

Commonly asked firing questions

Does the cone in a kiln measure temperature?

Cones don't really measure temperature, they measure an amount of heat absorbed (time and temperature). As the cone nears its maturing range, it softens and the tip begins to bend, drawn down by the influence of gravity. It typically takes 10 to 20 minutes for the cone to bend fully. Each higher cone number requires more heat to bend. When heated at a constant rate, the cone numbers do indicate a particular temperature was reached. For example at a slower heating rate of 108 degrees F per hour, an Orton Self Supporting cone 06 will fully deform at the 6 o'clock (or 90 degree) position at 1819 degrees F. If heated at the faster rate of 270 degrees F per hour, it will reach the 6 o'clock position at 1834 degrees F.

Do cones age or go bad?

Cones do not change with time, even if they are exposed to humidity. Cones which have become wet can still be dried and used, but it is usually safer to discard if there is any question about the cone. Be sure to check the number on the cone, if using an opened box.

Orton cones are measured against standards and do not vary batch to batch. Cones purchased this year will behave the same as those bought 2 years ago.