325) 655-7321, or you may email the STEAM Central supervisor, Casey Dees, at [john.dees@co.tom-green.tx.us](mailto:john.dees@co.tom-green.tx.us).