



IS YOUR PLAYGROUND SAFE?

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission 205,000 children are treated for playground accidents annually with approximately 15 resulting in death. Of these, 70% occurred at public parks and schoolyards. Are you meeting current playground standards? If you are not sure, here are five ways to help reduce the number of injuries happening at your playground.

Hire a Licensed Certified Playground Inspector. Having a third party inspect your playground shows that you are being proactive. Playground Inspectors are trained to look at things from a non-biased perspective. Every aspect of the area from equipment to ground cover will be reviewed. A report will be issued that identifies any potential hazards/code violations that will allow you to prioritize a plan of action. Regardless of whether you have a routine maintenance plan in place, playgrounds should be inspected on a regular basis by a qualified professional.

Keep your playground drawings and installation instructions on file. Having these items on file allows you to easily identify the components that may need repair or replacement. The part and order number are usually named on the drawings. If you have recently installed new playground equipment and do not have a copy, contact your manufacturer. Records are important!

Make sure your playground has proper signage. One key factor to include on your signage is an emergency number in case of injury. More importantly, note the appropriate age group to play on the equipment. Always recommend adult supervision and highlight the general rules of equipment use. Signage should be placed at the main entrance to the playground. In addition, warning signs should be posted on the equipment itself in any potential entanglement spots.

Keep your play area well drained. Standing water causes health and maintenance issues. Insects, such as disease carrying mosquitoes, will breed there. Loose fill used for ground cover will compact and rot quicker from standing water.

Ensure that ADA requirements have been met. Pathways to the equipment must be easily accessible. A certain ratio of ground level components is required. Transfer platforms and steps need to be installed as appropriate. Make sure you are addressing the safety of those individuals with special needs.

If you implement these five items, you will be much closer to safe playground environment. If one major injury to a child can be eliminated, that is well worth the effort.

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