



# Whittling Chip Pocketknife Safety Program

## *Choosing A Pocketknife*

---

When choosing a first pocketknife for a Cub Scout working on the Bear Cub Scout Achievement 19 "Shavings and Chips" and completing the Whittling Chip card, the choices are many. As a concerned parent, the following factors must be considered:

- 1. Safety**
- 2. Cost**
- 3. Quality and Durability**
- 4. Utility**

The intent of the "Shavings and Chips" Achievement is to teach the safe use of a pocketknife to every Bear Cub. It uses a systematic approach to teach each Cub respect for their pocketknife as a tool, the proper care and maintenance of their pocketknife, and safe use of their pocketknife. While working to complete this achievement, each Cub Scout learns a shared responsibility for pocketknife use, which reinforces the need for adult permission and supervision.

The choice of pocketknives is limited only by what an individual is willing to spend. This strategy is not the best when choosing a pocketknife for a Bear Cub Scout. In general, you should expect to spend \$35 or less on a first pocketknife.

Quality and durability will contribute to what you spend on a pocketknife for a Bear Cub. In most cases, "you get what you pay for" when choosing a pocketknife. There are many brands from which to choose, and few offer significant warranties, but the "Victorinox" brand of Swiss Army knives carry a lifetime warranty, which contributes significantly to their value, and speaks well of their quality and durability.

One of the single most important factors in choosing a pocketknife is the utility of the tool. While a single blade or locking blade knife is great for cutting and carving, the utility of such a knife for use in other camp tasks is limited. On the other hand, a Swiss Army knife that offers 64 different tool choices will be overwhelming to a third grade Bear Cub Scout.

An important facet in choosing a first pocketknife is the "functionality" of the knife you choose. A pocketknife that has a large cutting blade, a small cutting blade, a flat or slotted screwdriver, and a multifunction blade that has a can/bottle opener offers a great choice for a first pocketknife. A lanyard ring is also an essential – not because it adds to the utility of the pocketknife, but more since it prevents the pocketknife from becoming separated from the owner while camping or hiking.

While various choices of Swiss Army type knives, "Leatherman-type" multi-tools, and single blade knives are available, one of the best choices for a Cub Scout combine the best features, high quality, durability and cost. In this light I offer the following suggestions:

Victorinox Swiss Army "Tinker"

- large blade
- small blade
- large flat screwdriver/bottle opener
- small flat screwdriver/can opener
- Phillips screwdriver
- Awl/punch
- Lanyard ring



Victorinox Swiss Army "Hiker"

- large blade
- small blade
- large flat screwdriver/bottle opener
- small flat screwdriver/can opener
- Phillips screwdriver
- Awl/punch
- Saw
- Lanyard ring



Leatherman "Kick"

- large blade
- large flat screwdriver
- small flat screwdriver
- can/bottle opener
- Phillips screwdriver
- Awl/punch
- Full size pliers
- Lanyard ring



The Scout store and scoutstuff.com offers an "Official Cub Scout Knife" which is similar in features to the Victorinox Swiss Army "Tinker" but costs about \$30. This pocketknife contains the Cub Scout symbol, which may be a detraction as each boy progresses thru Scouting to Boy Scouts.