

Risk Assessment (RA)

Scout Bushcraft Knife Safety Session (1 Hour)

Activity: Bushcraft Knife Safety and Basic Carving

Location: Outdoor campsite, woodland or designated bushcraft area

Duration: 1 Hour

Participants: Scouts (10½+ years)

Supervision: Minimum 1 competent adult to 6 Scouts (adjust according to ability and experience)

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Risk Before Controls	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Cuts and lacerations from knife blade	Scouts, Leaders	High	Safety briefing before activity. Demonstrate correct techniques. Use only suitable bushcraft knives in good condition. Constant supervision. Only one Scout carving at each work area.	Low
Knife slips during carving	Scouts	High	Teach correct grip and controlled carving techniques. Always cut away from the body. Keep support hand behind the blade. Use sharp knives to reduce excessive force.	Low
People entering carving area	Scouts, Visitors	Medium	Establish individual knife safety circles (minimum 2 metres). Clearly mark the working area. Stop carving immediately if someone enters the safety circle.	Low
Trips and falls while carrying knives	Scouts	Medium	Knives must always be carried in a secure sheath. No walking with an unsheathed knife. Remove trip hazards where possible.	Low
Incorrect passing of knives	Scouts	Medium	Knives should be sheathed before passing whenever possible. Pass handle first and ensure the other person has a secure grip before releasing.	Low
Damaged or poorly maintained knives	Scouts	Medium	Inspect all knives before use. Remove damaged or loose-handled knives from use. Ensure blades are clean and sharp.	Low
Flying wood splinters	Scouts	Low	Wear eye protection if appropriate. Use suitable carving wood free from knots where possible. Stand clear of others.	Low
Poor behaviour or horseplay	Everyone	High	Zero tolerance for running, joking or distractions with knives. Anyone behaving unsafely will immediately stop using the knife.	Low

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Risk Before Controls	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Inexperience with knife use	Scouts	High	Instructor demonstration before practical session. Begin with simple carving exercises. Provide close supervision and coaching.	Low
Weather (rain, wind, cold)	Everyone	Medium	Stop activity if conditions become unsafe. Ensure participants wear suitable outdoor clothing and footwear. Keep handles dry for good grip.	Low
Infection from minor cuts	Scouts	Medium	First Aid Kit available. Clean and dress all cuts immediately. Wash hands before and after activity. Leaders trained in first aid.	Low
Manual handling of logs or chopping blocks	Scouts	Low	Lift correctly with assistance if required. Use stable seating and work surfaces.	Low

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Sturdy closed-toe footwear.
 - Outdoor clothing suitable for weather conditions.
 - Cut-resistant glove (optional for beginners, if appropriate).
 - Eye protection if using wood likely to splinter.
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Emergency Procedures

- Stop the activity immediately if an accident occurs.
 - Make all knives safe by returning them to their sheaths.
 - Administer first aid.
 - Contact emergency services (999) if required.
 - Follow the Scout Association's incident reporting procedures.
 - Inform parents or guardians if necessary.
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Instructor Responsibilities

Before the session:

- Inspect all knives and equipment.
- Check the activity area for hazards.

- Ensure the first aid kit is available.
- Brief participants on safety rules and expected behaviour.

During the session:

- Maintain appropriate supervision.
- Monitor safe working distances.
- Correct unsafe behaviour immediately.
- Stop the activity if safety standards are not maintained.

After the session:

- Check all knives are accounted for and safely stored.
- Clear the activity area of wood offcuts and waste.
- Review any incidents or near misses with the leadership team.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

The session leader should continuously assess:

- Changes in weather conditions.
- Participant behaviour and fatigue.
- Suitability of the working area.
- Equipment condition.
- Supervision levels.
- Any new hazards that arise during the activity.

Overall Risk Rating

Before Controls: High

After Controls: Low

Suitable for supervised Scout bushcraft activities when led by a competent adult following The Scout Association's rules and local activity requirements.