

Using Hand Axes Safely

A hand axe is used for cutting and trimming small firewood, thin braches, and twigs. Also, it is used to split logs. It should not be used on live wood, or any wood larger than larger than 3 inches/7.5cm in diameter (about the size of your wrist); this should be cut using a bow saw.



Safety guidelines

- Check the axe before you use it. Never use an axe if the haft is split or damaged, or if it does not line up with the head, or if the head is loose. Never use a blunt axe.
- Clear an area of at least three axe lengths (that is one outstretched arm and the length of three axes) around you. If possible, mark the area off with boundaries.
- Make sure there are no overhanging branches, ropes, or other obstructions.





- Always use a chopping block and never put an axe in the ground.
- Chop over the chopping block. The part to be cut should be resting on the block.
- Remove any loose clothing, including neckerchiefs, scarves, and lanyards.
- Wear boots, instead of soft shoes, to protect your feet.
- Always stop when feeling tired. If you carry on, you are more likely to miss and cause a serious injury.
- Cover the axe when not in use.
- Carry the axe upside down in your hand by your side, on the inside of your arm. Have the axe blade face forward clear of your fingers.
- A chopping area is a 'no go' area for anyone not properly trained or clothed.
- Always use an axe within the marked out chopping area.
- Chop enough wood to keep the fire wood pile stocked but do not over stock the pile.

