

ABC's of Playground Equipment Maintenance

A daily, monthly, and seasonal maintenance schedule should be created and strictly followed to promote a safe play environment for children.

Bushes, shrubs, trees, and other foliage should be trimmed or removed from the playground area to eliminate hiding spots for predators, muggers, vandals, etc.

CAN/CSA - Z614-07 Children's Playspace and Equipment Standard has been accepted by the Courts as the minimum requirement for playgrounds.

Document all inspections and maintenance.

Exit height of all slides should comply with CSA standards to provide a safe transition from the slide bed to the protective surface.

Fencing should be inspected for any visible damage, protruding points, and hardware.

Grease all moving parts as required. Wipe off excess oil or grease.

Horizontal distance between adjacent to-fro swing seats at rest shall be no less than 600 mm (24").

Incidents that occur on the equipment can lead to liability claims. Record all incidents, not just accidents.

Joining points at all angles or openings shall be less than 3" or more than 10" to reduce the chance of head entrapment.

Kids are "carefree" not "careless" in the eyes of the law.

Let manufacturers and installers provide their resources and expertise when making significant repairs or alterations.

Majority of serious playground injuries result from falls onto surfaces that are not resilient enough. Concrete, asphalt, grass, turf and hard-packed dirt are not acceptable.

Neck and head entrapment, toggle and string entanglement, and falls to hard surfaces are typical hazards that can be prevented.

Our society is becoming increasingly more litigious and injury awards are escalating.

Playground injuries resulting from falls can be prevented by ensuring all equipment has a surface around it in accordance with CSA Standards.

Quickly respond to public complaints.

Records should be kept on each piece of playground equipment to track maintenance schedules, repairs, costs and injury incidents.

S-hooks should be fully closed at all times and should never be re-used. Such a device is considered closed when there is no gap or space greater than 1 mm.

Train your employees in appropriate playground inspection, maintenance, CSA Standards, and incident management.

Upsgrading existing playground surfaces and equipment can prevent injury to children.

Vertical distances between the underside of a swing seat and the protective surfacing shall not be less than 300 mm (12").

Wooden, hard plastic, or metal swing seats should not be used. Approved cloth or rubber sling style seating is safer and more forgiving if the seat strikes a child.

X'plain your incident reporting system to all employees. You should remove all homemade playground & equipment that is old, worn out, or irreparable according to CSA Standards.

Zero-tolerance policy should be adopted for equipment that doesn't meet standards.