

California Playground Safety Regulations

FACT SHEET

- All existing public play areas are required to be inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector before October 1, 2000.
- All existing public play areas built before January 1, 1994 must be modified to comply with the California Playground Regulations by January 1, 2003.
- All existing public play areas built between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 1999 are exempt from complying with the full requirements of the California Playgrounds Safety Regulations until fifteen years after the date of installation but they must be modified to be at least as protective as the requirements of the Consumer Products Safety Committee *Handbook for Public Playground Safety (Pub 325-94)* by January 1, 2003.

The **California Playground Safety Regulations** require that playgrounds open to the public built by a public agency or any other entity shall conform to all playground related standards set forth by the American Society for Testing and Materials and tall playground related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The **California Playground Safety Regulations** define playground as “an improved outdoor area designed, equipped, and set aside for children’s play that is not intended for use as an athletic playing field or athletic court, and shall include any playground equipment, fall zones, surface materials, access ramps, and all areas within and including the designated enclosure and barriers.”

Inspections

- Only the initial inspection (Audit) of each play area must be conducted by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.
- A comprehensive inspection program must be developed for each playground. The inspection program consists of two types of inspections; Low Frequency Inspections and High Frequency Inspections.
- High Frequency Inspections must be carried out by trained personnel but they are not required to be conducted by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. Play areas must be inspected for potential hazards including corrosion or deterioration, insects, and weathering. These inspections should also give special attention to moving parts and other components which can be expected to wear. The frequency of these inspections is not specified and will depend on the type of equipment, the amount of use, and the local climate. These inspections may typically be prior to each season (schools and Parks) or more frequently where there is heavy use; i.e., commercial or heavy use facilities.
- Low Frequency Inspections are typically done on a daily or weekly basis, by operating staff, play area supervisors or maintenance staff. The play area must be checked for vandalism, broken glass and other unsafe or unhealthy debris. Loose-fill surfacing materials must be inspected to insure they have not become displaced or compacted in high traffic areas such as under swings and at slide exits. The loose-fill materials must be leveled on a regular basis to maintain the impact resistance of the fall surface. Any damage or hazards detected during these informal inspections should be reported to the appropriate maintenance staff or playground provider and promptly corrected.

Maintenance

- All hazards or defects identified during these inspections should be repaired promptly. All repairs and replacements of equipment parts should be completed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using original or approved parts, not substitute parts from the local hardware store.

Supervision

- Supervision is recommended when play area operators/providers are acting in place of the parent/guardian; i.e., in school, childcare, organized or fee program situations.. Supervisors must be trained by the operator/provider to oversee “safe” use of the playground, administer first aid, and report hazards and Injuries.

Record Keeping

- Records of all maintenance inspections and repairs must be retained, including the manufacturer's maintenance instructions and any checklists used. The person performing the inspection must sign and date the forms.
- A record of any accident and injury reported to have occurred on the playground must be made and retained.

Safeplay by Design, Inc.

9666 Sheldon Road
Elk Grove, CA 95624-9437
Phone (916) 647-0912

California Registered Landscape Architect #1284
NPSI Certified Playground Safety Inspector #15055-1012
david@spease.com
www.spease.com