
Playgrounds

99-02

Effective 7-1-99

This policy is applicable to projects under DSA jurisdiction only. DSA's Access Compliance jurisdiction encompasses state-funded buildings, facilities and universities, as well as publicly-funded elementary schools, secondary schools, and community colleges. Local jurisdictions may or may not adopt similar methods of administering current code requirements, determining equivalent facilitation, or defining acceptable parameters as necessary in enforcing the existing California Building Standards Code as allowed under Government Code Section 4451(f)] of the California Code of Regulations.

Issue: Participation areas are required to be accessible by Section 1104B.4.3 of Part 2, Title 24, California Code of Regulations. Playgrounds are required to be accessible by this section and by the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, the California Building Standards Code does not provide specificity by indicating on an item by item basis which particular features are required. Additionally, federal agencies are concerned that California playgrounds are often not in strict compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires play areas, which when viewed in their entirety, to be accessible by teachers, parents and children with disabilities in the most integrated setting.

The Federal Access Board has developed play setting recommendations for new construction, but these well developed accessibility guidelines are not yet adopted by the US Department of Justice for incorporation into the ADA accessibility guidelines. Playgrounds are required to be accessible to persons with disabilities as part of an ongoing obligation under Title II of the Americans with Disability Act. As a separate issue, the California Building standards Code "triggers" the requirements for accessibility in alterations, additions or in new construction when it occurs.

Resolution: Until specific requirements are adopted by the US Department of Justice and incorporated into the State Building Standards Code, DSA/AC will not take issue with playground plans which have been developed consistent with the accessibility guidelines for the Play Setting Subcommittee issued by the Access Board. Generally, playground equipment shall be reviewed during the plan check as part of the review process, and in some cases where the design and type of equipment has not been determined, deferred approvals shall be accepted prior to close out of the project. An accessible route will be required to one of each type of feature available in playground equipment, with engineered wood, properly installed and maintained, roll-out mats, or rubber surfaces deemed to be accessible surfaces. Raised features must be available at grade or by transfer points which lead to elevated areas by way of stepped platforms. All features at grade level must also be accessible, and arrange of play features must be provided (at least one of each type). Related to this policy see the Play Setting Subcommittee Guidelines used as a current standard for this environment.

Approving Authority:



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