

## Creating Troop Knife Guidelines

Knives can be an important and exciting piece of equipment for outdoor adventures, but they also bring with them an inherent increased risk. To assist in limiting this risk and maximizing the benefits of knife use, all Troops should establish their own policy regarding appropriate equipment for AHG activities, including knives. This policy should be included in your Troop Policy Handbook and shared with all families. Consider the following when working with your Troop Board and leadership in developing such a policy:

- It is advised that a Troop develop a Troop Code of Conduct, outlining expectations for girl behavior. Acting in accordance to the AHG Oath and Creed, and adhering to Troop rules might be among the items listed. It is also advised that Troops create an activity-specific Code of Conduct for activities requiring specialized behavior and/or increased risk (ie. Overnights, Troop camping, high adventure, etc.) A space should be included for both girl and parent to acknowledge that they understand and have discussed expected behavior for the Troop activity. A sample Code of Conduct, which can be customized for specific activities is available on the Leader Area of the AHG website.
- Knives may only be brought to an AHG activity when deemed appropriate by chaperoning AHG adult Leaders and included on a pack list for the AHG activity. For activities when knives (or other equipment, such as cell phones, electronic devices, etc.) are not appropriate, they should be included on the activity pack list under a “do not bring/leave at home” category. If pocket knives will be permitted at a Troop activity, Troop leadership must train girls about safe and appropriate use of a pocket knife.
- Troop Board and leadership should include specific guidelines in the Troop Policy Manual, including length and type of blade, type of knife, storage of knives, etc. These guidelines should be based on girls’ age, maturity and skill level, activity type and should above all work to ensure the safety of all girls.
- As a general rule, knives are not allowed on school premises nor can they be taken aboard commercial aircraft. These rules should be considered when creating policies, pack lists, etc. It will be important to also understand your Charter Partner’s guidelines for knives on the premises if you plan on teaching knife safety during a regular Troop meeting, etc.
- Each Troop is encouraged to create a system in which Leaders are made aware of items packed by girls for use during AHG events. This system should be included in the Troop Manual, and understood by all parents. The system will depend on the Troop’s needs, but some suggestions include: Pack list sign-off where parents initial the packing list indicating that all items have been inspected and only items on the pack list have been included in their bag; a pre-trip pack inspection where adult Leaders work with girls and parents to inspect all bags prior to leaving for an activity and return non-pack list and unnecessary items to parents.

If you should have additional questions, please consult your Support Services Coordinator at the AHG, Inc. office.