
Playground Safety, Routine Inspection, and Maintenance

The Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) Playground Safety Handbook provides best practices for playground design, installation, maintenance, and routine inspection process management. A current copy of the handbook is available from <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>. Ensuring that playgrounds are safe requires careful consideration of the type of equipment provided as well as a diligent maintenance and inspection program.

Two fundamental components of Playground Inspection and Maintenance Programs:

- Documentation of Routine Inspections and Maintenance
- Documentation of Annual Inspections

Suggested Procedures for Playground Inspection and Maintenance

Pick at least two full-time positions in facilities maintenance or a similar department and make those individuals specifically responsible for playgrounds inspection and maintenance. Playground maintenance should be done on a weekly and monthly basis and include an annual process with all appropriate written records. The maintenance crew and supervisor responsible for playground inspection and maintenance should, at a minimum:

- Know and reference the CPSC Playground Safety Handbook.
- Keep written records of all routine inspections.
- Use the inspections to help determine routine maintenance.

You can use any standard inspection and maintenance record format, or make up your own to better match

your specific playgrounds and equipment. Many playground equipment manufacturers include checklists and maintenance schedules for their equipment. If no checklist is provided, the CPSC Handbook provides several sample checklists.

Annual Inspections

Annual inspections should use the CPSC Playground Safety Handbook inspection guidelines and are best performed by a team including a manager, the supervisor, and members of the crew specifically responsible for playground inspection and maintenance. These inspections need to be detailed and thorough, documenting current conditions in a formal written format with photos. The inspection should include specific recommendations for repair, removal and/or replacement of equipment, surfacing, etc. Annual inspections should produce an official record that is used to guide budgetary allocation for playground upgrades.

What This Means for Counties

Inadequate maintenance of playground equipment poses a risk to the community and accounts for many avoidable injuries. Check to make sure that your county has an inspection and maintenance plan in place. For Playground Safety Guides and a Playground Safety Inspection Checklists, visit <https://www.cpsc.gov/safety-education/safety-guides/playgrounds>. For additional assistance on maintaining safe playgrounds, contact the CTSI Loss Prevention Team at 303-861-0507. 