

Are Your Playgrounds Safe?

Brought to NCA by:

Evergreen USA, RRG

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Are Your Playgrounds Safe?

This seminar will strive to teach you how to improve the safety of your campground or parks playground equipment.

We will address the current issues that face ARVC members who own, or are thinking of owning, playground equipment.

Outline

- Introduction
- Due Care & The CPSC Standards
- Statistics on Playground Safety
- Common Repairs and Issues
- Resources for Campgrounds & Parks
- Questions & Answers

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Due Care & The CPSC Standards

- ❁ Due Care is the standard of conduct that a *Reasonably Prudent Person* would observe in a given situation.
- ❁ Adequate Due Care can be determined by answering two questions:
 - ❁ Did the park owner/staff do something they should not have done?
 - ❁ Did the park owner/staff fail to do something they should have done?
 - **If the answer to either of these questions is ‘YES’ then the park owner has failed to provide ‘Due Care’**

Due Care & The CPSC Standards

- Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Standards for Public Playgrounds



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Statistics on Playground Safety



- The average campground/park playground claim costs \$11,200
- Over ten years one in every two campgrounds will have a playground claim

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Statistics on Playground Safety

- Playground Safety Data Collected Since 1970's
- 40% of playground injuries are related to supervision issues
- 50% of claims occurred because of broken equipment
 - Swings are the most common piece of broken equipment to cause injury
- 208,000 children receive emergency care for playground-related injuries each year
 - 17 resulted in death
 - 1/3rd classified as severe, with fractures being most prominent
- Every 2 ½ minutes a child is injured on a playground in the United States

Statistics on Playground Safety

- If a child hits hard surface material from a height of 8 feet, it is similar to hitting a brick wall at 30mph in an automobile.



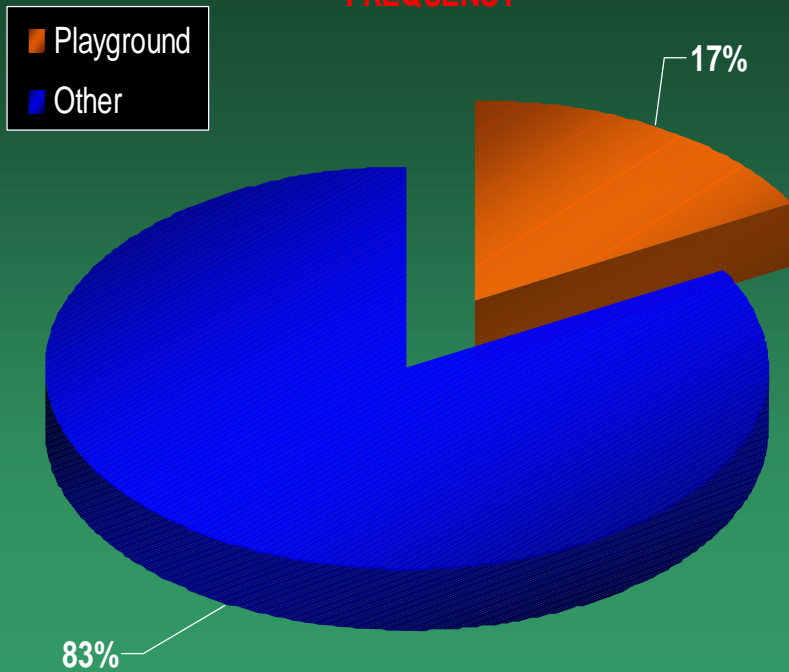
Statistics on Playground Safety

- In the past ten years, Evergreen has seen over a dozen playground claims that cost more than \$50,000
 - Four of these were over \$100,000
 - Two of these were over \$200,000
- Non CPSC approved equipment is nearly 20 times more likely to result in an award to the plaintiff

Statistics on Playground Safety

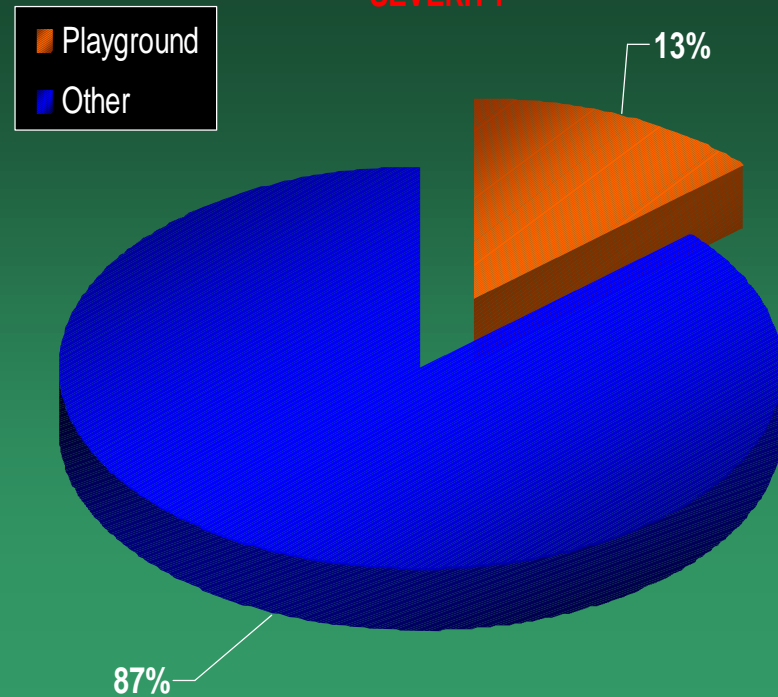
EVERGREEN'S EXPERIENCE WITH LIABILITY CLAIMS

FREQUENCY



EVERGREEN'S EXPERIENCE WITH LIABILITY CLAIMS

SEVERITY



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Common Repairs & Issues



- 12 Hazards to Be Aware Of
- Repairs
- Review / Inspection

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12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

1. Improper Ground Cover

- ☼ At least 6" to 12" in depth
- ☼ Consult CPSC standards

- ☼ Sand
- ☼ Fine Gravel
- ☼ Wood Chips
- ☼ Mulch
- ☼ Rubber Matting
- ☼ Pea Stone

12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

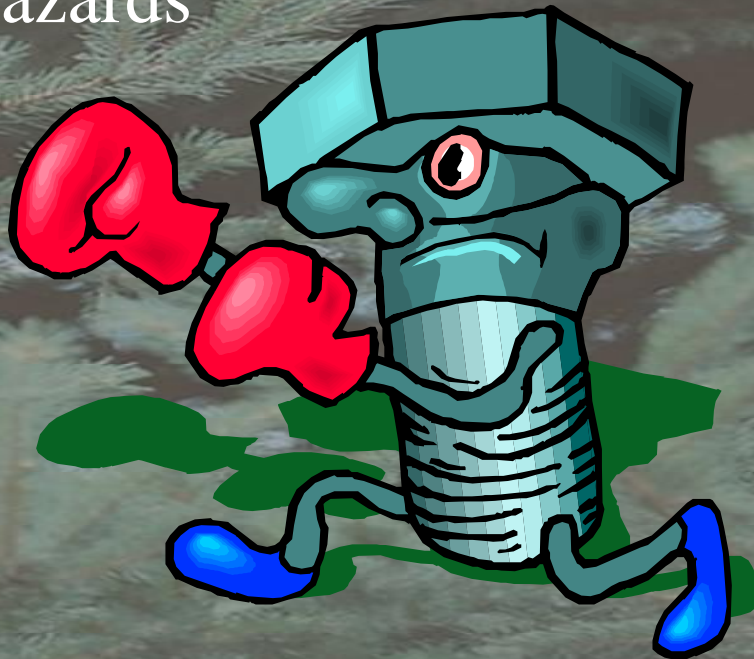
2. Fall Zones

- ☼ Covered with Soft Ground Cover
- ☼ No Other Equipment in Area
- Minimum of Six feet in all Directions
- Slides Higher than Four Feet the Fall Zone is height of slide plus four feet
- Swings should have a Fall Zone in front & behind that extends two times the height of the swing hanger

12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

3. Protrusion & Entanglement Hazards

- Ends of Bolts
- Metal Braces that Could Impale or Cut A Child
- Nothing should catch loose clothing



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12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

4. Entrapment in Openings

- No openings greater than 3 ½” but less than 9”

- Slide
- Platforms
- Climbers
- Ladders



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12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

5. Spacing of Equipment or Use Zone

- ❏ Do Not Overcrowd Equipment
- ❏ Do Not Overlap Fall Zones
- ❏ Improper Traffic Flow
- ❏ Minimum Twelve Feet Between Play Structures
- ❏ Try to Keep Swings and Other Moving Equipment Away from Permanent Fixtures



Use Zone – “Total space under and around installed equipment that is necessary for the user to complete the intended activity.”

12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

~Use Zone Separation~

5. Spacing of Equipment or Use Zone

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Use Zone – “Total space under and around installed equipment that is necessary for the user to complete the intended activity.”

12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

6. Trip Hazards

- Concrete Footings
- Abrupt Surface Changes
- Containment Borders
- Tree Roots
- Tree Stumps
- Rocks



12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

7. Lack of Supervision

- Design so Supervision is Easy

- Benches & Picnic Tables Nearby

- Easy Viewing Throughout Play Area



12 Hazards to Be Aware Of



8. Age Appropriate Activities

- Appropriate Age for Intended Use

- Post User's Age

 - At Playground

 - On Playground Rules

 - Policy & Rules Given at Registration

 - *Color Code Equipment*

- Pre-School Equipment Separate from School Age

12 Hazards to Be Aware Of



9. Lack of Maintenance

- Preventive Maintenance Program
- Inspect for Hazards Daily

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12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

10. Pinch, Crush, Shearing & Sharp Edge Hazards

- No Sharp Edges
- Check Moving Items
- ❄ Bridges
- ❄ Track Rides
- ❄ Merry-Go-Rounds
- ❄ See-Saws
- ❄ Swings



12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

11. Platforms without Guardrails

- Bridges
- Ramps
- Bridge ways
- Walkways

■ **Ages 2-5 – Anything over 20”**

■ **Ages 6-12 – Anything over 30”**

12 Hazards to Be Aware Of

12. Equipment Not Recommended for Playgrounds

- ◆ Non CPSC Approved Equipment
- ◆ Heavy swings
 - Animal Figure Swings
 - Double Occupancy Glider Type Swings
- ◆ Free Swinging Ropes that May Fray
- ◆ Dual Exercise Rings & Trapeze Bars
- ◆ Trampolines

Repairs

(#) = Claims for Evergreen in 3 Years

- Use Lead Free Paints (1)
- Tighten Nuts & Bolts (41)
- Periodically Pound Nails Down (27)
- Replace Rotting or Deteriorated Wood (21)
- Make Sure all Pipe Ends & Edges are Capped or Have Smooth Curves (13)



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Repairs

- Make Sure Bolt Ends Do Not Protrude (58)
- Broken or Missing Steps, Rungs, and Handrails Should be Replaced (18)
- Platforms, Ladders, and Ramps Should be Checked for Stability and Proper Anchoring (9)

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Repairs

- Cracked, Worn, and Bowing Components Should be Replaced (33)
- All Moving Parts Should be Lubricated (4)
- Replace Damaged or Loose Swing Seats (92)



Repairs

- Replace Worn Chains (14)
- Clamp/Tighten “S” Hooks (29)
 - “S” Hooks Need a Minimum Load Rating of 600 lbs
- Make Sure Ground Cover is Maintained Properly (104)



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Review/Inspection

- See Saw – Place Half Buried Tires Under Seats to Absorb Shock
 - Spinal Injuries
 - Crushed Legs & Feet



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Review/Inspection

- Swing Seats should be lightweight flexible material
 - Rubber or Canvas
 - Meet Industry Standards



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Review/Inspection

- Youth Swings
 - Totally Encompassed or
 - Manufactured Restraining Strap that Came Attached to Swing
- ✘ Do Not Add a Strap if Strap Has Broken Unless Manufacturer Approved



Review/Inspection

- Merry-Go-Round
 - Not appropriate for Children Under Six
 - Must Have a Closed Frame Base



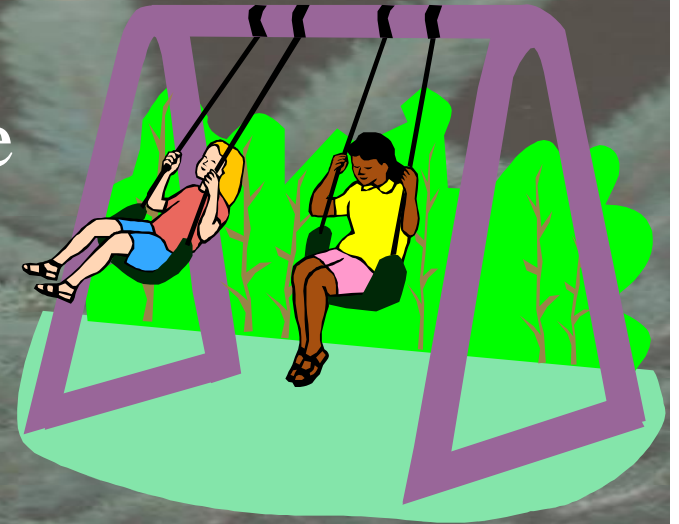
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Review/Inspection

- Make Sure Equipment is Being Used Properly and Correct Improper Actions
- Conduct Daily Inspections
 - Watch for Vandalism
- Keep Re-Order Sheets on File
 - Swing Seats
 - Parts List
 - Manufacturers



Resources

U.S. Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

Washington, D.C. 20207

1-800-638-2772

www.cpsc.gov

National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI)

National Recreation & Parks Association

2775 South Quincy Street; Suite 300

Arlington, VA 22206

(703) 820-4940

American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM)

1916 Race Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103

(215) 299-5400

International Insurance Services, Inc. (Evergreen)

P.O. Box 61

Lewiston, ME 04243-0061

1-800-343-7900

www.goiis.org or www.evergreenusa.com

Questions & Answers



Provide your campers
the experience they
deserve... a safe
experience.

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Thank You for Attending
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