

NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

January 2014

MAKING PLAYGROUNDS SAFER

The most effective way to reduce the frequency and severity of playground injuries is to develop a comprehensive playground safety program.

- **Have Playground Inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) Initially and at Least Annually.** Contact Jeremy Hatch (JeremyH@nbsia.org) to schedule an inspection.
- **Provide and Maintain Adequate Depths of Surfacing Below the Play Areas.** Inadequate surface depth of compactable material is the *number one cause* of playground injuries. The CPSC guidelines for types and depths of compactable surfacing material are set forth in their free Public Playground Safety Handbook. [Click here](#) (or email AmandaH@nbsia.org) for a copy of the handbook.
- **Adult Supervision Should be Required at all Times While Children are Playing.**
- **Install Highly Visible Signage.** Include rules of use, adult supervision required, hours of operation and age appropriateness of the equipment.
- **Develop and Use a Site Equipment Specific Checklist for Frequent and Documented Inspections of the Playground Equipment and Surrounding Area.** Conducting a playground inspection on a regular basis will help identify potential problems and establish a documented best practice for equipment conditions.
- **Playground Safety Checklist**
A checklist can guide the inspection process, and when properly developed and completed on a regular basis, can not only uncover areas needing improvement but also provide documentation in the event litigation is brought based on improperly maintained playgrounds.

Below are some items to include in your checklist. Items should be added or deleted based upon your specific equipment. Items to consider for an inspection checklist include:

- Is the play area free of trash, and are trash receptacles free from overflowing?
- Is the play area free of animal feces as well as sharp objects, such as broken glass?
- Is the play area free of thorny or poisonous plants as well as mushrooms and other fungi?
- Is the play area and equipment free from insect infestation?
- Are the playground equipment and signage free from vandalism?
- Is the equipment free of any user modifications such as swing chains looped over top support, rearranged or relocated equipment, etc.?
- If loose-fill surfacing (wood chips, mulch, shredded rubber, etc.) is used; has displaced surfacing been raked back into the areas of high use (i.e. under swings and slide exits)?
- Are equipment surfaces and hard surfaced pathways free of slip hazards such as leaves, water or ice?
- Is the equipment free of loose, missing or broken components?
- Are all "S" hooks closed to no greater than .04 inch? (A dime inserted should not be able to pass through the opening.)

Contact Us

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