CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PLAYGROUND PRACTITIONERS

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES RESPONSABLES D'AIRES DE JEU POUR ENFANTS

CAPP, "BEST PRACTICE" Tip Sheet

Note: This Best Practice [A] Tip Sheet is simply being presented by our Association as a reference tool/guide to strengthen and support the ongoing risk-management programs of today's owner/operators and playground practitioners. It is not intended to present further requirements or measures of performance for owner/operators, manufacturers, or suppliers of Children's Playspaces and Equipment.

Reference: A playspace owner/operator must always consider the technical and dimensional requirements of the CSA-Z614 National Standard of Canada for Children's Playspaces and Equipment published version, applicable to the relevant date of purchase/installation of their playspace [B], as their minimum level of best-practice or due-diligence in any/all applications of the Standard's criteria.

Disclaimer: The following commentary has been published and reviewed by all members of CAPP, and is supported as acceptable and reasonable professional-judgement only.
It is the responsibility of users of this information to judge it's suitability for their particular purpose, as the Canadian Association of Playground Practitioners does not warrant the suitability of this information to any particular purpose. This best practice does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this best practice to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory requirements prior to use.

CAPP-BP-02A (March 2011)

Playspace Inspections & Reports

The following notes outline the various levels of inspections both required and suggested for an effective owner/operator risk management plan.

√ **Budgetary Costing:**
An owner/operator must consider costing for inspections and maintenance prior to purchase.[C]

√ **Daily/Weekly Visual Inspection:**
A brief visual review only of the playspace and play components.[D]
The fundamental intent of this level of visual inspection is to confirm the playspace and all play components are simply able to function as designed and intended.

√ **Detailed Monthly Inspection:**
A thorough review of the playspace and play components.[E]
The fundamental intent of this level of inspection is to confirm the playspace and all play components are positioned and functioning as designed and intended.

√ **Annual Comprehensive Written Report:**
A comprehensive written report documenting the daily/weekly and monthly reports, and (if completed) the comprehensive or annual inspection.[F]
The fundamental intent of this report is to record/document the historical condition of the playspace and play components complete with any repairs, maintenance, and if applicable injuries occurred[G].

√ **Comprehensive Inspection/Audit:**
A comprehensive inspection including a check of all dimensional and technical requirements of the CSA-Z614 Standard for the playspace, play equipment, and protective surfacing.[H]
The fundamental intent of this level of inspection is to confirm that the design, manufacture, supply, and installation of the playspace and all play components meet or exceed the dimensional and technical requirements as published within the year-applicable CSA-Z614 National Standard.

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- √ **First Use Inspection:**
  A comprehensive inspection including a check of all dimensional and technical requirements of the current CSA-Z614 Standard for the playspace, play equipment, and protective surfacing.
  The fundamental intent of this level of inspection is to confirm that the design, manufacture, supply, and installation of the playspace and all play components meet or exceed the dimensional and technical requirements as published within the current CSA-Z614 National Standard, and is required to be completed prior to first use.[I]
- √ **Protective Surfacing Inspection:**
  A comprehensive audit of the impact-attenuation properties of the protective surfacing material(s) relative to the required fall height of the playstructure and/or play components.[J]
  The fundamental intent of this level of inspection is to confirm that the manufacture, supply, and installation of the protective surfacing element meets or exceed the published maximum impact-attenuation limitations within the year-applicable CSA-Z614 National Standard, namely Gmax less than 200 and HIC less than 1000.
  As this level of inspection requires very specific testing equipment, training, and knowledge it is almost always deferred to trained and certified inspection services.[K]
- √ **Third-Party Status:**
  Although only required under certain mandated requirements, it is otherwise discretionary to the party engaging the inspection services. This could be particularly relevant to First Use, Annual Comprehensive, and Protective Surfacing Inspections. It is common that an inspector or inspection agency represents themselves as "third-party" to avoid any legal-level or even opinion-perception of bias within it's reported findings.[L]
- √ **Inspection Report Fundamentals:**
  Particularly relevant to First Use, Annual Comprehensive, and Protective Surfacing Inspections, it is highly recommended, and supported by CAPP, that any inspection report include information and/or supporting references to the CSA-Z614 National Standard as a level of minimum performance criteria as listed in the following Appendix.[M]

Clarifying Appendix Notes:

[A] Definition (Wikipedia):

Best Practice: A best practice is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive, or reward which conventional wisdom regards as more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc. when applied to a particular condition or circumstance. The idea is that with proper processes, checks, and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. Best practices can also be defined as the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people.

[B] Clarification Reference:

CSA-Z614-07, Clause 1.4 reads:

This Standard applies to

(a) public-use playspaces built, protective surfacing installed, and public-use playground equipment manufactured after the date of publication of this edition; and

(b) additions to, and replacement parts for, public-use playspaces installed after the date of publication of this edition.

[C] Clarification Reference:

CSA-Z614-07, clause 11.1.1 reads:

Playground inspection and maintenance are integral parts of budgetary costing. The cost of inspection and maintenance shall be considered and incorporated into the budget at the time of design, purchase of equipment, and installation.

Continued,

D Clarification Reference:

CSA-Z614-07, clause 11.3.2 reads:

Visual inspection shall be performed by the owner, maintenance inspector, caregiver, or custodian on a daily basis, if possible, or at least once a week, to identify defects or emerging problems.

Example: Is the protective surfacing frozen? Are there any signs of vandalism? Are there any signs of notable debris or introduced hazards?

Note: Although record keeping of these simple visual inspections is not required, it is advisable that a simple yes-no checklist or sign-off sheet be included within risk-management records.

E Clarification Reference:

CSA-Z614-07, clause 11.3.3 reads:

A detailed inspection shall be performed every month, and the results and actions taken shall be entered in a permanent record available for examination.

Example: Check all moving parts for wear. Check all areas of uncontrolled motion for potential entanglement gaps or spaces. Check all fasteners for unintentional loosening.

Note: It is required that a detailed yes-no checklist or issue-descriptive template be included as both a reference guide and record keeping confirmation of completion. Manufacturers, suppliers, and/or inspection agencies all offer guidance and suggestions in this regard to owner/operators. Annex Tables B.1, B.2, and B.3 of the CSA-Z614 National Standard also provide a check-template and descriptive examples in this regard.

F Clarification Reference:

CSA-Z614-07, clause 11.3.4 reads:

Every year, a comprehensive written report shall be completed by the owner/operator or it's designate. The report shall document the results of the daily/weekly and monthly inspections, and the actions taken and planned, if necessary. The results of any protective surfacing testing undertaken during the 12 months shall be included, along with any actions taken. An owner/operator or designate can also undertake a comprehensive inspection every 12 months. If an annual comprehensive inspection is performed, the report shall document the results of the inspection and the actions taken. The annual report may be a compilation of monthly inspection reports.

G Clarification Reference:

CSA-Z614-07, clause 11.2.6 reads:

A record of any injuries reported to have occurred on the playground shall also be collected. This will help identify potential hazards or dangerous design features that warrant attention.

H Annual Comprehensive Inspection:

This level of inspection service requires a minimum level of knowledge and judgment relative to Children's Playspaces and Equipment. Presently, in Canada, there are two agencies recognised to provide training and certifications for playground inspections at this level.

A) CPRA- CPSI (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – Canadian Playground Safety Institute)
- accredited as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI)
- http://www.cpra.ca/EN/main.php?action=cms.trainPlaySafety

B) OPA (Ontario Parks Association), Ontario Playground Academy
- accredited as a Registered Playground Practitioner
- http://www.ontarioparksassociation.memberlodge.com/Default.aspx?pageId=648232

I Clarification Note:

Particularly as playspaces are intended and designed for both Play and Challenge they are often very complex to design, manufacturer, and install. The relative need for a first-use inspection often then increases with the complexity of the playspace design/layout.

CSA-Z614-07, Clause 8.2.3 reads:

A comprehensive inspection of the playstructure and protective surfacing shall be performed by the owner/operator or designate prior to first use.

Continued,

J Clarification References:

CSA-Z614-07, clause 10.4.6 reads:

Periodic site testing of installed protective surfacing shall be performed. Site testing shall be conducted from the fall height (determined in accordance with the edition of the Standard in effect at the time of installation).

CSA-Z614-07, clause 10.1 reads:

The surfacing material in the protective surfacing zone shall have a Gmax not exceeding 200 and a HIC not exceeding 1000 when tested for the defined fall height. The test methods specified in ASTM F1292 and CEN EN1177 are acceptable for testing protective surfacing.

K Clarification Note:

Many manufacturers/suppliers of protective surfacing also complete comprehensive on-site product evaluation testing prior to the sale. As such, if a manufacturer/supplier can provide written compliant test data results specific to the material supplied and installed onsite, and relative to the required and defined fall height limit, this testing may be deferred by professional judgment when first installed. However, as environmental elements, maintenance, and wear all negatively affect a surface's impact performance further "periodic" on-site testing shall be included within any long-term maintenance program.

L Clarification Note:

Anyone representing themselves as third-party to an owner/operator must then provide a signed declaration of non-conflict of interest including declaration of non-affiliation with playground equipment and protective surfacing manufacturers, suppliers and/or other contractors involved in the retrofit, upgrade or repair of playground equipment and protective surfaces.

Important: Any person or any agency representing themselves as "third-party" playspace inspectors should also provide the owner/operator with proof of Professional Liability Insurance coverage specific to the task of playspace inspections and to a minimum level of coverage agreeable to the owner/operator.

M Inspection Report Fundamentals:

- Inspector's name and contact information
- Inspection date and time
- Weather conditions at the time of inspection
- Analysis of age-appropriateness of the equipment and the overall site
- General description of playspace and relevant play equipment, including estimated/confirmed date of supply/installation
- General description of protective surfacing type, area, including estimated/confirmed date of supply/installation
- Assessment of the critical fall heights based on equipment type and configuration
- Declaration that a full review of any/all dimensional and technical requirements of the current CSA-Z614 National Standard was made relevant to each of the play equipment, playspace layout, and protective surfacing element
- Current calibrations of any instrumentation used in the inspection
- Recognised training designations/credentials, including copies of training or other professional accreditations
- Note: If an issue of non-compliance is found, each issue shall be reported separately with:
  - A direct reference to the applicable issue-relevant clause(s) of the Standard
  - A direct reference to the date of publication of the applicable/relevant clause(s) of the year-applicable Standard
  - A direct reference to the applicable hazard-rating of the issue noted (a comparative measure of severity)
  - Photographic or detailed descriptive confirmation of the present condition(s) relative to the compliance issue
  - A professional judgment reference or suggestion for the repair, removal, or replacement of the noted issue
- Note: If an issue of "concern" is found, each issue shall be reported separately with:
  - A direct reference to the applicable hazard-rating of the issue noted (a comparative measure of severity)
  - Photographic or detailed descriptive confirmation of the present condition(s) relative to the compliance issue
  - A professional judgment reference or suggestion for the repair, removal, or replacement of the noted issue