

Playground Inspections

While play and children are a familiar part of life in most communities, play remains largely misunderstood. We choose to address hazards in and around our office buildings, yet we sometimes fail to address hazards that could affect our kids' well being. We think of play as the opposite of work and can sometimes become complacent, implying that play is not to be taken seriously.

A well designed and safe playground is an excellent environment for learning and development. Since children grow and develop at their own pace, a lot of play options are required, but more options will create more challenges and safety concerns. The bottom line is that playgrounds are magnets for children. They give children a chance to run around outdoors, interact with others their age, explore and extend the abilities of their developing bodies, all while having fun in the process.

Unfortunately, many playgrounds are not as safe as they should be. According to the National Program for Playground Safety which obtained its statistical data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) National Electronic Surveillance System (NEISS), more than 200,000 children go to hospital emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment each year. Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground. Children ages

5 to 9 years are the age group most frequently treated for playground related injuries. In the ten year period between 1990 and 2000, 147 children under the age of 15 years died of playground-related injuries; 30% of those fatalities occurred on school playgrounds. Of the non-fatal playground related injuries, 75% occur on public playgrounds, such as schools and daycare centers.

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Four major factors contribute to playground problems:

- the surface under the equipment;
- the design and arrangement of the equipment;
- how children use the equipment, and
- how well the equipment is installed and maintained.

Keeping children safe is an underpinning of activity for most all Primex³ Members. Certified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Primex³ has several playground inspectors that are ready to help members with their playground safety requirements. Whether members have playground questions, a project that involves identifying hazards that may be lurking on an existing playground or working with you to plan the safe installation of new playground equipment, our consultants are available to help. To contact a Risk Management Services Consultant, call 1-800-698-2364 or email RiskManagement@nhprimex.org.