



Risk Control Bulletin

Maintaining a Safer Playground

You can use this checklist to inspect your building's playground. Inform building maintenance to correct any hazards immediately - **before injuries occur**.

Your playground should meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission's guidelines outlined in the *Public Playground Safety Handbook* (<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>).

Step 1: Surfacing

_____ Inspect protective surfacing in and around play equipment – To cushion a fall, shock absorbing material should extend a minimum of 6 feet in all directions from stationary pieces of play equipment. In front of and behind swings, the material should extend a distance equal to twice the height of the suspending bar. Install or replace protective surfacing, if necessary, according to the guidelines of the Public Playground Safety Handbook.

_____ Ensure loose-fill surfacing has no debris or foreign matter – loose-fill surfacing such as sand, gravel, engineered wood fibers or shredded rubber should be periodically raked and screened to remove dangerous foreign matter, such as glass and sharp branches.

_____ Ensure loose-fill surfacing material has not compacted or been displaced. With repeated use loose-fill surfacing material can compact and lose its ability to cushion falls. Rake and fluff surfaces periodically. Similarly surfacing materials under swings or slide exits may become displaced and should be replaced.

Step 2: General Hazards

_____ Check equipment for sharp points, corners or edges. Remove such hazards or protect them with caps or plugs.

_____ Check that protective caps and plugs are in place. Replace any missing caps or plugs as soon as possible.

_____ Inspect equipment for potential clothing entanglement hazards, such as open S-hooks or hazardous protrusions, such as bolts or connectors.

_____ Inspect equipment for crush or shearing points on exposed moving parts

_____ Inspect the use zones for tripping hazards, such as exposed footings, anchoring devices, rocks, roots or any obstacles in a use zone.

Step 3: Hardware Security

_____ Inspect fastening devices or connections for looseness or wear. Replace or repair as necessary.

_____ Inspect swing hangers, merry-go-round bearings and track rides to ensure moving parts are not worn or loose. Replace or repair as necessary.

Step 4: Equipment Upkeep

- _____ Check equipment and make sure there is no rust, rot, cracks or splinters. Check the area where the equipment comes in contact with the ground carefully.
- _____ Inspect equipment for missing components, such as handrails, guardrails, protective barriers, swing seats, steps or rungs.
- _____ Check fencing, benches, seating and signs for evidence of wear or damage.
- _____ Inspect paint (especially lead containing paint) to ensure it is not peeling, cracking, chipping or chalking. Make sure there are no areas of visible leaded paint chips or accumulation of lead dust. Remove lead paint where possible.

Step 5: General Upkeep

- _____ Make sure the equipment has not been changed or modified. Look for strings or rope tied to equipment or swings looped over the top rails. Remove all rope or string promptly and make other necessary repairs.
- _____ Inspect playground grounds for debris or litter and remove promptly.
- _____ Replace missing trash receptacles and make sure they are emptied on a regular basis.

Adapted from *Public Playground Safety Handbook*, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Publication #325, April, 2008 <<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf>>.