



Home Playground Safety

Each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. Almost 50,000 of the injuries occur on home playgrounds and 40 percent of those injured are younger than five years old.

Regularly check play equipment and surfacing.

Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground. Many backyard play sets are placed on dirt or grass – surfaces that do not adequately protect children when they fall.

Make your backyard playground a safe place to play!

Home playground safety checklist

Use this simple checklist to help make sure your home playground is a safe place to play.

- Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface around the play equipment. Since almost 60 percent of all injuries are caused by falls, protective surfacing under and around all playground **equipment can reduce the risk of** serious head injury.
- Use at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for home play equipment up to 7 feet high, OR;
- Use at least a 9-inch layer of sand or pea gravel for play equipment up to 5 feet high, OR;
- Use surfacing mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
- Make sure you assemble equipment correctly and according to instructions. It should be on a level surface and firmly anchored.
- Install protective surfacing at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the swing set.
- Check the spacing between swings.
- Be sure there is at least 8 inches between suspended swings and between a swing and the support frame.
- There should be at least 16 inches from a support frame to a pendulum see-saw.
- The minimum clearance between the ground and underside of swing seat should be 8 inches.
- All swing sets should be securely anchored.
- Swing seats should be made of something soft instead of metal or wood.
- Never attach – or allow children to attach – ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines, or pet leashes to play equipment. Children can strangle on these.
- Check for hardware, like open “S” hooks or protruding bolt ends, which can be hazardous.
- Check for spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs. These spaces should measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Make sure platforms and ramps more than 30 inches above the ground have guardrails to prevent falls.
- Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.



- Remove tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
- Regularly check play equipment and surfacing to make sure both are in good condition.
- Carefully supervise children on play equipment to make sure they are safe.
- Smaller climbing gyms for younger children should never be placed on hard surfaces outdoors or indoors, even if covered with carpet.

Beware of burns. Equipment in direct sunlight can get hot enough to cause severe burns, even in 70 degree weather.

*For more information or to file a complaint,
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