



Health and Safety Guidance on the provision and use of outdoor play equipment

Version 2.0

1. Introduction

This guidance has been written to assist on the safe management of the management of outdoor play equipment.

The guidance has been produced in conjunction with BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177 (Standards for Playground Equipment and Surfacing & Impact Attenuating Playground Surfacing). The standards are regarded as **best practice** within the industry.

Copies can be purchased from the BSI shop at <http://shop.bsigroup.com>

The Codes of Practices provides general guidance on:

- General safety requirements and test methods
- Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for swings
- Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for slides
- Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for runways
- Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for carousels
- Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment
- Guidance for installation, inspection, maintenance and operation
- Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for spatial networks
- Fully Enclosed Play

- Impact Attenuating Playground Surfacing
- Determination of Critical Fall Height

Current guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the relevant British Standards referred to in Section 1 and relevant [Industry guidance](#), can be referred to for additional information.

2. Legal Environment

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a responsibility on the employer to ensure a safe place of work and a safe working environment for employees and also for non-employees (e.g. pupils, members of the public, contractors).

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations requires the employer to assess the risks to employees and others that may be affected by their activities (e.g. pupils, visitors, member of the public). The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) also applies, see section 5 for further detail.

3. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is an **important** part of health and safety and must be applied to the working environment, equipment, machinery, processes, techniques and activities taking place.

Factors to consider in assessing the risks of using the outdoor play equipment could be, but not limited to:

- age appropriateness
 - environment
 - foundations
 - fall height
 - supervision
 - number and frequency of users
 - weather effects
 - deterioration
- (not an exhaustive list)

The WCC Risk Assessment Policy* and guide* provides further information on the completion of risk assessments, including an assessment form* to record the **significant** findings of the assessment.

4. Planning, Purchase and Installation

Planning - When siting any new outdoor play equipment, providers should be mindful of existing structures and trees roots, potential flow of persons to and from the area, the suitability of the outdoor play equipment when purchasing and installing, security e.g proximity to roads / amenities etc. The risk assessment performed, will also help guide with any planning considerations required.

Purchase – Outdoor play equipment should be purchased from a suitable supplier and that the equipment conforms to the relevant British and European standards.

Installation - Outdoor play equipment should be installed safely to appropriate national building regulations and to the manufacturer's instructions. A post-installation inspection is required for all new equipment installed and should be carried out by an independent organisation, which is competent to perform the inspection.

In addition to the above, guidance on the suitability and competency of contractors can be found in the WCC Construction and Contractor Policy* and Part 1 (CDM 2015 guidance)* and Part 2 (Managing Contractor work guidance)*

5. Maintenance and Inspection

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) requires work equipment to be maintained in a safe condition. In compliance with this duty and in specific reference to this guidance, outdoor play equipment, where the Local Authority has responsibility, must be maintained & inspected.

Guidance for inspections and maintenance should be contained within the manufacturer's instructions. Manufacturers will recommend the routine inspection frequency, although high-vandalism or high-use sites may need a more frequent check.

However, all outdoor play equipment must comply with current standards adopted by the play industry; EN:1176 (play equipment) and EN:1177 (safety surfacing). All equipment supplied must have a certificate of conformity.

The following inspections should take place:

- Routine inspection - basic pre use visual check by competent staff (defects, breakages, vandalism, cleanliness of area etc). Recorded using a simple brief tick sheet, signed and dated.
- Operational inspection - detailed inspection of outdoor play equipment by persons competent to [Register of Play Inspectors International standards](#); completed on a three monthly basis (or as recommended by the inspector of the equipment) and recorded.
- Annual inspection – carried out by persons competent to [Register of Play Inspectors International standards](#); focuses on equipment compliance, long-term structural problems with a written report provided.

Records of maintenance, inspection and testing of equipment and machinery must be retained and be accessible. **Remedial actions must be recorded**, prioritising any areas of improvement needed in compliance with legal requirements and/or best practice.

Defective equipment must be taken out of use, discarded or repaired by a **competent** person. Managers of outdoor play equipment **must** take action from any recommendations given and ensure a record is made.

6. Further information and advice

*All health, safety and wellbeing information is available on the school's health and safety document library on www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolhsdocs or via the [Health & Safety Section of the Intranet](#)

Alternatively contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service on healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk telephone 01926 476803.