

Velvicut® Premium Axes

Council Tool is pleased to produce a line of premium axes called **Velvicut®**. This name was trademarked many years ago, back when an axe was part of the work day. When sharpness, the ability to hold an edge, and the feel of the tool made the day shorter -- or longer -- based on performance. With **Velvicut®**, our commitment is to combine centuries of axe-making expertise with modern manufacturing techniques and excellent materials to produce a line of axes for those who want the best. **Velvicut®** axe heads are patterned and styled with features that allow the axe to perform in an exceptional manner. The big things -- like material, shape and balance -- are certainly important. But the little things -- the slight taper here, the refining of the cheek there -- make the axe more pleasurable to use. As with all Council Tool products, they are **Made in USA**.

Many of our tools are drop forgings, including **Velvicut®** axes. Each drop hammer is a massive piece of equipment in which a large steel mass (known as the ram) is dropped repeatedly, under control, on a hot piece of steel until the steel fills out the desired shape. The advantage of forging is that the steel's grain is refined and aligned with the shape of the product, providing superior strength. One of the drop hammers used to forge many of our axes has a ram with a falling weight of around 3,500 pounds. Operating a drop hammer takes a combination of physical strength, hand/eye coordination, concentration, and experience. It's both skill and art. The forger holds a hot piece of steel using tongs and moves the material about the die, making rapid decisions based on experienced judgment. Council Tool is fortunate to have a number of qualified forgers whose on-the-job experience averages 26 years. When using high carbon steel, it takes 6 to 8 blows of the ram to produce an axe head. We use 5160 grade alloy to make a **Velvicut®** axe head, and this material takes nearly twice as many blows to form a similar head -- a testament to its toughness. The end result of the alloy material in these axe heads is an outstanding product -- strong and tough with superior edge-holding properties.

Just as in the forging department, Council Tool is fortunate to have a staff of experienced and versatile people who grind, heat treat, sharpen and assemble products, including **Velvicut®** axes. We refer to this department as "finishing." Many of our finishing craftsmen are trained on all aspects of axe making and tool production. At present, the typical experience level is over 12 years and up to 27 years. The **Velvicut®** forging is first profiled and rough ground in a robotic work cell. The robot provides unmatched consistency and dimensional exactness. The axe bit is heated and quenched in oil, then tempered to Rc 52-56 to hold an edge. The sharpening steps are by hand -- and an experienced one at that -- with a series of increasingly fine grit abrasives finishing with 1,000 grit and leather.

The custom handles used in this premium line are all American hickory and are only "A" grade, selected for grain orientation and density. White sapwood and red heartwood are equally suitable as there is no difference in the specific density or strength of the wood. The handle patterns are traditional or unique shapes chosen with performance in mind. They tend to be thinner in width, allowing the handle to flex. These handles are much more difficult and expensive to manufacture, but they provide results. You will feel the difference during use. **Velvicut®** handles are not coated with any finish prior to assembly, providing the maximum strength of head to handle bond. Handles are lightly rubbed with linseed oil before packaging. The heads are finished in their natural steel state, lightly oiled to prevent rusting and to showcase its beauty.

Your **Velvicut®** axe head will outlast its owner, and then some. (The head does have a lifetime warranty.) We cannot guarantee how long a piece of wood will last, so our warranty on the handle is that it will be free from defects in material and workmanship. Given the grade of the material and the grain orientation it should also last a very long time. Prolong the life of your handle by protecting it from extreme or prolonged exposure to sun and water. Also keep it lightly coated with a protective coating like linseed oil.

These tools are designed to last for generations - and if you take care of them, they will.