

Axe & Saw Safety

Axes and saws are versatile and useful tools. Axes can be used for felling trees or splitting wood, while hatchets can be used for trimming small branches and making kindling. Saws are lighter than axes and easier to handle. Axes and saws are both great tools, but they need to be used properly. Here are some guidelines for their safe use.

Safe Practices & Uses For axes or hatchets

Use the right tool for the job. Axes should be used with two hands. Hatchets can be used one-handed for smaller jobs.

Always swing in a controlled, well-balanced manner.

Remove any hazards from your work area. Ensure it is on level ground and that your striking area is free of rocks.

For axes and hatchets, inspect the handles before use for any damage and looseness in the head.

Don't unsheathe your axe or hatchet until you are ready to use it. Cover it back up when done.

Always position your body so that you are not in the direct path of your swing.

Set up a safe area to use the tools. The perimeter of your work area should be the length of your arm combined with the length of the tool. This is called the "blood zone" - only the person using the axe should be in this area. Mark the area off with rope or flags.

Never use a dull blade. Always make sure your axe or hatchet is sharp. Use a chopping block so that you don't hit the ground or a rock with the blade.

When carrying an axe, hold it with the blade pointing down toward the ground. If on a long hike, securely lash it to your backpack.

Tip:

Given that a hatchet is a tool for one-handed use, you have less control when swinging. Minimize potential accidents - use a stable position when using a hatchet; take a knee or find a well-balanced standing position.

Safe Practices & Uses For saws

Always use a stable cutting platform.

When not in use, cover the blade with a guard.

Do not cut wood if you are not in a stable cutting stance. Position the wood so that the cutting platform doesn't interfere with your cuts.

When passing someone a saw, do so handle-first.

Always carry your saw by the handle to prevent cuts to your hands.

Hold the wood securely with your free hand to prevent the wood from slipping while cutting.

Keep the blade free of debris. Wipe the blade clean after each use.

When starting a cut, make a notch in the wood to prevent the blade from losing control.



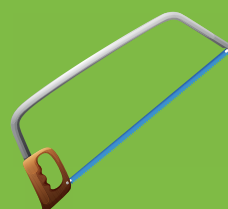
1 hand for a hatchet



2 hands for an axe



Pocket saw



Bow saw



Hand saw