

NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

October 2019

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Consumer Product Safety Commission sites each year, more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger go to hospital ER's with injuries from playground equipment. More than 20,000 of these children are treated for a traumatic brain injury, including concussion.

1. Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls.

- **Improper Ground Surfaces:** Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.
- **Unprotected Elevated Areas:** Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.
- **Head Entrapment Spaces:** Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.
- **Sharp Points and Edges:** Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, "S" hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

2. Avoid Strangulation Hazards

Children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground

3. Take Steps to Keep Kids Safe By:

- Check that playgrounds have fall material such as wood chips, sand, or mulch.
- Read playground signs and use playground equipment that is appropriate for the child's age.
- Make sure guardrails are in good condition to help prevent falls.
- Look out for things in the play area that can trip a child, like tree stumps or rocks.



NBSIA provides playground inspections, Campus Monitor Training and Playground Inspector Training. Playground signage stickers available. Contact MemberServices@nbsia.org to learn more.

Sources

<https://www.cdc.gov/safekid/playground/index.html>
<https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/safety-topics/child-safety/playgrounds>



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