

# Safety Observances in ABS Performance Testing

The following is a safety guide for both Mastersmiths administering the performance test to stamp applicants and Instructors of the ABS "Intro to Bladesmithing" course.

## Test Blades

Blades must be equipped with a lanyard strap.

All blades must have some form of handle grip (tightly bound cord wrap, wood, etc.) securely fastened to the blade; duct tape is not enough.

A test blade shall be:

- A. Demonstrably sharp enough to shave hair, over the entirety of the sharpened edge, before the testing begins. A tester has until the beginning of the test to correct this, after the test begins there will be no retouching of the edge in any way.
- B. Constructed in a solid manner to insure a safe test.
- C. Free of any warps or edge defects before the testing begins.
- D. Free of any evidence of cracking at any location, edge, spine, ricasso, tang etc.
- E. At least a 220X finish to allow proper inspection of surface and avoid stress risers.
- F. Any Mastersmith administering a test may, at their discretion, determine that the knife is unfit for testing.

## Rope Cutting

Cutting areas must consist of a perimeter of safe distance from all other personnel or objects.

All cuts must be done with the opposite foot back from the hand that is cutting, so that the cut is never traveling into a forward leg.

Any repositioning of the cutting target, must not be done by the cutter so long as the knife is tied to, or held in, their hand. The cutter should either set the blade down outside the cutting area, or step away with knife in hand at their side.

Rope must be secured in a way that keep all personnel at a safe distance, the rope is not to be held in a hand.

Clean the cutting area of debris between tests to insure solid footing.

## 2X4 Cutting

Cutting areas must consist of a perimeter of safe distance from all other personnel or objects.

Whenever possible the 2X4 should be securely held in a fixture. The applicant may request the 2X4 be turned over half way through the cut, but it must be resecured before proceeding.

Any repositioning of the cutting target, must not be done by the cutter so long as the knife is tied to, or held in, their hand. The cutter should either set the blade down outside the cutting area, or step away with knife in hand at their side.

Observers are not to stand in the area directly in front of the 2X4 cut.

Clean the cutting area of debris between tests to insure solid footing.

### **Bend Test**

Knife edges should be dulled by a quick pass on the belt grinder before the bend test.

The blade must be secured in a vise that is mounted in a secure and immovable way. Having to hold a vise base in place puts personnel within the safety zone and is not acceptable.

A cheater bar/pipe that totally encloses the handle should be used. Bending forks, wrenches, or other items that do not retain the handle end of the blade, in the event of failure, are not acceptable.

The tester must stand to the side of the cheater bar, and never directly in front of, or under it, when performing the bend.

A buffer of a single layer of leather between the blade and the vice jaws is highly advisable, direct metal to metal contact will create a surface defect increasing the chances of failure.

No observers will be allowed to stand in the area directly in front of the outside bend of the blade.