

Whittling Chip Training Course (for the instructor)

Preparation/materials:

- This training can be given to boys at the Wolf age and higher, but use your discretion: some dens are more mature than others. Bears have the Whittling Chip as part of [Achievement 19: Shavings and Chips](#).
- **Check with the parents first**, and have them purchase (and bring) the boys' knives to the meeting.
- You should plan for at least an hour for this training.
- You should bring as many different examples of knives as you can. The boys will enjoy seeing filet knives, cleavers, and bowie knives, even if they can't use them. It will also help to stress the "non-toy" nature of pocket knives.
- You should have a bar of soap for each boy to practice whittling. Substitute with soft wood if you desire.
- Other items you'll need: a tube of lipstick, a plastic kitchen knife (see step 5), and a few sharpening stones.

1. Whittling Chip, and what it means:

The Whittling Chip is a card that represents the fact that you have received proper training and are ok to bring a pocketknife only to approved events.

- Can bring: hikes, camp-outs, specific den meetings, when your Scout Leader AND your parent(s) says it's ok.
- Can't bring: normal den meetings, pack meetings, school, around the yard, going to the store.

If Akela (any adult, any den leader) sees you misusing your knife, it will be taken away from you, and you'll lose one of the corners of your card. If you lose all the corners, you will have to take the class again.

If anyone is injured while you are using your pocketknife (you or anyone else), the Whittling Chip will be revoked immediately, and CANNOT be re-earned until the next rank.

2. Discussion of knives

- Knives are tools, NOT toys. They should never be played with, or used for the wrong reasons
- Display: pocketknife, scissors, carving knife, cleaver, filet knife, steak knife, butter knife. Show sheaths where appropriate.
- Explain the difference between a pocketknife (folding) and a fixed blade knife. Show what might happen if you put a fixed blade knife in your pocket.

3. Safety Circle & Safety Rules

- Before you open your knife, do a "Safety Circle" check by moving your arms all around you in a big circle. If there's anyone in the circle, you shouldn't use the knife.
- Always walk with your knife pointing away from you when holding a knife or scissors. NEVER run.
- Always cut away from you.
- Always keep your knife sharp and clean. A dull knife is dangerous to use.

- Always have a firm grip on the knife. Don't use it if your hands are slippery.
- Always be aware that your knife is under your control. If you need to put it down, close it. You should not leave knives out where other people (younger siblings) could pick it up and play with it.
- Always know where the first aid kit is.
- Only use a knife as a saw if the material you're cutting is soft enough (rope, cloth, etc.). There is separate training for using a wood saw.
- Never try to catch a knife if you've dropped it. Step back away from it, and let it fall to the ground before picking it up.
- Never throw a knife at anything (a tree, a board, etc.)
- Never use a knife as a screwdriver.
- Never use a knife to skin the bark off of a tree, carve your name in anything, or carve something that's not yours.
- Never use a knife to dig in the ground. It will dull the knife.

4. Opening and closing a pocketknife.

- Always open carefully, and only use one of the tools at a time (if there are multiple tools).
- Always close with your palm, and with your fingers NOT in the blade cavity.

5. Passing a knife.

- Always hold the knife by the dull side, with the handle towards the person you are passing it to.
- Always wait until the person receiving it has acknowledged that they have it by saying "Thank You." Explain that this is not just simple courtesy but also a very important precaution.

After this discussion, the den will practice passing a plastic knife around the table. Lipstick will be applied to the blade - anyone who has any lipstick on their hands will have been 'cut'.

Mention that this is a very important safety rule, and that it's OK to point out improper knife handling to adults, too, if you see them not passing knives properly.

6. Importance of cleaning a knife.

- A rusty or dull knife is dangerous to use.
- Wiping is NOT cleaning. Wiping a wet knife is OK, but (just) wiping a knife that's been used to cut meat is NOT OK.
- Clean good knives by hand, NOT the dishwasher.
- Before using a knife to cut food, clean it.
- After using your knife to cut food, clean it.

7. How to sharpen a knife

- Show how maintaining the right angle, and doing the same number of passes on each side of the blade are important.
- Show how pulling the knife away from the stone is the wrong approach. Cut/sharpen INTO the stone, not away from it.

8. Practice Whittling on a bar of soap

- Spread the boys out, have them do their Safety Circles, and practice whittling on bars of soap.

9. Quiz (see separate material)

- Part 1 Answer Key: 1. True – 2. False – 3. False – 4. False – 5. False – 6. False – 7. True – 8. False – 9. False – 10. True – 11. False – 12. False
- Part 2 Answer Key: 1. Palm – 2. Knife – 3. Safety Circle – 4. Sharp and Clean – 5. Knife – 6. Walk – 7. Before and After

10. Take the Pocketknife Pledge. It is a “repeat after me” ceremony

- I will treat my pocketknife with the respect due a useful tool.
- I will always close my pocketknife and put it away when not in use.
- I will not use my pocketknife when it might injure someone near me.
- I promise never to throw my pocketknife for any reason.
- I will use my pocketknife in a safe manner at all times.

11. Presentation and signing of the cards

- The parents will be presented with the signed cards and the patches, and they will give them to the boys.
- Remember, the card must be carried with the scout every time he carries a pocketknife.

12. Wearing the Whittling Chip Patch

The Whittling Chip patch is a “Temporary patch”, and officially, only one temporary patch can be worn on the uniform at one time. The [Whittling Chip patch may be worn on the uniform shirt](#), centered on the right pocket. It can also be placed in a temporary badge holder hanging from the button of the right pocket. However, scouts may choose to add the patch to a patch vest or a patch blanket. The only BSA item that is issued in connection with this skill is the pocket card which should be carried by the Cub Scout every time he carries a pocketknife.

