

Tool Use Policy

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this tool use policy is to establish guidelines and safety procedures for the responsible use of sharp tools and knives during activities at The Outdoors Group.

Scope

This policy applies to all Outdoors Group staff and participants, including children and adults, engaging in activities that involve the use of sharp tools and knives at The Outdoors Group.

Acknowledgments

All staff who run sessions or teach in a setting where knives are used must read, understand, and sign this tool use policy, including the section on tool counting and accountability, to indicate their commitment to safety and responsible tool use.

Responsibilities

Instructors

Trained and qualified instructors from The Outdoors Group will be responsible for supervising and guiding participants in the proper use of sharp tools.

Instructors will conduct safety briefings before tool use activities and ensure that participants understand and adhere to the established safety rules.

Participants

All participants must attend a safety orientation session before being allowed to use sharp tools.

Participants are expected to follow the instructions provided by the instructors and adhere to the safety guidelines outlined in this policy.

General Safety Guidelines

Daily checks:

- Before each use, staff must inspect tools for any damage or defects. Damaged tools should be reported to Site Leads or session leaders and removed from use immediately.
- Before and after each tool use session, Site Leads or session leaders will conduct a thorough inventory of all tools to ensure that each tool is accounted for.
- Staff are required to return all tools to the designated storage area at the end of each session.
- If any tools are missing, Site Leads or session leaders must investigate and take appropriate action to locate the missing tool.

Tool handling and workplace safety:

- Tools must be carried with the blade or cutting edge facing downward and away from the body, knives should not be carried at all without a suitable sheath in place.
- Participants should never run or engage in horseplay while carrying or using tools.
- Participants will maintain a clear and organized workspace to minimize the risk of accidents.
- Adequate supervision will be provided to ensure safe tool use in designated areas.
- Instructors will review emergency procedures with participants, including first aid and evacuation plans.
- First aid kits will be available on-site, and all participants should know their location.
- Tools will be stored securely in a designated area when not in use.
- Site Leads or session leaders will ensure that the tool storage area is locked and properly secured when not supervised.

Unauthorized tool use:

- Participants are prohibited from using sharp tools without proper authorization and supervision.
- Deliberate misuse, throwing, or any other unsafe handling of tools is prohibited.
- Consequences of Violations:
 - Violations of this tool use policy may result in disciplinary actions, including but not limited to verbal warnings, temporary suspension from tool use activities, or permanent removal from the program.

Transporting tools, knives, and sharp tools

- If you need to carry an edged tool in a public place, make it as inaccessible as possible: if on foot in a public place or on public transport then put it in the bottom of your rucksack or bag and ensure that it is very inaccessible.
- If you are travelling by car knives axes and other sharp tools should always be kept in the boot of a car when traveling to, from or between sites. Ensure that any sharp tools are kept in the boot/trunk and ensure its locked and preferably in a locked and secured box and NOT close to hand or stored in the glove compartment

Use of Knives by School Staff

Anyone who feels they would benefit from having a small cutting knife on them, may carry a personal knife if it is less than 3 inches, foldable, and kept in a zipped pocket. The presence of a knife **must** be declared each day in briefing at schools and then again at the ends of each day, in debriefing.

Company knives are to be returned and held in a locked box for whittling or group sessions. No personal knives are to be onsite unless agreed by MMT.

You can **only carry a knife in school if it has a folding blade that is 3 inches (7.62cm) or less in length.**

Lock knives are not acceptable and are **not classed as folding knives.**

Multitools are allowed onsite under the same above conditions and need to be declared at briefing and debriefing. All knives must be in good condition i.e. sharp, undamaged, of good quality and with a suitable sheath to ensure that they do not become a hazard in their use or to others.