



CREATIVE WORKSHOPS & PROJECTS

make, play, discover

RISK & SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR: **CRAFT KNIVES & SCISSORS**

- Only use a craft knife if it is the correct tool for the job. If you can use scissors or a guillotine, you should. Craft knives are for precision, detail, or small-scale work.
- Use the correct sized and type of scissors for the job – for example, do not use oversized scissors for small paper-cutting jobs, and do not use fabric scissors for cutting paper.
- Be aware of others in the area (they may bump or distract you). Set yourself up in a safe, tidy and distraction-free area.
- Always make sure your blade is clean and sharp. Blunt blades cause more injury as they are not as easy to control.
- If you are using a retractable craft knife, your blade must be locked in place when using it. You will need to use the provided blade snapper to snap old blades off. Change your blade when you feel it becoming difficult to cut, or if your paper is starting to become ragged when cutting – this is the sign of a blunt blade.
- Dispose of old blades in a 'sharps' bin if you have one, or at your local tip. Never put old blades directly in to your bin. If you cannot go to your local tip, then wrap it in newspaper, label it clearly, and place in a box that is also labelled.
- If using a retractable craft knife, retract and lock your blade when not in use; or put on the protective cover/stick it into a rubber. Store all craft knives in a safe place.
- Never leave knives unattended on desks, floors, chairs, etc. where others might not expect to find them. Never put unprotected blades in your bag/pocket. Note that carrying a craft knife around in public could be considered a weapon.
- Always use your dominant hand to cut with, and your other hand to secure the paper or card you are cutting. If necessary, secure work with pins or tape. Keep your 'other' hand behind the cutting blade at all times. Always make sure the material to be cut is held firmly on a stable surface.

- Never cut towards your body/hands. Always think about the direction of your blade and how much control you have over using it. If necessary, rotate your paper/card so you are cutting in a more controlled way.
- Don't press too hard and try to cut through something thick in one go. Lots of light cuts rather than one big deep cut provides greater control and better results. Keep going until the item is cut – do not be tempted to tear off any remaining corners or snags as this will look ugly!
- Craft knives must be used with a cutting mat. A cutting mat is designed to protect your work surface as well as act as a gripping surface for your paper/card. If your blade cuts in to the mat, it is designed to withstand the incision so your blade doesn't slip. If you do not have a cutting mat, use a thick piece of grey board.
- Always use a metal safety ruler if you are wanting a straight line. A metal safety ruler is designed with a 'guard' so that if you slip your blade will be caught in the protective channel. Never attempt to use a plastic 'school ruler' to cut a straight line as your craft knife is highly likely to cut through the plastic and slip up causing injury to your hand.

EXAMPLES OF CRAFT KNIVES:



Above left: Retractable craft knife / Above centre and right: single use blades

EXAMPELS OF METAL SAFETY RULERS:



Above middle: the rulers pictured are on a green cutting mat – it is worth investing in a few different sized cutting mats so you have one that is the right size for the work you are doing.