

Resources – Pocketknives

Pocketknife Safety – What Cub Scouts Need to Know

<https://cubscoutideas.com/4053/cub-scout-whittling-chip-requirements-pocketknife-safety/>

Pocketknife safety is important for Cub Scouts to learn. A requirement for the Cub Scout Whittling Chip, it's also just good information for them to know.

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Pocketknife safety is one of the life skills our boys learn in Cub Scouts. Life lessons is one of the things I love about Cub Scouts! Our boys may seem a little young to be learning about knives, but according to BSA's [Age-Appropriate Guidelines](#), Bears, Webelos and Arrow of Light scouts can use a pocketknife.

In the Cub Scout Adventure program, the **Bear and Arrow of Light ranks require knowledge of pocketknife safety.**

Bear Adventure: [Bear Claws 2](#): Learn knife safety and earn your [Whittling Chip](#).

Arrow of Light Adventure: [Scouting Adventure 6](#): Demonstrate your knowledge of the pocketknife safety rules and the pocketknife pledge. Earn your Whittling Chip card if you have not already done so.

Below you'll find the pocketknife safety information that the boys need to know to earn their Whittling Chip.

General Pocketknife Safety Information:

- A knife is a tool, not a toy.
- Never use your knife on something that will dull or break it (rocks, metal, cement, etc.)
- Never use your knife to cut living trees or plants, or poke it in the dirt. Moisture and dirt will ruin your knife.
- Keep your knife out of the fire. The heat will ruin the temper of the steel making the knife edge soft and useless.
- Do not carve your initials into anything that does not belong to you.
- Keep your knife dry and keep the blade clean. Wipe the blade before closing it.
- Clean your knife by hand; the heat and steam of the dishwasher can dull and damage the knife
- Keep your knife sharp. A dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp one.

Blood Circle:

The first thing the boys need to learn is that they should establish a safety circle, or “blood circle,” in order to safely use a pocketknife. To create the blood circle, grasp a closed pocket knife in your hand. You should extend your arm with the closed knife straight in front of you. Then rotate your body to either side while continuing to extend the closed knife arm. No one or thing should be in the imaginary circle that you have created. Also, check your overhead clearance as this is part of your safety circle. If someone enters the circle, the knife should be closed up and laid down.

Pocketknife Safety Rules:

- Be alert; it may not be you who makes the mistake. Someone else may enter your Blood Circle by not being alert.
- Always cut by pushing the knife away from you. Be sure your hands and body are out of the way.
- Never carry an open pocketknife.
- Always walk when carrying your knife – never run with it.
- Never throw your knife; it could easily deflect and hurt someone or ruin the knife.
- A sharp knife is safer because it’s less likely to slip and cut you. A sharp knife will “bite” the wood. Know how to sharpen your knife.
- When using the cutting blade, don’t make big shavings or chips. Easy does it. Be careful not to cut yourself or anyone nearby.
- When you are not using your knife, close it and put it away. An open knife could hurt someone who doesn’t realize it’s there.
- Close the blade with the palm of your hand

Handling a Pocketknife:

- To Open a Pocketknife
 - Hold the knife in your left hand, and put your right thumbnail into the nail slot. Pull the blade out while pushing against the hinge with the little finger of your left hand. Continue to hold on to the handle and blade until the blade snaps into the open position.
- To Close a Pocketknife
 - Hold the handle in your left hand with your fingers safely on the sides. Push against the back of the blade with the heel of the right hand and swing the handle up to meet the blade. Let the knife snap shut. It’s sometimes easier for the boys to use their fingers instead of the heel of the hand.
- To Pass a Pocketknife
 - Always close the blade – never pass an open knife. The receiver should get a good grip on the knife and then say “thank you” to indicate that they have a grip on the knife when taking it. The giver should never let go of the knife until the receiver says “thank you” even if the receiver tries to pull it away.

Taking Your Pocketknife with You:

- Knives are usually used as tools, but they can be weapons too. Many places do not allow knives. Always keep your knife at home unless your parent or Den Leader tells you otherwise.
- Places where knives are prohibited even if you have your Whittling Chip card with you:
 - School
 - Outdoor school events (school football games)
 - Airport
 - Pack or den meetings, even after you earn the Whittling Chip

- [Cub Scout campouts](#) unless there is adult supervision
- You must carry your Whittling Chip card whenever you are using your knife. If you break any of the rules, a corner of the Whittling Chip card will be cut off. When the 4th corner is cut off, the card will be taken from you. If that happens, you must go through training again, in order to receive a new card. The cutting of corners can be done by any adult who feels safety has been violated. For very serious infractions (such as threatening another scout), the card will be taken immediately.

Bears, Arrow of Light and Webelos pocketknife safety knowledge is so important to ensure that our boys know how to safely carry and use a pocketknife. I hope this pocketknife safety information has been helpful to you as you plan your Cub Scout Whittling Chip lesson.

Whittling Chip Pocketknife Pledge

In return for the privilege of carrying a pocketknife to designated Cub Scout functions, I agree to the following:

1. I will treat my pocketknife with the respect due a useful, but dangerous tool.
2. I will always close my pocketknife and put it away when not in use.
3. I will not use my pocketknife when it might injure someone near me.
4. I promise never to throw my pocketknife for any reason.
5. I will use my pocketknife in a safe manner at all times.

Scouts Signature