

Axe Yard Set-Up

Before using woods tools such as axes or saws, a safe work area must be established. This area is referred to as the **Axe Yard**.

There must be plenty of room in the Axe Yard to swing an axe. Check **clearance** by holding the axe at arm's length by its head. Slowly turn in a circle. Remove any brush or branches that the handle touches, as well as anything overhead that could be snagged when swinging the axe.

Cordon off the area so that other people stay at least **ten feet** away while you are cutting. Use signs to clearly mark the Axe Yard. A Scout who uses any woods tools must have a valid **Totin' Chip** card. To help keep safety training and commitment top-of-mind, Scouts are often asked to post their Totin' Chip card at the Axe Yard entrance when using the area.

Scouts may enter the yard only to chop and saw wood. Each user of the area should clean up chips, bark, and other cutting debris before leaving. Only **one person** at a time may enter the axe yard. Adult **supervision** must be available in the area when a Scout enters the axe yard or uses woods tools.

A chopping block should be used to prevent the axe from chopping into the ground. This will help keep the axe blade sharp. It will also help reinforce using a safe technique.

If it is necessary to cut up a log that is too large to drag to the Axe Yard, the Axe Yard must be moved to the log (or a second Axe Yard area must be laid out and marked around the log).

Tools must be **cleaned, sheathed,** and properly **stored** when not in use. They must never be left out in the weather where rust can occur, or where an unaware passerby or unauthorized user could stumble on them or have access to them.

