

**GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT FOR:**

Bushcraft tools

PART 1 : ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Section/Establishment Name: Lea Green Centre

Date of Assessment

18<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Date of Issue

18<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Assessment  
carried out by

JSh, BP

Signature

Reviews

Review  
Date

Reviewed by

Date

Changes  
Made

Y

N

Jan 26

PV GN

6/01/26

Y

June 2026

Affected persons:

Young People/Clients

☒

Staff

☒

Visitors

☒

Contractor

☐

Others (specify)

Name of Manager confirming and agreeing Assessment:

PV

Signature:

The following sections should be completed by all staff who need to be made aware of and abide by the findings of the Risk Assessment. NB: If, as a result of a review, changes are made to the Risk Assessment the relevant box on the attached page should be completed as appropriate by the staff concerned.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

Lea Green views the use of sheath knives as a tool to be used to meaningfully achieve or produce something. They are not simply given out to occupy time or to satisfy a desire to use a knife. The choice to allow individual participants to use a knife, and the way that knife is used reflects an appreciation of the participant's ability and developmental level. It should be borne in mind that the use of tools reflects taking supported risks, as well as the risk being balanced against the benefit the participant will glean from such use.

The use of a knife as a tool will be for such tasks as whittling a stick for it to be used to roast marshmallows, production of campsite items from natural materials and cooking. The use of sheath knives receives specific attention in Bushcraft competency training and assessment, and there are established 'tool talks' which are applied each time knives are to be used. The dynamic risk assessment of an individual participant's ability to use a knife and the way that knife is to be used rests with the Bushcraft practitioner and their professional judgement.

What are the hazards?	Generic Control Measures implemented	✓ X	Person to implement	Additional Control measures needed to reduce risk to an acceptable level	Person to implement	Date to be actioned
<b>Knife or bowsaw stored unsheathed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sheath knives carried in a locked container</li> <li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li> <li>• Ensure all knives and bowsaws are stored with sheath securely on</li> <li>• Ensure participants are wearing gloves when collecting knives and bowsaws ('gloves on first policy')</li> <li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li> <li>• First aid kit always carried</li> </ul>		Instructor leading the session			
<b>Carrying a knife or bowsaw unsheathed or incorrectly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li> <li>• Demonstrate the safe way to carry a knife or bowsaw</li> <li>• Intervention made if a person is walking with an unsheathed knife or bowsaw</li> <li>• 'Static use policy'- tools are only used whilst we are stood/sat still</li> <li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li> </ul> <p>First aid kit always carried</p>					

<b>Removing the knife from the sheath</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li><li>• Demonstrate the safe way to remove the knife from a sheath</li><li>• Participants to wear gloves on their 'helper hand'</li><li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li></ul> First aid kit always carried					
<b>Carrying the knife on the belt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal warning</li><li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li><li>• Encourage sheaths to be visible</li></ul>					
<b>Incorrect knife technique</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li><li>• Demonstrate the safe way to use the knife, using the portion of the blade next to the handle</li><li>• Participants to wear gloves on their 'helper hand'</li><li>• Log discs to be available to rest work piece on if necessary</li><li>• Practitioners to monitor use of knives and intervene as necessary</li><li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li></ul> First aid kit always carried					
<b>Too much force used to shave wood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li><li>• Demonstrate the safe way to use the knife, only taking small shavings from the wood</li><li>• Participants to wear gloves on their 'helper hand'</li></ul> Knives maintained and sharpened regularly so minimum force is needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practitioners to monitor use of knives and intervene as necessary</li></ul>					

<b>Batoning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li></ul> First aid kit always carried <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tool talk</li><li>• Demonstration</li><li>• Helper hand to be gloved</li><li>• Knife handle always used to outside of wood</li><li>• Restrict diameter of wood to be batoned to approx' 3"</li><li>• To be used in conjunction with small wedges to reduce the force needed on knife blade</li><li>• Blade to be struck vertically onto spine</li><li>• Portion of blade in contact with wood to be hit; not the exposed tip</li></ul> Once wedge released blade from the wood, the knife is to be recovered to the sheath					
<b>Sharpening/ stropping blades</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knives maintained by practitioners or adult participants</li><li>• Wearing gloves whilst sharpening/stropping blades</li></ul>					
<b>Injury from using knife whilst sitting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of 'tool talk'</li><li>• Demonstrate the safe way to use the knife, emphasising the cutting on the 'outside of the body policy' or 'elbows on knees policy'</li><li>• Practitioners to monitor use of knives and intervene as necessary</li><li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li></ul> First aid kit always carried					

<b>Kneeling/sitting/stepping on unsheathed knife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 'tool talk'- re-sheathing knife when not being used/ returning to storage when finished</li> </ul>					
<b>Knife used in proximity of others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool only used at least one arm and a tool length away from any other person</li> <li>• Safe working areas clearly defined.</li> </ul>					
<b>User of the knife entering a state of 'flow'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners to monitor use of knives and intervene as necessary</li> <li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li> </ul> <p>First aid kit always carried</p>					
<b>Inappropriate use of knife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero tolerance policy.</li> <li>• Establish relationship with group/individuals before introducing the use of knives</li> <li>• Limit the numbers using knives at any one time in accordance with the developmental and maturity level of the participants</li> <li>• Practitioner to observe and monitor use</li> <li>• Intervention made if unsafe behaviour or practice is seen, activity abandoned if necessary</li> <li>• Revisiting the 'tool talk' to re-establish correct behaviour and use of knives</li> <li>• Emphasise that knives are tools which are used for a specific reason</li> <li>• Consider if the use of knives is appropriate- are there any indicators that</li> </ul>					

<p><b>Knives taken/ stolen/ lost</b></p>	<p>this may occur?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practitioners hold a valid first aid certificate</li></ul> <p>First aid kit always carried</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of knives present established at the start of the session</li><li>• Participants made aware of the number of knives</li><li>• Individual participants given responsibility for a knife/ ensuring all knives are returned</li></ul> <p>Counting of knives at the end of the session</p>					
<p><b>Participants using own knives</b></p>	<p>Only centre knives to be used by staff and students.</p>					