

Risk assessment

Name of Section or Activity	Bushcraft Includes - Fire lighting, Backwoods Cooking, Shelter Building, use of Axe, Knives & Saws and Pond dipping	Date of risk assessment	08 December 2020	Name of who undertook this risk assessment	Paul Woodward
		Date of next review	September 2026		

General Bushcraft Risks

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?
Hazard – something that may cause harm or damage. Risk – the chance of it happening.	Young people, Leaders, Visitors?	Controls – Ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. For example - you might use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way the activity is carried out.	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.
Slips, Trips & Falls - Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area to be checked for trip hazards prior to commencing activity Any fixed hazards that cannot be moved shall identified and all participants prior to the activity commencing All Persons shall be warned about hazardous areas 	
Activity Equipment - Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Equipment shall be checked for damage. Any defects are to be reported to the QM Equipment is to be set up by competent persons. 	
Weather – Sunstroke, Hypothermia, Sunburn,	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather to be checked prior to commencing activity; Activity to be modified to suit weather conditions. Correct Clothing for weather to be checked prior to commencing activity i.e. Waterproofs, Sun hat, Coat, Hat etc. 	
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. Instructor and leaders to ensure participants always have appropriate medication with them. For example, asthma inhaler, epipen 	

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

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Fire Lighting

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?
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Burns – Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated area to be used for Fire lighting. No running / horseplay in the fire area. • Fire buckets to be within easy reach of the fire • Matches to be stored in a sealed dry container and issued in small numbers to responsible participants. • Training to be given to all participants on how to correctly use Matches and Lighters • Participants to be briefed on the dangers of fire lighting and the following rules explained ; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No picking up burning wood ○ No throwing objects into the fire ○ No loose clothing around the fire (Including Scarfs) ○ Participants to behave sensibly around the fire ○ Wood to be lowered onto the fire by holding one end with fingers near to the ground. • Flammable Liquids to be stored in a sealed container and kept well away from fire and naked flames. • Leaders shall only use small portions of flammable liquids for priming a fire where required. Meths or Paraffin only; No explosive liquids such as Petrol. 	
Pollutants / toxic smoke - Illness	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 'Natural' wood to be used for cooking purposed, i.e. not chemically treated (Tanalised) or painted wood. • Leaders to check condition of wood from wood piles for suitability prior to use. • Do not allow the burning of Live trees or Plastics 	
Collecting Wood - Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief to include staying within a designated area, not running, • Brief to include not moving big heavy objects (consider using a benchmark such as no thicker than your wrist) and not to carry too much at one time. • Participants to be reminded about the possibility of Splinters and to avoid any wood that looks like a potential hazard. 	

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Uncontrolled Fire – Burns, damage to equipment and Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fires to be kept away from, and downwind of any Tents and Flammable materials If lighting a fire on the ground, the area around the fire shall be cleared of combustible material. Do not light a fire on Peat areas and under trees Fires shall be kept maintained within an alter fire, or a ring of suitable stones Fires shall be as small as possible whilst still being suitable to meet requirements Spectators to be kept a suitable distance away from the fire There is to be a clear escape route away from the fire Fire buckets to be within easy reach of the fire. Fire to be extinguished when no longer required, 	
Extinguished Fires – Re-ignition and burns	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extinguished Fires that are not to be relit in the near future are to be doused with water to ensure that no embers remain and there is no risk of re-ignition All participants to be warned that ash from extinguished fires can still be hot - even though there are no flames or smoke present. 	

Backwoods Cooking

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Burns from hot food	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants reminded that food removed from a fire is still hot. Food removed from the fire using tongs or heatproof gloves Instructor to remove tin foil for younger participants 	
Food poisoning	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All meat must be checked prior to consumption Participant to sanitise their hands before food preparation and then again before consuming food 	

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Allergic reactions	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors will be made aware of any special dietary requirements within the group 	
Injury from cooking utensils	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors to brief participants in the safe method of using utensils (knives etc.). 	

Shelter Building

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Moving construction material	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief to include staying within a designated area, not running, not moving object which are too big and heavy, (consider using a benchmark such as no thicker than your arm) Participants to be reminded to ask for help with large and long objects along with awareness of others and not carrying too much at one time. No throwing of objects 	
Shelter collapse	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor to visually and if necessary, physically check structures for stability before structure is used Instructor to ensure supervision of the area and construction 	
Falling objects	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor to check for potential deadfall in the area 	
Scratches and splinters	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor to warn group about the possibility of splinters and avoid any wood which looks like a hazard 	
Rope burn	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using rope or string instructor to ensure it is being used appropriately 	

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Axe, knives and saw use

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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 bystanders. • 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. 	
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 	
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 	
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. 	
Faulty Equipment	Young People Leaders Visitors	<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 	
Misuse	Young People Leaders Visitors	<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 	

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Pond Dipping and Minibeast Hunting

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Cold water shock and drowning	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group briefed not to go in the water Group briefed to dip from designated areas only; younger groups to have increased supervision 	
Equipment misuse	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group briefed on appropriate use of equipment 	
Individual health	Young People Leaders Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group briefed to wash hands after activity Instructor and leaders to ensure participants always have appropriate medication with them. For example asthma inhaler, epipen 	

<p>Checked by Line Manager</p> <p>Tris Cocks GSL 16th December 2020</p>	<p>Checked by Executive</p> <p>Lesley Dingle Group Chair 11th February 2021</p>
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Version Control

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

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