



Knife & Sharp Edge Safety Protocol 2018

In order to provide clear, safe and reproducible guidelines in programming, it is important for our staff, participants, and parents to be well informed. Regardless of age or role, at Sassafras everyone is asked to strictly adhere and transmit the following protocol. Sassafras considers the use of knives, saws, hatches and axes, a privilege. Youth not adhering, will be asked to hand in their knives for a specified amount of time (often till the end of the program day).

Do's:

- Consult with us on the purchase of a knife for a youngster
- Staff carry all knives, saws, hatches, axes inside a back-pack, or stored in the yurt.
- Make an agreement with (other) staff about an appropriate time to bring these tools out.
- Make an agreement about where we keep our knives during programming (in a bag, clipped or otherwise secured)
- Carry appropriate, reasonably sharp gear that is fit for the job
- Sassafras recommended knives are **fixed blade knives**. A knife should fit comfortably in your hand, and not have a slippery or shiny handle.
 - For adults and youth 8/9 and up, we recommend and use the *Mora knife; fixed stainless steel blade*.
 - For younger, smaller hands we create an exception because there are no fixed blade knives available for smaller hands. We use a folding knife that locks, the **Opinel Junior folding knife (3" blade)**. Staff opens, and locks (and at the end of the activity unlocks and closes) the Opinel folding knives for all youth, until they have clearly demonstrated their ability to do so, under close supervision.
- SAWS, HATCHES are only utilized under close 1-on-1 supervision until youth prove their ability to use independently, these tools will be used with youth 9 and up.

DO NOT:

- Carry your knife on your belt, it's a hazard during games and distractions
- Never play games, or run with a knife on your belt or in your pocket
- Leave your knife out, on the ground, bench or table.
- Send your child with folding knives, gadgets or any other knives than specified above.
- Send your child with saws, hatchets or other sharp blade gear
- Assume that your child can carve safely by themselves at home, always monitor their skill level and progress.

KNIFE SAFETY 1-2-3:

- 1. Ask an adult or staff**
 - a. Carving happens under close adult or teen leader supervision
 - b. Teens and staff ask themselves first, and then creating agreement around carving time, considering the ages and energy of the group.
 - c. When in doubt, or short of time, don't carve.
- 2. Sit down in your carving bubble**
 - a. Always sit down before you open your knife and remain seated
 - b. Create an imaginary bubble with your outstretched hand
 - c. Warn others that are close to entering your bubble, while you stop carving and talk to them.
- 3. Practice safe techniques from beginning to end**
 - a. Use a medium sharp knife
 - b. Always carve away from your body (this includes all body parts, hands, legs, etc...)
 - c. Carve in a controlled manner, and keep your movements small
 - d. Keep your eyes on your blade, when interrupted, stop.
 - e. When not in use, put your knife in the sheath, secure it with rubber band or other snap to hold in place, and put it away in your back pack or return to staff.