

Playground Safety Management



A Playground is an environment for children to learn and develop essential life skills. However, they can also be a source of liability for public agencies if they are not properly managed. **According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, over 200,000 children ages 14 and under are treated for playground related injuries each year. Many of these injuries can be prevented with a proactive Playground Safety Management Program.**

INSPECTIONS



Frequency of inspections is based on several factors such as playground usage, age, vandalism, frequency of reported injuries, etc.

High Frequency Inspections shall be conducted daily, but not less than weekly in accordance with your agency's playground safety management program.

Low Frequency Inspections shall be conducted quarterly, but not less than annually to evaluate structural integrity and wear and tear of each piece of equipment. The focus is preventative maintenance and shall be completed in accordance with your agency's playground safety program.

TRAINING

Staff involved with installation, inspection and maintenance of playground equipment must be properly trained to identify hazards in the play area, layout and equipment. **Staff conducting high frequency inspections should be:**

- ◆ Trained in use of inspection forms, procedures, documentation, and reporting requirements.
- ◆ Trained in specific maintenance duties: raking surface materials, identifying and removing hazards, and evaluating general condition of playground equipment.
- ◆ Trained in repairs to be made to equipment in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Staff conducting low frequency inspections should attend training provided by NPSI and successfully complete CPSI certification and be familiar with the maintenance guidelines of each manufacturer.

RECORD KEEPING

All inspection records should be maintained in accordance with your agency's record retention policy. Inspectors should use the appropriate forms to document all inspections and provide the forms to appropriate managers.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Any playground equipment determined to be unsafe, or presents safety concerns must be corrected as soon as possible. Immediate corrective actions include:

- ◆ Removal of litter, animal feces, broken glass or debris
- ◆ Raking or filling in low spots under equipment
- ◆ Clean and disinfect equipment
- ◆ Repair fallen signs
- ◆ Removal of graffiti
- ◆ Removal of playground equipment if it poses a serious risk of injury to the public. If equipment cannot be immediately removed, barricades should be installed to prevent falls from any openings created by the removal of the equipment.

SIGNAGE

All signage should be securely installed at all defined entrances to the play area. If several access points exist, signage should be placed at each access point. Language should include:

- ◆ Use rules
- ◆ Hours of operation
- ◆ Recommendation that adult supervision be provided for all users
- ◆ Age appropriateness for equipment
- ◆ Warning communicating removal of helmets, drawstrings or accessories around neck
- ◆ Warning communicating hot play surfaces
- ◆ Warning communicating hazard of play equipment located over hard surfaces

