Exposing Your Axle Tips

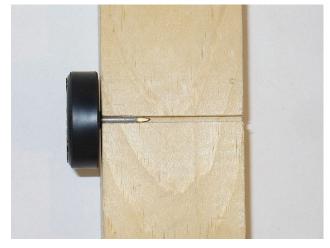
(or "How to Comply with Axle Inspection Almost-Painlessly")

Hello Pinewood Derby Racers!

If you've read the rules for your District (you did, right?), you might have noticed an interesting provision in the rules regarding axle visibility: " It is not required to place the axles into slots pre-cut in the wood block; however, the pointed ends of the axles shall be readily visible from the underside of the car."

OK, how do you make the axle tips visible?

There is the easiest method: use the pre-cut slots.



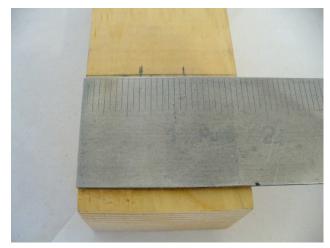
But wait - what if you don't like using the slots and would rather drill your axle holes (or already have drilled axle holes)? What can you do to meet the requirements of this rule?

Here's how.

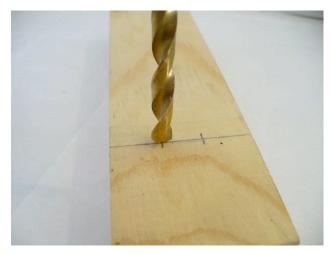
First, mark the locations of your axle holes on the underside of the car.



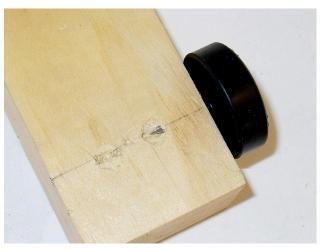
Next, make marks 9/16" in from each side of the edge of the car at the axle hole. These locations are where the inspection holes will be centered.



Next, with the axles removed from the car, drill a shallow hole just deep enough to expose the axle hole. The diameter of the hole should be about 1/4" or more to show the entire axle tip.



When the hole is at the correct depth, it should look like the one on the left in the photo. With the axle reinserted to the correct depth, the hole should look approximately like the one on the right in the photo.



All done! You're in compliance with the rules, and the inspection will go much happier!

But wait - what if the axles are glued in, or for some reason you can't or don't want to remove them? Note that the rules are clear and firm - "the pointed ends of the axles shall be readily visible". The tips still need to be exposed, one way or another.

But there is still a way to expose them, even with the axle in place. By using woodworking tools such as carving tools or an electric multitool*, you can carefully remove the wood around the axle tip (just please try not to mangle the axle too much).



Happy racing!

Bob Weaver jusbobweaver@gmail.com

and

Richard Moeur rcmoeur@aol.com

Four Peaks District Pinewood Derby Co-Chairs

^{*}It is Boy Scouts of America safety policy that Cub Scouts are not to operate power tools.