

PLAYGROUNDS

Children's playgrounds are a great thing to have and really appreciated by parents (not too many McDonalds restaurants don't have one!). But they are perhaps one of the most hazardous areas of your operation and sadly also one of the most neglected.



Injuries:

Falls from equipment are the largest cause of serious injury in the playground. Other injuries include entrapment; collisions with equipment, needle stick injuries, cuts from broken glass, protrusions and other children;

Issues:

We have seen hazards such as:

- Rusty protruding nails & screws
- Splintered timber
- Sharp metallic edges
- Needles & syringes
- Brittle and cracked plastic seats
- Red back spiders in cubby houses
- Broken glass
- Concrete play surfaces
- Bricks and rocks on the ground around equipment
- Swings too close to fences, walls and other equipment
- Hanging ropes and chains with noose like loops tied in them
- Potentially live wires hanging from damaged light fittings.

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A safe playground should have:

- Fencing similar to that required around swimming pools
- Equipment without protrusions and entrapment hazards
- Equipment that is appropriate for the age of the children using it
- An adequate soft fall surface for all equipment. If the equipment is more than 500mm in height the surface must comply with Australian Standards (AS/NZS 4422:1996)
- Shade and seating for supervision by parents
- Rules displayed ie appropriate ages, no food or drink, no glass, no running etc
- Signage indicating that children should be under adult supervision at all times
- Be regularly inspected and maintained, especially the soft fall surface. Details records of these inspections should be kept.

Special Notes:

Australian Standards are:

- AS 4685.1 – 2004 – Playground equipment – General Safety Requirements & Test Methods
- AS 4422 - Playground surfacing
- AS 4486 - Playgrounds and Playground Equipment. Part 1: Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation

The playground shown in the photo does not have sufficient clearance to hard surfaces/impact points around the equipment, there are no safety fences, the concrete base is exposed in parts, it is not inspected on a regular basis and there are no warning or adult supervision signs. Rectifying these deficiencies would be very difficult so best advice is to remove the equipment.



SEE ALSO:

[PLAYGROUND SAFETY CHECKLIST](#)

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