

Risk assessment – Bushcraft

Name of activity, event, and location	Explorer24 – Beacon Hill Scout Campsite	Date of risk assessment	02/10/2026	Name of person doing this risk assessment	Harry Rippon / Lee Martin
		Date of next review	Prior to next event		

What could go wrong? What hazard have you identified? What are the risks from it?	Who is at risk?	What are you going to do about it? How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? How will they be communicated to young people and adults and remain inclusive to all needs?	Review & revise What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
Inadequate supervision – unskilled adults failing to keep activity safe	All	Adults competent and familiar with the use of the equipment and clear on how to instruct / supervise young people with this equipment Adults to have read guidance before supervision of axe and saw activities : Using axe and saws safely Scouts Adults to have read guidance before supervision of knife activities : Scout Knife Safety Guidance Scouts Adults to have opportunity to practise their own skills before supervising YP Supervision plan clear so that those supervising use of equipment are not distracted by other young people not participating Closer supervision / 1 to 1, for young people with additional needs requiring greater support.	
Inappropriate use of axe – leading to injury of self or others Cuts, bruises, serious injury	All	Group safety briefing at beginning of event, giving clear guidelines on when, where and how axes can be used Axes used in clearly defined area (consider use of roping off if this is mobile) Axe activities to cease in inadequate light YP supervised at all times when in axe use area, group size to reflect level of supervision and space available. Volunteers to assess and monitor individuals' competence with axe YP and adults given guidance on axe use, including using a chopping block below wood, using a kneeling position to protect the legs, using another stick to hold up smaller wood to protect fingers, stop using the axe if you feel tired, make sure there is adequate space around you before swinging	

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		the axe, wearing appropriate clothing and PPE If you need to pass the axe to someone else, stand side by side facing the same direction. Pass the head of the axe first.	
Inappropriate use of saw – leading to injury of self or others Cuts, lacerations, severe injury	All	Group safety briefing at beginning of event, giving clear guidelines on when, where and how saws can be used Saws used in clearly defined area (consider use of roping off if this is mobile) YP supervised at all times when in saw use area, group size to reflect level of supervision and space available. Volunteers to assess and monitor individuals' competence with saw Yp and adults given guidance on saw use, including using a sawing block, adopting a safe stance to protect fingers and legs, wearing appropriate clothing and PPE,	
Inappropriate use of knife - leading to injury of self or others Cuts, lacerations, severe injury	All	Adults to practice their own knife skills before they begin any practical sessions with YP. Group safety briefing at beginning of event, giving clear guidelines on when, where and how knives can be used and information about knife law and safety. YP supervised at all times when using knives, group size to reflect group's skills and level of supervision available. Volunteers to assess and monitor individual's competence with knife. YP given safety skills instruction, eg strike away from body, fingers behind knife, only whittling a small amount at a time. Start with a small knife (such as a Swiss Army Knife) and complete small tasks. Build up to a larger blade as people become more confident and dexterous. YP not to create sharp weapons (eg. spears) and play with them	
Maintenance, Storage and Transport of sharp tools – leading to failure of tools and accidental injuries	All present	Clearly explain to all the importance of safely storing sharp tools Mask items (cover the blade) and store them safely between uses. Store sharp tools in a designated place Count out sharp items and be clear on how many are being used. Count them back in to make sure they're all returned. Young people not allowed to retain their own equipment, sharp items must be handed in and stored under adult supervision and only given out when	

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		adult supervision available. Inspect tools before use. Axes should not have loose heads or handles and should align properly. Saws and knives should have securely fitting blades and handles. Carry an axe properly: it should be in your hand with your arm by your side, the axe bit should face forward, and your fingers should be out of the way. Saws and knives should have blades covered/ closed when carrying them. Do not use blunt tools Tools should be clean and dry and oiled before being put back into storage	
Inappropriate Clothing and PPE – leading to entanglement and injury	All	Don't wear scarves, ties, lanyards, or any loose clothing or jewellery. Tie back long hair to prevent tools from getting caught. Provide sturdy gloves for use when cutting wood using axes and saws. Ensure sturdy, well fitting footwear is worn when using sharp tools. Boots should be worn for axe use. Ensure clothes and footwear are well secured; shoelaces tied, coats done up etc.	
Behaviour or over excitement – risk of injuries from mistakes or misuse	All present	Consider the suitability of the group for this type of activity. Have a section code of conduct to set clear expectations of behaviour. Stress the importance of being responsible when using sharp tools. Cease the use of sharp tools if members of the group are not following the rules.	
Individual needs and preferences – exclusion and lack of alternative provision	Individuals	Make adjustments to the activity to support individual needs Have suitable alternative activities for YP who are not taking part in using sharp tools Inform and consult parents beforehand	
Cutting area – risk of injury	All present	Make sure cutting area is of a safe size and at a safe distance Mark out cutting area using rope or tape Clear ground of trip hazards in cutting area Cutting area to be kept clear and tidy Only designated group to be allowed in cutting area at any one time	

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Collecting and handling wood – injuries from wood and wood pile Splinters, puncture wounds, cuts, slips, trips, falls	All	Sturdy gloves provided and to be worn when handling fire wood Sturdy shoes to be worn YP briefed on safety around wood pile in-situ. Supervision at wood pile may be necessary if group does not show sufficient understanding. YP guided on being careful around wood pile and when walking around site, particularly where pallets may have nails in. Wood piles never to be climbed on When carrying wood, only carry what you can easily manage. Work in pairs/ small groups if necessary When breaking wood, be mindful of flying debris. Ensure area is clear	
Injuries – first aid required	All present	Make sure there's a first aid kit and a first aider on hand. Ensure an emergency response system is in place and all adult volunteers and helpers know what to do. Purple Cards issued and kept to hand	