

**2009 GSA Child Care Training Conference
Orlando, Florida**

Maintaining Child's Play

The Importance of a Playground Maintenance Program

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Why isn't Playground Maintenance a Higher Priority?

- What is the problem?
- What are we missing?
- What are the factors contributing to injuries?
- What causes most injuries on playgrounds?



Major U.S. Organizations Concerned with Playground Safety

- NPSI *National Playground Safety Institute*
- CPSC *Consumer Products Safety Commission*
- ASTM *American Society for Testing & Materials International*
- IPEMA *International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association*
- NPCAI *International Playground Contractors Association*
- NPPS *National Program for Playground Safety*

 *One in every three playground injuries may result from improper or lack of maintenance.**

Now estimate is 2 of every 5



* Source: King, S. (1995) *Developing a safe playground is everyone's responsibility.*



1990's Factors That Contribute to Public Playground Accidents

Poor Maintenance

36%

Inappropriate Design

10%

Installation Issues

6%

**Site Planning Issues
Poor Layout**

4%

Improper Use / Poor Supervision

44%



2000's Factors That Contribute to Public Playground Accidents

Poor Maintenance

40%

**Inappropriate
Design**

7%

Installation Issues

6%

**Site Planning Issues
Poor Layout**

3%

**Improper
Use / Poor
Supervision**

44%



Playground Safety Management

Purpose:

- To reduce or prevent injury and suffering to the playground users.
- To prevent damages or destruction to the playground environment.
- To shift through transfer those losses which cannot be controlled by other means.
- To show good intent to the public

*How to have a successful
Comprehensive Playground Safety
Program:
Just take AIM through . . .*

Audits

Inspections

Maintenance





Elements of a Playground Safety Program

- Agency Playground Safety Policy
 - Playground Safety Coordination
 - Site Documentation / Records
 - Safety Audits
 - Inspections
 - Maintenance
- Maintaining your agency's
Standard of Care



Benefits of a Good Playground Inspection & Maintenance Management Plan

- ✓ Fewer playground injuries
- ✓ Legal defense against charges of negligence
- ✓ Better cost accounting by site
- ✓ Effective resource utilization
(Personnel, equipment, tools, supplies)
- ✓ Efficient annual & life-cycle budgeting
- ✓ Better public image & relations

What is the problem?

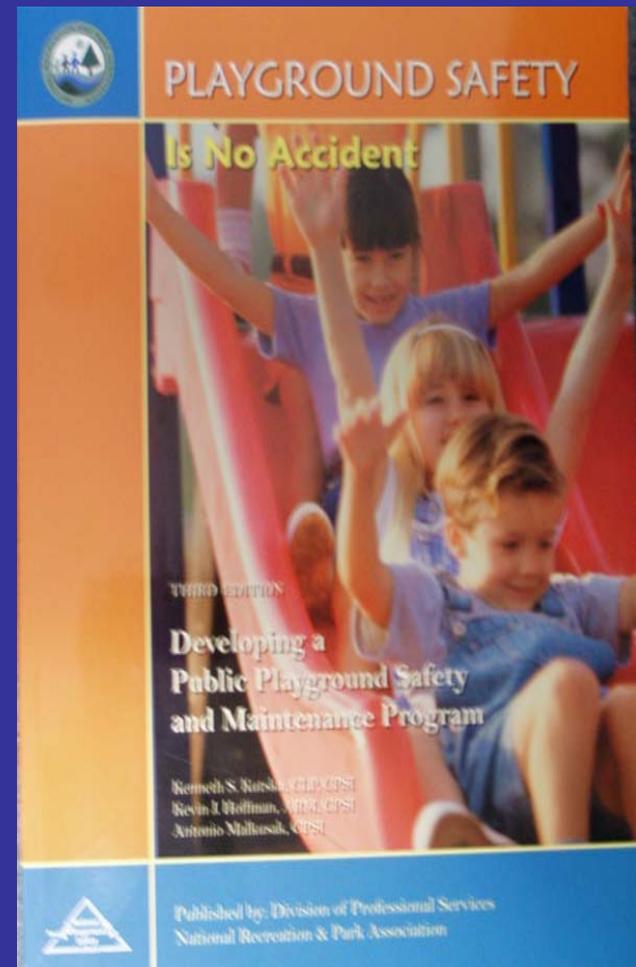
The marketplace wants
answers to their questions
not...
more questions to answer

What needs to be done?

What is missing?

Where are the resources?

PSINA provides a good format to develop an inspection/maintenance program but does not provide enough detail on how or when to take appropriate action



PSINA Fourth Edition

Playground Safety Is No Accident

We are reminded constantly by emergency room statistics how important playground safety is for children. In the current state of our nation, some playgrounds are being removed without replacement because they are weathered, and funding for replacement can be scarce. Play in general is endangered, with recess reduced or alleviated; and some elementary schools across the nation are actually being built with no plans for a playground, for various reasons. Play has more impact on society than most realize.

As editor of *Playground Magazine*, and a mother of three active sons, I have become increasingly aware of the challenges faced with designing, installing, and maintaining safe play spaces for children. There are solutions to combat these challenges, and little by little we can make a big difference—especially concerning the ripple effect of proper or improper playground maintenance.

Owners and operators of playgrounds play a pivotal role in, and share a great responsibility for making sure playgrounds are not only safe, but fun, challenging, clean, attractive, and that place where children can learn and grow, no matter their physical ability.

Playground Safety is No Accident is a very useful resource, providing those responsible for design, installation, and maintenance information needed to ensure proper care and maintenance of playgrounds.

The impact of development that takes place on the playground should remind us that it behooves us all to make sure we are providing the best possible play environment to foster safe and healthy development for children—physically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally. It all starts with a playground, experience that later shapes our society.

Shannon Amy Stockwell
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2008 Apex Award for Publication
Excellence Recipient



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Playground Safety Is No Accident

Fourth
Edition

Kenneth S.
Kutksa
IPSI, LLC

Playground Safety Is No Accident

Developing a Public Playground
Safety and Maintenance Program



Fourth Edition

Kenneth S. Kutksa, CPSI
International Playground Safety Institute, LLC

- Follows the CPSI Course Teachings
- Includes Needs Assessment Process
- Includes Guidance for Taking Equipment out of Service
- Examples of Others Audit Forms

PDRMA's Experience

- Know your loss history (Identify the Problem)
- Focus on big issues first (high return on investment)
- Create a pro-active TEAM to address issue
- Develop a training program
- Monitor/evaluate the program implementation
- Adjust and adapt as necessary to meet goals



What we know

Causes of Playground Injuries

79% are caused by FALLS -

- 68% Falls to surface
- 10% Falls to other parts of the equipment
- 1% Falls to unknown

**FALLS ARE THE MOST
COMMON CAUSE OF PUBLIC
PLAYGROUND INJURIES**





What we know

Causes of Playground Injuries

11% are caused by *IMPACT*

- 8% Impact with stationary equipment
- 3% Impact with moving equipment

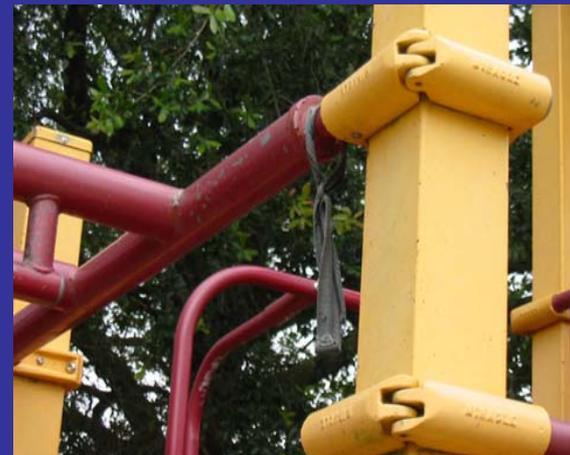




Causes of Playground Injuries

10% *MISC.* causes

- Generally contact with crush points and sharp edges.
- Also entanglement, and head or neck entrapment





What we know

Playground Maintenance Responsibilities

- **Manufacturer/Vendor (ASTM F1487)**

Provide inspection & maintenance procedures, schedule, list of tools & materials

- **Owner/Operator (ASTM F1487)**

Completion of maintenance tasks, conduct inspections, records

- **Users & the Public (Wild Card)**

Litter & vandalism reduction, cooperation & support



What we know

Functions of Inspections & Maintenance

- **Safety** – *ensure safety of users*
- **Utility** – *keep equipment functioning*
- **Sanitation** – *hygienically clean*
- **Attractiveness** – *aesthetically clean*

Goal:

To be pro-active (prevent a problem)

Not reactive (only correcting problems)



What we know

Purpose of Inspections:

To maintain a standard of care and to identify all new hazards on existing playgrounds resulting from rapid or evolving changes, i.e., ...

- Vandalism or Storm Damage
- Exposure/Deterioration
- Wear or Litter
- Breakage



What we know

Factors that Affect Inspection Frequency

- **Use Factors:**

 - Extent of playground use*

 - Ages of children using the playground*

 - Vandalism patterns*

- **Development Factors:**

 - Type of surfacing materials*

 - Materials used to manufacture equipment*

 - Age and type of playground equipment*

- **Environmental Factors:**

 - Soil/drainage conditions*

 - Climatic/Atmospheric conditions*

PDRMA's Plan to Create its own Maintenance Program

- Identify the need and scope of the program
- Hire a project manager
- Create a Technical Advisory Committee
- Evaluate needs of intended audience
- Conduct and review research on subject
- Develop an program outline
- Evaluate first draft of program
- Create Training Tools
- Test program content and delivery to test market

Two Important Concepts/Issues

- How does one prolong the function and life of a playground and its components
- How does one identify when a playground and its components need to be replaced

Throughout the research and development of the program one thing kept coming forward when looking at the deterioration of materials. “Keep things clean”

Clean: Aesthetically vs Hygienically



Major Focus of Maintenance Needs

- Need to Maintain Surfacing Requirements
- Need to Maintain Moving Component Parts
- Need to Focus on Drainage (Surface/Subsurface)
- How to systematically inspect the playground
- How to determine when to inspect/maintain
- How and when to take equipment out of service

PDRMA members wanted recommendations for solving problems not just the knowledge to identify the problem.

Best practices and Common Sense should be used as one size fits all does not always apply.

Course Content Outline

- Introduction: Resource materials/workbook (approx 12 hours program)
- Module #1 Legal
- Module #2 The Playground Maintenance Process: Diamond of Care
- Module #3 Surfacing
- Module #4 Concrete
- Module #5 Wood
- Module #6 Plastic
- Module #7 Metals
- Module #8 Fasteners/Connectors/Fastening Connectors
- Module #9 Playground Inspection Process
- Module #10 Record Keeping
- Module #11 Removing from Service
- Virtual Playground: Interactive Review

Let's Visit PDRMA's Maintaining Child's Play



Using Technology - Virtual World



Virtual Quiz

