



Bushcraft

Risk Vs. Benefit Statement

There is a low risk of injury from knife use or burns from fire lighting. However, these activities offer a real connection to the basics of survival and the Natural world with opportunities for skill development, environmental awareness and team working. The risks are therefore acceptable.

Hazard Description and activities giving rise to risk	Who may be harmed	Control Measures	Risk Rating
General participation – The area used may be uneven leading to slips, trips and falls. There may be stinging, thorny or irritant vegetation, and the safety of participants may be affected by their attitudes and behaviour	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants' clothing and footwear is suitable for the expected terrain and conditions (flat or low-heeled shoes, long trousers, waterproofs, sun hats, water bottles, etc.) • Make best use of space. Allow sufficient room for participants in each of their tasks • Select tasks appropriate to the abilities of the group. Some bushcraft activities can be dangerous if not treated with respect. Stop any activity that you think is not being taken seriously 	Low
Fire lighting – causing burns, abrasions, smoke inhalation or wider fire spread	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerants such as petrol, methylated spirits or paraffin must NOT be used • Make sure all participants have long hair tied back out of the way • Tell participants to blow gently on their ember and place it in their fire pit as soon as they see a flame. Don't hold on to it for too long! • Tell participants not to get too close to their fire if there is lots of smoke • Do not feed fires with green/fresh materials; this will increase the amount of smoke • Keep the areas around fire pits clear of flammable materials to avoid fires spreading • Do not allow fires to become too large • Secure all fire lighting equipment at the end of the activity 	Low

<p>Tool use – knives, saws and other edged tools causing cuts, grazes or punctures</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each instructor can supervise a maximum of 8 knife users at a time. The assisting adult should be used to supervise other students during this time. • Arrange participants in a horseshoe shape so you can see everyone easily and no-one is behind you. • Only introduce tool use if it is safe based on the behaviour and ability of the group • Keep tools in a secure place (e.g. locked storage box) until YOU are ready to introduce them • Count out and count in all knives. DO NOT finish an activity until all have been accounted for • Supervise knife use very carefully. Stop and correct any action you consider unsafe • Explain the danger areas of knives each time you use them, (blades AND points) • Ensure knives are passed handle first, and are sheathed and placed on the ground when not in use • Demonstrate and explain safe knife use, (strokes forward of the seated knee-crotch-knee triangle or kneeling with wood placed against the ground) • Space participants to be at least an arm length apart 	<p>Low</p>
<p>Shelter building – cuts, splinters, scratches and handling injuries arising from moving and assembling wooden structures</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise shelter building and intervene if designs/standards are inadequate • Explain safe handling rules when moving logs. “If it’s bigger than you, it takes two. More than three, leave it be” • Tell participants to be careful of who is around them when moving logs, and give each other space • Do not allow anyone inside shelters you consider unsafe 	<p>Very Low</p>
<p>Food and Foraging – possible poisoning, irritation or intolerance to natural foods, leaves, berries, fungi, etc.</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONLY collect foods from pre-agreed places that are known to be safe • ONLY eat leaves, berries etc. that appear healthy. Avoid wilted, discoloured or dead plants • DO NOT allow participants to eat foods that you do not recognize • DO NOT eat anything if you are not sure what it is • ONLY drink filtered water if it is fresh from the filter and has been examined for colour, clarity and odour 	<p>Very Low</p>
<p>Cooking – Burns and scalds from fires, hot water, cooking pots and hot food</p>	<p>Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow food hygiene rules at all times. Hands must be clean, food must be cooked thoroughly and contamination during cooking must be avoided • Only allow participants to cook if you are sure their behaviour is safe • Only allow cooking once the fire has stabilized. Cook over embers rather than flames • Position participants so you can see them all while they are cooking • When serving hot liquids bring the cups to the kettle, not the other way round. Pour into cups placed on the ground, not held by participants! 	<p>Low</p>