

# Knife Safety

A pocket knife can be a handy camping tool. You can use it to cut twine, peel marshmallow-roasting sticks, and cut a piece of cake. But knives can also be dangerous. Be sure to always use your knife safely by following these basic rules!

Remember that a pocket knife is a tool, not a toy.

Always keep your knife clean and sharp. If your knife isn't sharp, ask a grown-up to help you sharpen it. Dull knives are dangerous because they can catch. If your knife isn't clean (and dry) it can rust and be hard to close.

Before you open your knife, make a safety circle. Hold your arm out straight and reach it around to your right and left. No one should be inside your circle. If someone comes to sit next to you, it's your responsibility to either ask them to move or close your knife and move yourself. It's always a good idea to announce to the group that you're making a safety circle that they shouldn't enter so long as your knife is open.

When your knife is open, hold it by the handle the way you'd grip the handle of your bicycle. Never let your thumb rest on the back of the blade (if you push hard, you could close the knife on your fingers.)

Always cut away from your body. That means that the back side of the blade (the dull side) should always be facing your body. The sharp part of the blade should always be facing away. If you're having trouble whittling this way, turn the stick around.

When you're done using it, close the knife and put it away. To close a knife safely, hold the blade between the thumb and forefinger of one hand, while you hold the case with the other (making sure your fingers aren't covering the slot for the blade!) Close the knife in a controlled motion. If you can't close it, set the knife on the ground and ask an adult to pick it up and close it for you.

Close your knife before passing it to someone else.

# What to Do If You Get Lost

Do you know what to do if you get lost in the woods? Follow these easy steps, and you'll know exactly what to do if you ever find yourself alone in the forest.

## **Hug a Tree**

If there's a tree nearby, wrap your arms around it and stay still. The most important thing you can do is to **STAY WHERE YOU ARE**, and hugging a tree is a good way to do that. If you want, you can sit down by your tree. But no matter what, stay put.

## **Carry a Whistle and a Plastic Garbage Bag**

The whistle is for you to blow, so people can hear you. The plastic bag is to use as a coat in case you get cold. Reach inside and tear a hole for your head, then put it on so it covers your body (it goes over your head like a big shirt). Be sure to make the hole!

## **Don't Worry that Anyone Will Be Mad**

It's easy to think that your parents will be mad at you for getting lost, but don't worry. Anyone can get lost, even grown ups. The important thing is for you to stay where you are, so the rescuers can find you. If you start to worry, hug your tree.

## **Make Yourself Big**

If you hear helicopters, then it's okay to leave your tree and go to an open place where you can see a lot of sky. When helicopter pilots look down from the sky, it's hard for them to see things that are next to trees. Go to an open area (a field or the top of a flat rock) and lie down as the helicopter flies over. If you have a bright shirt on underneath your plastic bag, take your bag off for the time the helicopter is going over. It's easier for them to see bright colors.

## **No Animals Can Hurt You**

If you're out at night and you hear an animal, yell at it. Or blow your whistle at it. Animals are scared of people and will run away if they hear you yell. Be sure to stay where you are and make big noises to scare animals away.

## **Remember that Hundreds of Friends Are Looking for You**

As soon as people realize a child is missing, hundreds of volunteers gather to search. People will be looking for you. Use your whistle and yell if you hear anyone getting close, so you can attract their attention. Stay where you are and wait—the volunteers won't give up until they find you.

# 10 Essentials

*The Mountaineers* list 10 essential items to take on any day hike, overnight hike, or camping trip. Make this your survival kit! We've added a few more suggestions at the end.

1. Map
2. Compass
3. Flashlight / Headlamp
4. Extra Food
5. Extra Clothes
6. Sunglasses
7. First-Aid Kit
8. Pocket Knife
9. Waterproof Matches
10. Firestarter

## More suggestions:

water  
warm hat and/or hat with a brim  
lip balm  
whistle  
sunscreen

# Campfire Safety

If a fire gets out of control, it can be dangerous both for people and for wild animals. With these easy tips from Smokey the Bear, you can make sure that never happens!

## **Use a Campfire Pit**

If your campground has a fire pit, be sure to build your fire there. If there isn't one, pick an area that isn't under any tree branches and dig a small pit. Make sure there aren't any twigs, branches, or grasses nearby that could catch fire. The ground should be clear down to the dirt for five feet all the way around your pit.

Your campground fire pit might have stones circling it or a metal ring. That's the best kind!

## **Keep a Fire Bucket and Shovel Nearby**

Whenever you build a campfire, you should have a pail of water and a shovel nearby. The water is to put on the fire to put out the flames. The shovel is to scoop up dirt to throw on the fire, in case it gets out of control. In kindness to the little animals living in your campground, place a stick in the water bucket, so any critter that falls in can climb back out again.

## **Keep Extra Wood Far Away**

Your woodpile should be at least five feet away from the fire, and upwind.

## **Put Your Match in the Fire**

After lighting your fire, put the match in it. Never toss away a match that's still hot or warm.

## **Never Leave a Fire Unattended**

This is the most important rule of all. Never leave your fire unwatched, even for a minute. If everyone else has to go to the bathroom, have one person stay with the fire and wait until the others are back.

When it's time for bed, use the bucket and shovel to put your fire out with water and dirt. Make sure it's all the way out before you turn in for the night. It's better to put a lot of water on than not enough. Your fire pit will have all night to dry out and be ready for the next day's campfire.