

## Knife Permit: Safe Use of Knives



### Objective:

The objective of this workshop guide is for the Scout Leader and/or Scout youth to be able to describe and demonstrate safe use of a knife for scout use.

### Common knives that are used in Scouting

**Pocket Knife** (Multi-tool knife). This is by far the most common knife used in scouting. This knife usually contains a variety of tools that fold into the handle. The main blade of a pocket knife ranges from 2 to 4 inches in length. The pocket knife is named due to its compact size and can be carried in pant pockets or in a sheath that fits on a belt.



Most pocket knives have a "Slip Joint" which means that the blade does not lock, but, is held in place by a spring device that allows the blade to open and close if a certain amount of pressure is applied

**Buck knife.** The Buck knife typically contains a single blade knife up to 4 inches in length which folds into the handle and contains a locking mechanism. The buck knife is usually too large to fit into a pocket and should be carried in a sheath that attaches to the belt.



Most buck knives have a "Locking mechanism" which means that the blade will lock in place when folded into the handle or fully opened. The lock is typically triggered by a pressure pad on the knife handle.

### Knife Sheath



When not in use, a knife should be folded and put away in its sheath or pant pocket. A knife sheath contains a belt loop and must be worn on the hip where it is visible. There are two common means of fasteners on sheaths - Velcro and Snaps. The Velcro faster is not as secure as a snap faster as the Velcro strip may wear out, be cluttered with fluff or loosen when the user bends over or kneels. The snap fastener is a more secure method and is less prone to loosen with wear.



Knives should be worn vertically on the hip and not horizontally. Knives that are sheathed in a horizontal manner are far more susceptible to slipping out and being lost.

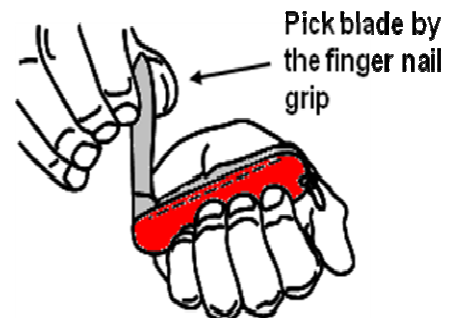
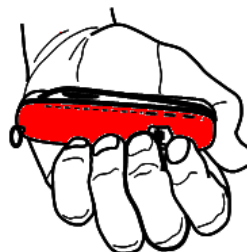
Never wear a knife sheath when you are playing games as the sheath cover may come loose and the knife fall out.

### Knife safety – Opening, Closing and Passing the knife

For the purpose of this knife permit, these guidelines will refer to the Pocket Knife as the tool of choice.

**BLOOD ZONE:** Establish a clear area around you when you plan to use knife. This is often referred to as the "Blood Zone". It is good practice to announce in loud voice "OPENING A KNIFE" to make others aware that you are using a knife and to stay clear. Sweep your extended arm in a circle around you to establish the "blood zone". DO NOT SWING AN OPEN BLADE WHEN ANNOUNCING A BLOOD ZONE!

**OPENING YOUR KNIFE:** Only open your knife when you are sure a safe working area has been established. The body of the knife should be firmly held between the fingers of one hand and the main blade opened by the fingers of the other hand.

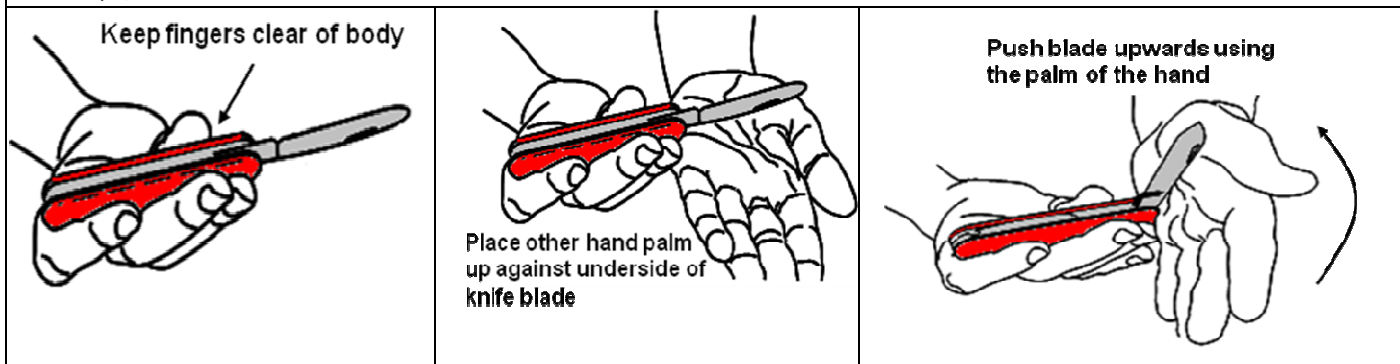


## Knife Permit: Safe Use of Knives

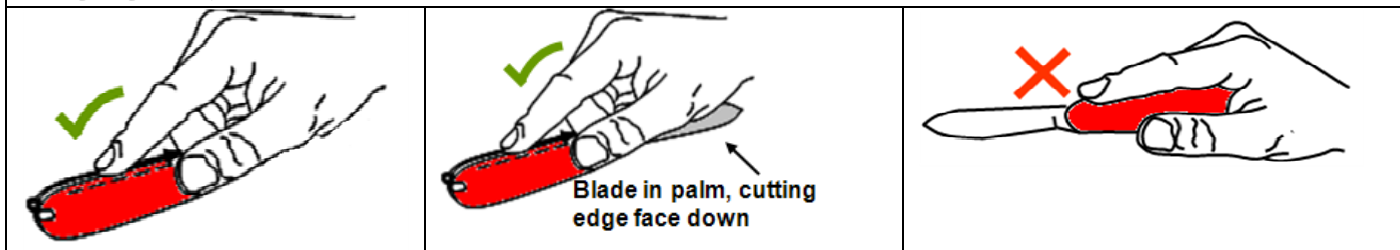


**CLOSING YOUR KNIFE:** Hold the body of the pocket knife firmly in one hand, ensuring that the fingers **DO NOT OVERLAP** the area where the knife blade will close into the body of the knife. Place the other hand, palm up against the knife blade and then push the blade upwards by rotating the palm towards the knife blade. There will be initial resistance as the blade has a spring loaded 'slip joint' and the pressure may cause the knife to slip in the other hand.

**Warning:** Once the knife blade reaches past vertical the spring mechanism may cause the blade to snap into the body of the knife.



**PASSING YOUR KNIFE:** A knife should always be passed 'body' first. The safest method is with the blade closed. If this is not convenient, then pass the knife with the blade in your palm and cutting edge down. In this position, when the knife is passed it will not cut your fingers or palm. **NEVER PASS A KNIFE WITH THE BLADE POINTING AT THE OTHER PERSON.**



When passing a knife practice the following dialogue and actions.

Person passing the knife:	Places the knife in a safe passing position and states: <b>"Passing the knife to you" - but doesn't let go of the knife</b>
Person receiving the knife:	Checks that the knife is safe to be handed off and takes the knife by the handle
Person passing the knife:	<b>"You have the knife"</b>
Person receiving the knife:	<b>"I have the knife"</b>

### Using your knife

Now that you have learned how to safely open, close and pass a knife, you need to decide whether you wish to use a knife for whittling or for outdoor survival practices. Both of these activities require the user to be familiar with how to hold and use a knife but differ in techniques on how to safely cut with a knife.

For both whittling and outdoor skills, a general purpose pocket knife is a suitable tool. However, for outdoor survival activities, a buck knife may be more applicable tool as the knife blade is stronger and more robust and can be used with rocks to improve cutting actions.

In all cases where knife work is to be done, ensure the following:

- Ensure that a suitable 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit is present in case of accidents
- Establish a safe working area (setup a blood zone)
- Ensure that the knife you plan to use is suitable for the task you wish to perform


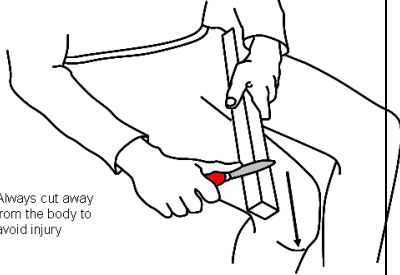
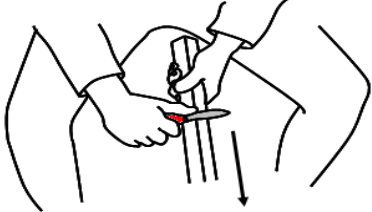
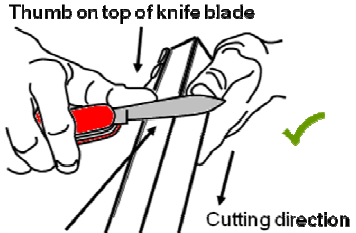
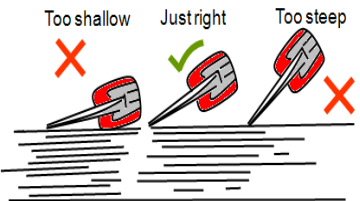
## Knife Permit: Safe Use of Knives



### Whittling / Carving Wood for craft purposes

When you want to whittle wood, the following guidelines should be practiced

- Locate the wood that you want to carve / practice on and ensure that it is suitable for use in that it is long enough to hold, is not rotten or too thin such that it could break when knife pressure is brought to bear.

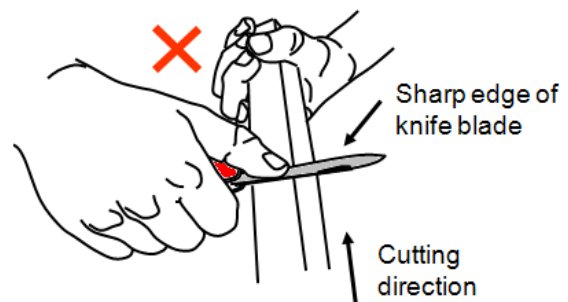
<p>Ensure that you establish a comfortable posture which will allow the following requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whittling should never be done between the knees as the knife may skip and cut the inside of your legs and possible injure an artery</li> <li>• Whittling can be done on your legs with the blade pushing away from your body</li> <li>• Whittling is best done beyond the knees with arms resting on your legs</li> </ul>		
 <p>Never cut wood between the legs as the knife may slip and cause injury</p>	 <p>Always cut away from the body to avoid injury</p>	 <p>Sit on a chair or tree stump and place arms and elbows on legs. Cut wood in a motion that takes the blade away from the body.</p>
<p>Grip the wood firmly in one hand and with your knife hand place the sharp edge of the knife blade on the wood so that the cutting direction is away from your body</p> <p>Place the thumb of the hand that is holding the knife on the top part of the knife blade as this allows you to apply pressure to the knife blade to make the cut.</p>		 <p>Thumb on top of knife blade</p> <p>Sharp edge of knife blade</p> <p>Cutting direction</p>
 <p>Too shallow    Just right    Too steep</p>	<p>Ensure that the blade is angled correctly when cutting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Too steep an angle means that the knife will dig into the wood and get stuck.</i></li> <li>• <i>Too shallow an angle and the knife will skip or slip over the surface</i></li> </ul>	

Start your cut by applying smooth and even pressure to the knife and in a direction away from you. This action will cause the knife blade to smoothly shave through the wood in one constant motion.

- *If you do not apply smooth pressure the knife could jam, slip free of the wood or leave a rough edge in the wood that will require smoothing out.*

### NEVER CUT WITH THE BLADE TOWARDS YOU

- It is more tricky to cut towards you (pulling movement) as it is not a natural pushing movement
- With this cutting method, the knife could slip and seriously cut the fingers of the hand holding the wood.





## Care of a Knife

- Knives should be kept sharp, clean and in good working order. Any part of a knife that is loose should be considered a hazard. A sharp knife will cut easily and have less chance of slipping.
- A knife should be kept clean and free of rust.
- After each use the user should clean the knife of all debris and periodically apply a light coat of oil in order to protect the knife from moisture and that the 'slip joint' move freely.
- Store the knife in a sheath to protect it from accidental damage and from outside elements.

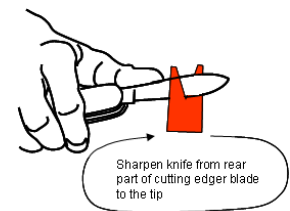
## Sharpening Your Knife

When your knife blade has a reflection on its cutting edge and/or it doesn't cut through wood easily, then it is likely that the cutting edge has dulled and it needs sharpening.

Knives can be sharpened through many different methods. The two most popular methods are:

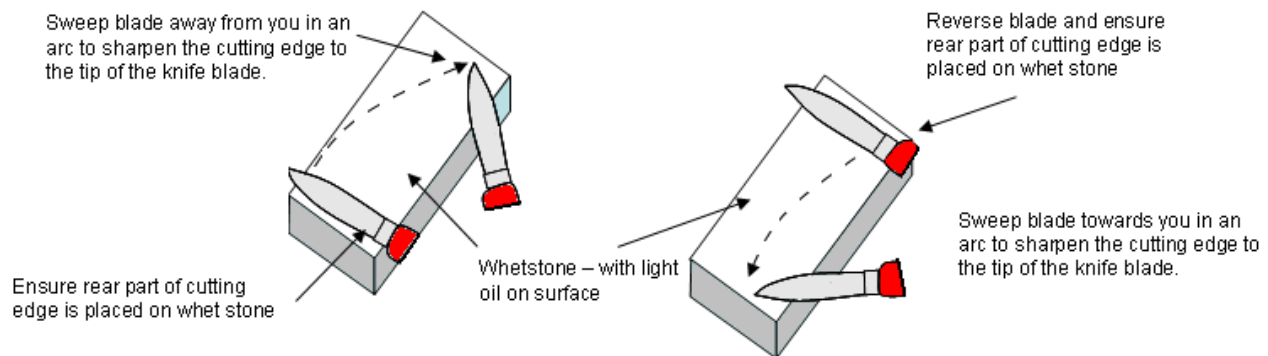
### Knife sharpener tool:

- This is the quickest method of sharpening a knife.
- A knife sharpener is a small tool usually with a carbide edge which
- is quick and convenient as the tool provides a recess in which to place the blade at the correct angle for optimum sharpening.
- Knife sharpeners are small and can easily fit into your pockets or backpack.



### Oil and Grit Stone/Sharpening Rod:

- The grit stone should be placed on a flat surface and a small amount of oil should be placed on the stone surface. The knife blade should be placed at an angle of approximately 10-20 degrees with the cutting edge facing away from you. The blade is then pushed forwards and backwards a few times. Turn the knife over and position it with the cutting edge facing you and approx 10-20 degree angle. Repeat the same motion of pushing the blade forwards and backwards a few times.
- Wipe the blade clear of oil and examine the cutting edge of the blade. If there is a dull shine, then your cutting edge is not sharp enough. Repeat the sharpening process.



Test your knife by slicing it through a piece of paper. If the point of the knife blade pushes through the paper with ease and it can cut paper through its own weight, then the blade is sufficiently sharp enough for any wood cutting that you wish to do.



## General Knife Safety rules

- Only personnel who are authorized in knife use may use a knife or supervise others in using knives
- The knife is an important survival tool and it must be treated with respect in that it should be kept sharp, clean and in good working order
- A knife should never be left unattended (see Knife Log for Scouts Own)
- A knife should only be used for outdoor skills use or whittling activities.
  - It should never be thrown
  - It should never be used in a threatening manner such as pointing or waving it at another person
  - Knives are not to be used inside a tent area
- A knife should be cleaned after use
- A knife should be placed in its sheath when not in use
- Do not run or play games with a knife
- Hold the knife blade when passing the knife to someone else.

## Informal Scout Guidelines for Knife Respect

- Knives are never brought to a formal Campfire, or Scouts Own. For a Scouts Own, a knife log is usually provided for scouts to place their knives before entry. Knives can be pushed into the log blade first, or laid on the log in the closed position.
- Any scout who carried a knife on them should carry the knife permit with them to demonstrate they are authorized to use a knife.
- Any scout that is found to not be using a knife in the correct manner may have their knife permit revoked and their knife taken away for the duration of the scout activity.

## ANATOMY OF A KNIFE

There are many types of modern knives, each of which can differ in construction and feature. For the sake of consistency, the following parts of a knife are common to all knives

1. **Knife Blade.** The blade edge can be plain or **serrated** or a combination of both.
2. **Handle.** The handle, used to grip and manipulate the blade safely.
3. **Tip.** The point of the blade which is used for piercing
4. **Cutting edge.** The cutting surface of the knife extending from the point to the heel,
5. **Grind.** The grind is the **cross-section** shape of the blade
6. **Spine.** The spine is the top, thicker portion of the blade,
7. **Ricasso.** The Ricasso is the thick portion of the blade joining the blade and the handle.
8. **Slip joint.** The part of the body which contains a spring which holds the knife blade in the open or closed position.
9. **Lock.** Is part of the body which restricts the knife blade from release. Pressure is required to depress the lock to free the knife blade. The lock is usually contained in the knife handle.
10. **Key Ring.** The part of the knife which allows a lanyard to be attached to the knife
11. **Knife Accessories.** Additional tools that may be found on a knife (such as pocket knives)



## PERMIT DEMONSTRATION

In the presence of your instructor, perform the following:

### Questions to be answered

1. State the main components of a knife
  - a. *Knife blade*
  - b. *Spring lock or 'slip joint'*
  - c. *Knife body*
  - d. *Cutting edge*
2. Identify three items on a pocket knife that need to be inspected prior to use?
  - a. *Knife is clean*
  - b. *Knife is sharp*
  - c. *The locking mechanism allows the blade to be securely locked in the open and closed position*
3. State the importance of the blood zone
  - a. *An area which no one should intrude otherwise there is risk of injury from knife use*
4. Describe F.R.E.D
  - a. *Blood Flow*
  - b. *Rest*
  - c. *Elevation*
  - d. *Direct pressure (to staunch wounds)*

### Demonstration on whittling

1. Demonstrate that you can open, pass and close a knife safely
2. Demonstrate that you can attain the correct knife posture for whittling
  - a. *Knife action is away from your body*
  - b. *Arms are placed on the knees for comfort and correct posture*
  - c. *Knife activity is extended past the knees*
3. Demonstrate that you can whittle correctly using correct angle of the knife on wood

### Demonstration on outdoor skills

1. Demonstrate that you can attain the correct knife posture for whittling
  - a. *Knife action is away from your body*
  - b. *Arms are placed on the knees for comfort and correct posture*
  - c. *Knife activity is extended past the knees*
2. Demonstrate that you can whittle correctly using correct angle of the knife on wood
3. Demonstrate that you can cut through a sapling or small branch
  - a. *Use this branch as a pole for holding a pot*
4. Demonstrate that you can cut a notch in the pole for holding a pot handle
  - a. *The pot is to be held on the pole for boiling water over a campfire*