

Risk assessment

Name of Section or Activity	Use of Knives Saws & Axes	Date of risk assessment	8 th December 2020	Name of who undertook this risk assessment	Paul Woodward
		Date of next review	September 2026		

Hazard Identified? / Risks from it?	Who is at risk?	How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed?	What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
<i>Hazard – something that may cause harm or damage. Risk – the chance of it happening.</i>	Young people, Leaders, Visitors?	Controls – Ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. <i>For example - you might use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way the activity is carried out.</i>	Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change it...or even stop it! This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.
Hazard: Cut from tool	Young people Leaders By-standers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Briefing to be given to all users prior to the start of the activity. Instructors to position themselves so that they can observe all participants and by-standers. Safety instructions given and participants to carry out instruction one at a time. Ensure all wood to be cut is stable with no risk of slipping and no risk of blade slipping into people Ensure appropriate footwear and clothing is worn and hair tied back etc. 	
Hazard: Falling on tool	Young people Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants warned not to walk/run when carrying knives. Participants to be trained in how to hold tools whilst moving around 	
Hazard: Harming other people	Young people Leaders By-standers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to carry out the training and drills individually and away from other people Sharps only to be used in designated areas with sufficient space between users 	
Hazard: Cutting hand whilst whittling sticks	Young people Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants instructed how to use the knife to whittle the stick. I.e. away from their body. 	
Hazard: Cutting fingers whilst chopping food	Young people Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants instructed how to use the knife to cut a carrot or other food. I.e. holding the food with fingers correctly. 	
Hazard: Storing Equipment, injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users to return all sharps after they have been used, All equipment to be stored appropriately away from young participants and with sheathes where necessary 	

Additional information can be found in the [Safety Checklist for Leaders](https://scouts.org.uk/safety) and other information at scouts.org.uk/safety

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Hazard: Faulty Equipment, Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment to be checked for faults before each session Any Damaged or Faulty Equipment to be reported to the QM 	
Hazard: Misuse of Equipment	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only use under the supervision of an instructor or designated leader Tools only used for appropriate activity Consider excluding those who endanger themselves or others 	
Behaviour	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioural expectations of all persons involved in the activity to be briefed before the activity commences. 	
Supervision	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision of YP to be within minimum ratios as specified in POR. 	
First Aid	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one leader to hold a current first aid qualification and to have easy access to a first aid kit suitable for the Activity. 	

Checked by Line Manager	Tris Cocks GSL 11 th December 2020	Checked by Executive	Lesley Dingle Group Chair 11 th February 2022
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Version Control

Date	Version	Changed by	Comments
8 th December 2020	1	Paul Woodward	Initial Version
28 th August 2023	1.1	Paul Woodward	Reviewed
10 th November 2024	1.2	Paul Woodward	Reviewed
17 th February 2026	1.3	Paul Woodward	Reviewed

Additional information can be found in the *Safety Checklist for Leaders* and other information at scouts.org.uk/safety

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Additional Notes

For additional information please refer to the Scout Association Axe and Saw Safety sheet attached or from the [Scout Website](#)



Scout Association
Axe and Saw Safety

Scout Policy (2016)

Knives should be considered as a tool and treated as such. Those who are going to use them should get training for their use, as you would for a saw or an axe. Knives are an offensive weapon so great care should be taken when dealing with them. When undertaking training at the Scout HQ, knives should be taken to and from Scouts by an adult. When taking a knife to camp, they should be securely stowed in the middle of the rucksack or bag.

If you consider a knife as a tool, then you should use the appropriate tool for the job. The vast majority of Scouts use will only require the use of a pen or clasp knife, the cutting of string, cooking or whittling. Where you have a larger task, such as splitting wood, a larger knife such as a sheath knife may be appropriate. If you relate this to axes, you would not use a hand axe to fell a tree, nor a felling axe to split wood.

There is an issue with regard to clasp knives and lock knives. A lock knife is one where the blade stays open unless some mechanism is used to close the blade. In the eyes of the Law, this is more of an offensive weapon than a standard clasp knife because of this multiple action. From a safety point of view, a lock knife cannot fold onto the user's fingers and may be better.

The carriage of knives is also to be considered. If a knife is considered as a tool, you would only really carry the knife when there is an expectation to use the tool, after all, you wouldn't carry an axe around a campsite on the off chance of coming across some wood to chop. Therefore, knives when not being used should be stowed away until such time as they are needed. Legally, you are not allowed to carry a knife in a public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse. A campsite, which may technically be private property as it is owned by a District or County, is considered as public property because of its use. Knives should not be carried unless they are going to be used and should be put away when not in use.