

Cub Scout Safety Scenario #2: The Falling Branch Surprise

For Cub Scouts (Ages 6–10)

Your den arrives at the park for an outdoor activity day. While the leaders set up a craft table, a few Cub Scouts begin exploring nearby. They notice a big, low tree branch that looks perfect for swinging.

One Cub Scout jumps up and grabs the branch. Another Cub Scout says, “Let me try!” and pulls down on it too. The branch shakes, cracks loudly, and suddenly **part of the branch breaks off and falls to the ground** — landing only a few inches from where the Cubs were standing.

No one is hurt, but everyone jumps back in surprise.

One Cub Scout says, “Whoa! That was close... but we’re okay. We don’t need to tell the leaders.”

Role-Play / Skit Activity: “The Falling Branch Fix-It Team”

Characters

- 2–4 Cub Scouts
- 1 Leader
- 1 “Safety Scout” (optional narrator/helper)

Props

- A large stick or cardboard “branch”
- Tape or string to hang the “branch” loosely from a chair or table
- A marked “danger zone” on the floor (rope, cones, or tape)

Skit Outline

Scene 1: The Tempting Tree Branch

- Cubs see the “branch” and pretend to swing or pull on it.
- The branch “cracks” (leader or helper makes a sound).
- The branch falls into the danger zone.
- Cubs freeze in shock.

Scene 2: Safety Scout Steps In

- Safety Scout says: “Freeze! What could have happened if someone was under that branch?”
- Cubs give silly answers first, then real ones.

Scene 3: The Safe Way

- Leader explains: “Branches can fall without warning. We always check with an adult before climbing or swinging.”
- Cubs practice spotting “danger trees” and marking a safe zone.
- Cubs help create a pretend “safe play area.”

Final Line (all together)

“Look up, look around — stay safe on the ground!”

Leader’s Guide: The Falling Branch Surprise

Purpose of This Scenario

This scenario teaches Cub Scouts:

- Why they must never climb or swing on branches without adult approval
 - How to recognize unstable trees or “widow-makers”
 - How serious injuries can happen even during play
 - Why reporting near misses is essential
 - How to stay aware of their surroundings outdoors
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Key Teaching Points for Leaders

1. This Was a Serious Near Miss

This incident had **clear potential for severe injury**, including:

- Head injury
- Broken bones
- Cuts or bruises from falling debris

Even though no one was hurt, the branch falling **inches away** makes this a textbook near miss.

Reinforce that:

- Near misses must be reported
 - Reporting helps prevent future injuries
 - Cubs should always tell an adult when something almost goes wrong
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2. Connect to Scouting America Safety Expectations

Use this scenario to highlight:

- **Outdoor hazard awareness:** Look up for loose branches before choosing a play area
 - **Age-appropriate activities:** Cubs should not climb trees or swing from branches without adult supervision
 - **Environmental safety:** Leaders must check the area for hazards before activities begin
 - **Boundaries:** Establish clear “safe zones” for play
 - **Buddy system:** Cubs remind each other about safety
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3. Teach Cubs to “Look Up, Look Around”

Help Cubs learn:

- Trees can have dead or cracked branches
 - Branches can fall even without wind
 - Not all trees are safe for climbing or swinging
 - Asking an adult first is always the right choice
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4. Use the Skit to Reinforce Learning

The skit helps Cubs:

- Understand the danger without real risk
- Practice stopping unsafe behavior
- Learn how to identify hazardous branches
- Build confidence in speaking up

Encourage dramatic reactions — it helps the lesson stick.

5. What Leaders Should Do After a Near Miss

- Document the event factually
 - Submit a near-miss report
 - Review the area for additional hazards
 - Mark or block off unsafe trees
 - Remind parents and leaders about outdoor hazard checks
 - Reinforce safety expectations at the next meeting
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Suggested Leader Discussion Prompts

- “What made the branch unsafe?”
 - “How close was this to being a serious injury?”
 - “Why is it important to tell an adult when something almost goes wrong?”
 - “How can we check for dangerous branches before playing?”
 - “What safety rules can we use every time we explore outdoors?”
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Takeaway Message for Cub Scouts

Branches can fall without warning. When we look up, look around, and tell an adult about near misses, we keep our whole den safe and ready for adventure.