The following Minimum Standard is applicable on all projects

This Minimum Standard applies to Unitas employees and subcontractors.
Knives are amongst one of the most commonly used hand tools in the construction sector. Unitas recognise that the use of knives is unavoidable for certain tasks. Incorrect selection and use of knives can cause serious laceration injury. Persons using knives must be competent in their use.

Elimination
Always try to eliminate or reduce the use of hand knives e.g. by using for example sheers, cutters with concealed blades, scissors etc.

Selection
Unitas must provide their employees with the correct knives if needed. The use of personal knives is prohibited.
The use of a fixed blade / non-retractable knifes are not permitted. Unitas's preference is for retractable blades where the blade length can be kept to a minimum during use and the blade can be stored away safely after use.
Consider blades with anti-stab round edges (example below).
The only exception to selecting knives outside these requirements is for specialist work requiring specific knives which will be subject to a specific risk assessment.

Examples		
✓ **Alternative to knives**	✓ **Permitted knives**	✗ **Not Permitted**
	Rounded Tips/ Edges	

Safe use of knives
Plan ahead – right tools available for the tasks ahead?
Prepare your cutting area and check around for others before cutting.
Check the condition of your knife before each use e.g. always use a sharp blade (never a dull/blunt one).
Always cut away from yourself – if this is not possible cut very slowly and never across your legs.
Wherever possible secure the materials with clamps to a bench or trestles and if this is not possible try to keep your hands securing the material being cut away from the blade at all times.
Don't apply too much pressure on the blade or cut more than the knife can handle.
Wear Category 5 cut resistant gloves as a minimum and possibly gauntlets subject to risk assessment.
Follow manufacturer's instructions when changing blade.
Never use a hand knife as a screwdriver and always store the knife properly.