

We instill in our Scouts knife and axe safety. There are many practical reasons our Scouts need to be familiar with knives and axes and the need for them to do so safely is critical.

At Thanksgiving, they might need to know how to carve a turkey safely. Our Scouts may need to chop wood for a fireplace. While cooking, our Scouts will need to know a chef's knife from a fruit and vegetable knife.

Some basic knife safety:

- Always chop, cut, or slice away from you. This helps prevent serious injury.
- If you drop a knife, never attempt to catch it. Pick it up by the handle once it has stopped moving.
- Never use a large knife to do a small job.
- Hand-wash knives. Never drop them into murky, soapy water, and then root around for them.
- Knives should be stored in a knife block or rack. If you are keeping them with other silverware, make sure they are separate.
- If someone is handing you a knife, say "thank you" when you take the knife firmly in your hand and they will let go.



Some basic axe safety:

- Never use an axe that appears broken or damaged.
- Never use a dull axe. It is too dull to chop wood but plenty sharp enough to do serious injury.
- Wear thick heavy shoes, just in case you drop it.
- Chop directly on a chopping block.
- All Scouts must be supervised while using an axe.
- Be certain to check the condition of an axe before use.
- Be certain to check that there is an appropriate clearance within a circle surrounding where the axe will be used.

A method for determining whether our North Star Scouts are eligible to use either a knife or axe is the requirement they be properly educated in knife and axe safety and earned their Paul Bunyan Card by demonstrating the required skills. Our Scouts are occasionally asked to demonstrate their skills to insure that they retain them. If they are unable to demonstrate the skill properly, they cut one corner of the card cut off. They are

two other attempts to show they still retain the skills, but if the fourth corner is cut, they must give back the card, and are given the opportunity earn it again.