



# Knife Awareness

Written by Andrew Morrell

## **The Law**

With regards to bladed or sharply pointed articles it is an offence to have/carry either in public (S.139 Criminal Justice Act 1988). Folding pocket knives with a blade which does not exceed 3 inches are exempt from the above, unless the blade locks in which case the offence is committed, however a person would still need to give good and justifiable reason for carry one otherwise a charge of carrying an offensive weapon may follow as this is a different offence (S.1 Prevention of Crime Act 1953).

## **Lawful Reasons for Possession**

If a person can show good reason or lawful authority for carrying such items then that is a defence in law. Defences are for use at work, for religious reasons or as part of a national costume.

Carrying a bladed article for self-defence **IS NOT** a lawful reason and will result in arrest remembering that the minimum age for arrest is England, Wales and Northern Ireland is 10 years old and 12 years old in Scotland.

## **Schools**

It is an offence to have ANY bladed or sharply pointed article on school premises (S.139 Criminal Justice Act 1988). Police have the power to enter school premises to search for both bladed articles and offensive weapons without the need to obtain a warrant.

## **Teaching Defensive Techniques**

First and foremost, it must be noted that if a person physically engages another holding/making threat with any bladed article the likely hood of getting cut or stabbed is extremely high. On this point teaching 'disarming' as stand-alone techniques is ill-advised as this will encourage physical engagement. The only exception to this is if your student base stems from a security or policing workforce meaning they have no choice other than to either engage or make a strategic withdrawal.

In addition to teaching defensive skills the following points will help you as an Instructor when teaching students about this subject.



The first line of defence is do not physically engage unless you have no other choice.

1. Running/withdrawing/escaping is ALWAYS the best option.
2. If you're not able to run, then follow these guidelines.  
**R**emove an item of clothing and wrap it around your arm to act as a shield if you can.  
**U**se 'power talking' to try and engage and distract the attacker while you select a method to defend yourself.  
**N**ext look for something around you to use as a shield or counter weapon.

You'll notice the bolded letters spell '**RUN**', this will help students remember.

3. If physical engagement is unavoidable then remember you are fighting for your life so anything goes! Section 76 Criminal Justice & Immigration Act 2008 Common Law Self Defence states that where a person has an honestly held belief that he, she or another is in imminent danger, that person may use reasonable and necessary force in order to repel the attack. A person being attacked need not wait to be assaulted – circumstances may justify a pre-emptive strike.
4. Bite and ensure your teeth meet each other, scratch any area of skin and gauge eyes if you can.
5. Take control of the attacking arm as fast as you can so as to gain some control of the bladed article, grabbing inside the elbow joint is best as it will reduce the movement more than anywhere else on the arm (test this method before teaching it).
6. If you do get cut or stabbed leave the blade in (if still in place, do not remove it) and/or apply pressure.
7. If you are lucky enough to escape take control of the bladed article if you can and escape remembering to call the Police asap.