

Risk assessment

Name of activity, event, and location	Cub Scout Balsa Wood Derby (Construction)	Date of risk assessment	22 Feb 2026	Name of person doing this risk assessment	Martin Berriman
		Date of next review	22 Feb 2027		

Only Balsa wood will be used (soft, low density, easy to sand by hand) therefore hand sanding only, no power tools are to be used.

What could go wrong? What hazard have you identified? What are the risks from it?	Who is at risk?	What are you going to do about it? How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? How will they be communicated to young people and adults and remain inclusive to all needs?	Review & revise What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
<p>A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm that may occur from the hazard.</p>	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	<p>Controls are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way you do the activity.</p>	<p>Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change what you're doing or even stop the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.</p>
Inhalation of Wood Dust causing respiratory irritation, coughing, mild allergic reaction. Skin contact irritation.	Cubs, leaders, young leaders	<p>Balsa wood is generally considered safe for most people, but it can cause allergic reactions in some individuals. While severe reactions are uncommon, skin irritation has been reported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dust masks provided and worn while sanding. Windows/doors opened to ensure good ventilation. Sanding carried out at tables, not on floor. Cubs instructed not to blow dust into the air. Tables wiped with damp cloth after session. Handwashing required after activity. Cubs with asthma advised to bring inhalers 	
Dust in eyes causing irritation and/or discomfort.	Cubs, leaders, young leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cubs reminded not to blow dust Cubs told not to rub eyes. Handwashing after sanding. Eye wash available in first aid kit. 	
Minor Cuts from Sandpaper or Wooden Edges	Cubs, leaders, young leaders	<p>First aid kit available. Leaders will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate correct sanding technique. Pre-check blocks for sharp splinters. Assist with assembly as required, 	
Use of Glue	Cubs, leaders, young leaders	<p>Use PVA glue and hot-melt glue only (no superglue). Clear instruction not to ingest glue. Wipes available.</p>	

You can find more information in the [Safety checklist for Section Volunteers](#) and at scouts.org.uk/safety

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		Handwashing after use.	
Choking Risk (Small Parts – beads for axles)	Cubs	Age-appropriate group (8–10.5 years). Clear instruction not to put parts in mouth. Supervised at all times.	
Slips/Trips from Dust or Equipment	Everyone	Dust cleaned regularly. Bags/Bottles and coats stored away from work area. Clear working zones established.	
Behavioural Excitement / Rough Play	Cubs	Clear behaviour expectations explained. Adequate adult supervision ratios maintained. Calm structured activity.	

Don't forget, as part of your programme planning, you should have contingency activities in reserve just in case you can't do what was planned or you need to stop half way through. Make sure this is shared with those involved, so everyone knows how to respond. You should have risk assessed contingency activities prior to them taking place and communicated key information to those involved as with all activities.

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