



## UK Knife Legislation

### Main knife laws

It is illegal to:

- sell a knife of any kind to anyone under 18 years old (16 to 18 year olds in Scotland can buy cutlery and kitchen knives)
- carry a knife in public without good reason - unless it's a knife with a folding blade 3 inches long (7.62 cm) or less, eg a Swiss Army knife
- carry, buy or sell any type of banned knife
- use any knife in a threatening way (even a legal knife, such as a Swiss Army knife).

Lock knives (knives with blades that can be locked when unfolded) are not folding knives, and are illegal to carry in public without good reason.

### Good reasons for carrying a knife

Examples of good reasons to carry a knife in public can include:

- taking knives you use at work to and from work
- taking knives to a gallery or museum to be exhibited
- the knife is going to be used for theatre, film, television, historical reenactment or religious purposes, eg the kirpan some Sikhs carry

A court will decide if you've got a good reason to carry a knife if you're charged with carrying it illegally.

### Banned knives

There is a ban on the sale of some knives:

- flick knives (also called 'switchblades' or 'automatic knives') - where the blade is hidden inside the handle and shoots out when a button is pressed
- butterfly knives - where the blade is hidden inside a handle that splits in two around it, like wings; the handles swing around the blade to open or close it
- disguised knives, eg where the blade is hidden inside a belt buckle or fake mobile phone
- gravity knives
- sword-sticks
- samurai swords (with some exceptions, including antiques and swords made to traditional methods before 1954)
- hand or foot-claws
- push daggers
- hollow kubotan (cylinder-shaped keychain) holding spikes
- shuriken (also known as 'death stars' or 'throwing stars')
- kusari-gama (sickle attached to a rope, cord or wire)
- kyoketsu-shoge (hook-knife attached to a rope, cord or wire)
- kusari (weight attached to a rope, cord or wire)

This is not a complete list of banned knives. Contact your local police to check if a knife is illegal.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/buying-carrying-knives>

For more information, follow these links:

The Knives Act 1997.

The Offensive Weapons Act 1996.

The Criminal Justice Act 1988 Section XI "Miscellaneous" - Subsection 139 - 142 - "Articles with Blades or Points and Offensive Weapons".