

Sassafras Earth Education

Knife & Sharp Edge Safety Protocol 2024

Overview: Clear, safe, and reproducible guidelines are essential for all staff, participants, and parents at Sassafras. Regardless of age or role, everyone must understand and adhere to the following protocol. The use of knives, saws, hatchets, and axes is a privilege. Youth who do not follow the rules will be reminded once, then asked to surrender their tool for the rest of the program day.

Guidelines

DO:

- **Approved Knives:** Purchase a Sassafras-approved knife for ages 8 and up who have passed knife safety.
- **Storage:** Store knives, saws, hatchets, and axes outside program hours. During program hours, carry them in a bag or backpack.
- **Sharpness:** Use appropriate, reasonably sharp gear suitable for the task.
- **Recommended Knife:** Use a Mora fixed stainless steel blade that fits comfortably in your hand.
 - **Usage:** Knives are for adults and youth ages 8 and up.
 - **Supervision:** Children must demonstrate ability to follow the safety protocol under close supervision.
- **Other Tools:** Saws, hatchets, and axes are used under 1-on-1 supervision until youth prove independent use. These tools are for ages 9 and up.
- **Carving Times:** Staff agrees on appropriate carving times during morning meetings to ensure adequate supervision.
- **Staff Protocol:** Staff carve only in service of the program, with co-lead consent, following the same protocol.

DO NOT:

- **Carrying:** Do not carry your knife on your belt; it's a hazard and a distraction.
- **Games/Running:** Never play games or run with a knife on your belt or in your pocket.
- **Unattended:** Do not leave your knife unattended on the ground, bench, chair, stump, or table.
- **Unauthorized Gear:** Do not send your child with folding knives, gadgets, or unsanctioned knives, saws, or hatchets.
- **Assumptions:** Do not assume your child can carve safely at home without supervision.

Knife Safety 1-2-3:

1. Ask an Adult/Staff:

- Carry knives in backpacks, only taking them out with staff's permission.
- Carve under close staff supervision only.
- Staff assess group energy and maturity before carving.
- No carving on Mondays, or when in doubt or short on time.

2. Sit Down in Your Carving Bubble:

- Sit down before opening your knife and remain seated while carving.
- Create an imaginary safety bubble the size of your outstretched hand.
- Stop carving and alert others that approach or enter your safety bubble.

3. Practice Safe Techniques:

- Use a sharp to medium-sharp knife.
- Always carve away from your body.
- Make controlled, small movements.
- Keep your eyes on the blade; stop if interrupted.
- Focus on your work; avoid conversation.
- When not in use, sheath the knife, secure it with a rubber band, and store it in your backpack or return it to staff.