

BACKGROUND:

Playground safety is an increasingly growing concern for many playground operators. Equipment design, layout, and once in place, equipment maintenance are three very important contributors to the overall safety of the playground.

Playground safety is achieved through recognizing potential hazards that exist with the playground equipment and addressing these hazards to prevent or reduce the likelihood of their occurrence. The implementation of playground safety management, including inspections and associated corrective actions, is intended to reduce the risks to which the equipment users are exposed and, thereby, to reduce the liability of the public playground operator.

PREFACE:

Playground Safety Analysts performed a playground safety assessment/inspection for the playground area specified in the Playground Audit Findings section of this report. This report is a summary identifying the findings on the date of the inspection, and recommendations associated with improving the safety of the playground. The report provides information on the requirements the playgrounds are subject to by the adoption of guidelines found in the Handbook for Public Playground Safety, published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, as California law. The Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use, published by the American Society for Testing and Materials was also consulted.

The adoption of California Department of Health Services Regulations R-39-97 requires that all playground operators must have an audit by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. This report will provide details of the Playground Inspection findings for the playground. The report will describe recommendations concerning any possible modifications to the existing playground equipment, and finally recommendations for on-going maintenance and inspections.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE:

The playground inspection was performed by Gary C. Groshon, a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (Certification number 1404-0606) for Playground Safety Analysts. The evaluation involved a walk-through inspection, as well as field measurements to compare to published guidelines. Specifically, the areas observed include, but are not limited to pinch points, protrusions, potential entrapment areas, equipment footing and maintenance, fall zones, guard rails, and protective surfacing.

METHOD:**Walk-through Inspection**

The walk-through inspection consisted of visual observations of all pieces of equipment on the site playgrounds. The equipment was evaluated for sharp points or edges that have the potential to cut or puncture skin, for protrusions or projections that have the potential to entangle clothing and lead to serious injuries, and for pinch or shearing points that have the potential to injure. Other areas of interest observed during the walk-through inspection consisted of possible areas of entrapment, fall zones, the type of surfacing material used and the amount present.

Field Measurements

The field measurements taken consisted of areas that were observed to be marginal or inadequate during the visual inspection. Other measurements taken were obtained using the handbook mentioned above as a guideline.

This audit allows the playground owner to both judge the playground against the 2007 ASTM standard F1487.11 and the CPSC 2008 Revised Handbook guidelines, and also prioritize actions needed for upgrading. It uses a priority system based upon one which appeared in the National Park Service publication *Trends*. The three levels of priority, as identified in the article, are:

- 1 Any condition which is life-threatening or can cause severe, permanent disability.**
- 2 Any condition which can cause serious or non-disabling injury.**
- 3 A condition which may cause slight injury; *a condition which may not have caused injury but does not meet the requirements in the CPSC Revised 2011 Handbook guidelines and the 2011 ASTM standard F1487.11.**

* This last statement has been added and was not included in the National Recreation and Parks Association publication *Trends*.

This priority system was developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association to illustrate the potential threat of a particular risk condition and to assist the playground owner in developing a budget and timeline for upgrading. Priority (1) items must be addressed immediately, followed by the second and third priorities.

It is the opinion of Playground Safety Analysts that all recommendations noted in this report with a Priority Rating, or any conditions that do not meet the 2011 ASTM standard F1487.11 and the CPSC 2011 Revised Handbook guidelines, are to be repaired, modified or the hazard removed by the playground owner in an expedient manner.