



Toolbox Talks for Club Employees: Knife Safety

Frequently we use knives and other cutting tools in our clubs. We cut bindings off boxes of paper. We open containers of all sorts. We cut ropes, cloth and various materials and adapt them to our use. We prep our food product for cooking. But we don't always do this safely.

Watch someone use a knife sometime and notice how often they risk being injured by cutting toward their body. You might see individuals hold a loaf of bread near their chest and cut toward themselves when slicing off a chunk. Sometimes when cutting a rope, we bend the rope into a loop and insert the knife into the loop facing upward. When the knife is drawn up through the rope, the force of the cutting action can bring it close to (or toward) the face or other body parts. Another unsafe but common use of box knives is to reach across the box and draw the knife toward you. These actions are *not* safe practices!

Sometimes, the cutting instruments we use are not the sharpest. Remember a sharp knife is a safer knife. It takes less force to cut through an object with a sharp knife. This gives you greater control of the blade. When heavy force is applied, the blade often cuts deeper than intended.

Hand and arm protection are also available for occupations that require the frequent use of cutting tools. Specialty gloves protect hands and arms from cuts and punctures. Safe workers wear hand and arm protection consistently.

The bottom line is to practice knife safety.

Use these tips when handling knives and other cutting tools to ensure your safety whatever your task:

- DO** direct sharp points and edges away from you.
- DO** store knives in knife blocks or in sheaths.
- DO** always use sharp cutting tools. If they are dull, sharpen them.
- DO** use knives for the operation for which they are intended.
- DO** carry knives with their tips pointed towards the floor.
- DO** wear cut-resistant gloves when appropriate.
- DO** ensure others know how to properly and safely use the various types of knives.
- DO NOT** use honing steels that do not have handle guards.
- DO NOT** attempt to catch a falling knife.
- DO NOT** use knives with broken or loose handles.
- DO NOT** use knives as a can opener or ice pick.
- DO NOT** leave knives in sinks full of water.
- DO NOT** pick up knives by their blades.