

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

WHITTLING CHIP POCKETKNIFE SAFETY RULES

- A knife is a tool, not a toy.
- Know how to sharpen a knife. A sharp knife is safer because it is less likely to slip and cut you.
- Keep the blade clean.
- Never carry an open pocketknife.
- When you are not using your knife, close it and put it away.
- Keep your knife dry.
- When you are using the cutting blade, do not try to make big shavings or chips. Easy does it.
- Make a safety circle: Before you pick up your knife to use it, stretch your arm out and turn in a circle. If you can't touch anyone else, it is safe to use your knife.

Although it isn't listed in the Safety Rules published by BSA, one very important rule. You should **always cut away from your body.

**SAFETY CIRCLE AKA BLOOD CIRCLE

The first thing the Scouts 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.



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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.

KNIVES ARE NOT TOYS

- Close the blade with the palm of your hand.
- Never use a knife on something that will dull or break it.
- Be careful that you do not cut yourself or any person nearby.
- Never use a knife to strip the bark from a tree.
- Do not carve your initials into anything that does not belong to you.

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**



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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 Scouts know how to safely carry and use a pocketknife.

P.S. Only you, **as a parent, can decide when it's time for your son to own his own pocketknife.** If your Cub Scout is mature enough to own a pocket knife



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