



# SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN



## PLAYGROUNDS – COMPREHENSIVE INSPECTIONS AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

As Spring approaches, now is a great time to inspect playgrounds and review the maintenance program for your playgrounds. A comprehensive maintenance program consists of inspections at three basic frequencies.

### 1. Annual Audits

Document the condition of each piece of playground equipment and the surrounding areas by taking pictures. A comprehensive Playground Risk Management Program starts with an annual audit. The audit consists of inventorying and examining each piece of the playground and ancillary equipment, the park's grounds and structures, and perimeter streets and curbs.

### 2. Periodic Inspections (Weekly to Monthly)

Define the frequency of inspections in the written Playground Risk Management Program. Many departments begin to ramp up the inspection program's frequency rate beginning in the Spring. The frequency of a playground's inspection is determined by several factors: the season, frequency of use, harsh environments such as on a beach, neighborhood demographics, age of equipment, history of damage, etc.

A sample [Playground Facility Hazard Identification Inspection](#) on the [MEL Safety Institute](#). A checklist offers the advantage of documenting what was inspected and found to be in satisfactory condition. By only reporting deficiencies, the worker who completed the report is open to questions of what conditions were or were not inspected, possibly months or years later. Remember the rule of documentation, "If it is not written down, it did not happen".

### 3. Daily Inspections

Instruct workers to visually check the playground equipment and grounds for obvious problems such as broken equipment, graffiti, etc. Workers are in the parks almost every day; cutting grass, picking up trash, or even just driving by on their way to other assignments. Paperwork is not needed unless a deficiency is found.

Instruct workers to immediately correct conditions that can be fixed, or report conditions that cannot be corrected as soon as possible. The Playground Risk Management Program should describe the documentation process for when repairs are made, or how a deficiency report is submitted.

Record even routine maintenance activities such as replenishing mulch or closing the gaps on S-hooks. Playground owners should have a 'paper trail' of work performed by employees.

Document all repairs to playground equipment. Repairs should be made using the manufacturer's parts. Use tamper-resistant hardware and have a stock of spare hardware on hand.

Hold a Safety Briefing to remind employees what to look for, what deficiencies should be addressed immediately, and how to report deficiencies that cannot be corrected on the spot.

We also want to remind our members of other resources.

- The MSI LIVE has a Playground Safety Inspector class, please check the [MSI LIVE Schedule](#).
- [MSI Video Briefing Playground Risk Management](#).
- Contact your Risk Control Consultant with any questions or to request assistance.