

Knife Safety

Earning the Whittling Chip

This document is intended to help guide Den Leaders in conducting knife safety instruction for Bears and Webelos. The intent would be for Cub Scouts to earn their Whittling Chip after going through the instruction. The Whittling Chip card should be awarded immediately after instruction. If the Den Leader chooses to award the Whittling Chip patch, it should be awarded at the next pack meeting.

The text of this document includes safety rules, knife selection, knife care, knife sharpening, and activities for practice. There is also a Safety Quiz and a “fill in the blanks” exercise for the Pocketknife Pledge. This document is a guide, not a word by word lecture.

When conducting knife safety instruction, it is very important to have an adult (parent or guardian) with every cub. Safety and supervision is extremely important.

Supplies needed: 1) There is a knife safety kit in the Cub Scout closet. It includes several knives and different types of sharpening stones. The adults accompanying the cubs should bring an appropriate knife for the cub to use. This knife needs to be checked by the Den Leader before allowing use. 2) Den Leaders will need to get enough bars of soap for each member of the den. Ivory soap works well for this exercise. 3) You will need enough drop clothes to collect the debris from the boys to practicing whittling with a par of soap. 3) Den Leaders will need to get enough Whittling Chip cards to award to the boys. (The awards chairperson can help with this.) 4) Once the training is complete, the Den Leader should request Whittling Chip patches to be awarded at the next pack meeting.

Uses of Knives

- Cutting brush
- Food cutting
- Shavings and chips
- Carve items

Safety Rules

- A knife is a tool, not a toy.
- Knives are only allowed on scout outings with parent and leader permission.
- No knives are allowed at school!
- Know how to sharpen a knife. A sharp knife is safer because it is less likely to slip and cut someone.
- Never carry an open knife in your hand.
- Before opening a knife *Define a Safety Circle (Blood Circle)* before using a knife
 - o With knife closed, make circle with arm extended all the way around body and over head. Make sure no one is in the circle.
- Following rules for passing your knife to another person. Three ways:
 - o Closed knife – hold knife in front, release when other says, “Thank you.” Thank you are the magic words. No “dancing” around.
 - o Open knife – hold knife by blade with sharp edge away from palm handing handle to other person, release when other says, “Thank you.”
 - o Open knife – leave on table, leave blood circle, and allow other person to enter after saying, “Thank you.”
- Open and Close knife safely
 - o Open by holding body of knife with one hand and move blade out with thumbnail of other hand.
 - o Close by holding body of knife firmly with one hand and use the palm of the other hand to close the knife

Choosing a Knife

- should be easily opened and closed
- should be fairly simple
- avoid some locking knives (some require fingers in wrong places)
- should be about the size of your closed fist
- needs to be closable

Taking Care of Knives

- Always store knife with blade in and dry
- Cleaning
 - o You can use soap and water to clean a knife
 - o Make sure you dry as well as you can
 - o Some use a hair dryer
- When carrying a knife, make sure it is always closed.

Knife Sharpening

- A sharp knife is safer than a dull knife. Always maintain a sharp knife.
- There are several ways to sharpen a knife (dry, water, or oil stone; leather strop; or steel)
- Method we will demonstrate and use is “dry stone”
 - o Place stone on floor or table.
 - o Hold stone securely behind blade.
 - o Place blade of knife on stone near handle
 - o Maintain about a 20 degree angle
 - o Slowly move the blade along stone away from body
 - o At the same time draw the knife from the handle to the tip
 - o Repeat this process on each side of the blade until it is sharp
- Blade is sharp when light will reflect evenly from tip to handle on sharpened edge.
- Stones can be held in hand, but be careful to keep fingers below the edge.
- It will likely be easier to sharpen the other side of the blade by drawing the blade towards your body. Be careful!
- After sharpening, make sure to clean the blade

Practicing Knife Skills

- Defining the Blood zone
 - o Have each boy practice and demonstrate defining their blood zone. They should practice this even when they are doing the other exercises.
- Opening and Closing
 - o Have each boy practice and demonstrate opening and closing the pocket knife. Make sure that they keep their fingers out from between the blade and the handle.
 - o If a scout has trouble opening or closing their knife, then it is not appropriate for them.
- Hand off to another person
 - o Have each boy practice handing a knife off to their adult partner and to another boy.
 - o Emphasize that they must say thank you and not play around.
- Knife sharpening
 - o Extra care should be taken while sharpening knives. Make sure that boys use slow, measured strokes.
 - o There is a couple different kind of sharpeners in the Knife Safety Kit.
- Whittling a bar of soap (Ivory)
 - o Have the boys practice rounding the edges of the soap, clipping off the corners, and whittling wide slivers from the flat sides.
 - o The boys should try to whittle the soap into a shape of something else.
 - o Wipe the knives with a dry cloth after whittling. The boys can clean their knives at home.

Earning the Whittling Chip Card

- Go through the Knife Safety Quiz with the den.
- The boys should recite The Pocketknife Pledge. There is a “fill in the blank” exercise included that will help them learn it.
- The Whittling Chip card should only be awarded to those boys that exhibit safe and responsible behavior while going through the training. The boys must be able to demonstrate defining the blood zone, opening and closing a knife, sharpening, and know the safety rules. The adult who supervised the training should confirm that the cub should be awarded the Whittling Chip.
- Use the knife safely or the card will be taken away
- Boy Scouts earn a similar card called the Totin’ Chip

Knife Safety Quiz

1. You should close the blade with the palm of your hand
True False
2. A knife is just a toy.
True False
3. It's okay to keep your knife wet.
True False
4. A dull knife is more likely to slip and cut you.
True False
5. You should carry your open knife in your pocket.
True False
6. Carving your initials into a tree is okay.
True False
7. You should pick the size of your knife by how far you can throw it.
True False
8. A "blood circle" is meant to make sure you have a safety zone around you.
True False
9. "Thank you" is the magic word.
True False
10. When using a knife, try to make huge shaving and chips to save time.
True False

The Pocketknife Pledge

I understand the reason for _____ rules.

I will treat my pocketknife with the _____ due a useful tool.

I will always _____ my pocketknife and put it away when not in use.

I will not use my pocketknife when it might _____ someone near me.

I _____ never to throw my pocketknife for any reason.

I will use my pocketknife in a safe manner at _____ times.

RESPECT INJURE SAFETY ALL CLOSE PROMISE