REQUIREMENTS BY SKILL

Woods Tools & Fire Safety Requirements by Rank

Pocketknife safety, knife-saw-ax use, fire building, and stoves.

Tools and fire come early. Scout rank covers pocketknife safety, Tenderfoot adds the saw and ax, and Second Class puts it all together: preparing wood, building and extinguishing a fire, and setting up stoves. Many troops also use the Totin' Chip and Firem'n Chit cards. Those are troop privileges, not rank requirements, but the skills overlap almost completely, so teaching them together saves time.

> Requirements are paraphrased for planning, and numbers follow the current Scouts BSA Requirements book. Verify wording at scouting.org before signing off.

How Woods Tools & Fire Safety Builds Across the Ranks

Scout

5 Explain pocketknife safety.

Tenderfoot

3d Show how to care for, sharpen, and use a knife, saw, and ax, and when to use each.

Sign-off: Scout actually sharpens and uses each tool within a marked safety circle.

Second Class

2a	Explain when it's appropriate to use a fire for cooking or other purposes, and when it isn't.
2b	Use the knife, saw, and ax to prepare tinder, kindling, and fuel wood for a cooking fire.
2c	At an approved place and time, build a fire with that wood, light it (unless local restrictions prohibit), let it burn safely for a couple of minutes, then put it out with minimal impact. **Sign-off:** The fire should be fully extinguished — cold to the touch — and the site left clean.
2d	Explain when to use a lightweight stove versus a propane stove, set one up and light it (unless prohibited), and describe stove safety.

After First Class

There's no single tools-and-fire merit badge, but these skills come up again in Camping, Cooking, and Wilderness Survival. Woodwork is an option for scouts who enjoy tool work.

Wilderness Survival — Fire building without matches and improvised shelters.

Camping EAGLE — Eagle-required. Assumes solid fire and stove skills.

Cooking EAGLE — Eagle-required. Uses stove and fire skills throughout.

Can rank work count toward a merit badge? Sometimes. Under the Guide to Advancement (4.2.3.6), one activity can count for both when the two requirements match exactly and have the same purpose, like camping nights for the ranks and the Camping merit badge. For safety skills such as first aid and CPR, the counselor should be satisfied the Scout still remembers what was learned. When requirements only look alike, the Scout still does each one's own work. The unit leader or merit badge counselor makes the call.

Life rank tie-in: Second Class 2b, 2c, and 2d (wood prep, fire building, stoves) is one of the Life rank Teaching EDGE choices.

Tools & Fire Skills Campout Block

A campout afternoon at a site that allows fires, with a marked safety area. About 90 minutes.

1. **Knife safety (all new scouts)**
   Pocketknife safety talk and safe-passing practice (Scout 5). Pair it with the troop's Totin' Chip if you use one.

2. **Tool station**
   Tenderfoot candidates sharpen a knife and practice safe saw and ax use inside the safety circle (T 3d).

3. **Fire talk**
   Second Class candidates discuss when fires are and aren't appropriate, including the current local fire restrictions (SC 2a).

4. **Wood prep and fire build**
   Second Class candidates use those same tools to prepare tinder, kindling, and fuel, build and light the fire, then fully extinguish it (SC 2b, 2c).

5. **Stove station**
   Second Class candidates set up and light a backpacking stove and a propane stove, and explain the safety rules for each (SC 2d). Use the lit stoves for dinner.

Signing It Off

Second Class 2b should use the same tools from Tenderfoot 3d. Watch for safe technique, not just a pile of wood.

If a burn ban is in effect, scouts can still build the fire lay. The requirement allows for local restrictions on lighting it.

Totin' Chip and Firem'n Chit are separate from rank. A scout can have the card without having passed the rank requirements, or the reverse.

Common Mistakes

Skipping the ax and saw because "we don't use them anymore." Tenderfoot 3d requires all three tools.

Leaving the fire to "burn down" instead of fully extinguishing it.

Signing off stove requirements when the scout only watched an adult light it.

> **Safety:** Follow the Guide to Safe Scouting and local fire regulations. Use a marked safety circle for tool work, and keep water and a shovel at every fire.