



# Safety Bulletin: Playground Maintenance June 2026

Attention: M&O, Custodial, Grounds, Risk Management

Regular maintenance and inspection of school playgrounds are essential to protecting students and preserving a significant district asset. Inadequate maintenance is recognized as one of the leading causes of playground injuries, second only to inadequate supervision.

Playground manufacturers are required to provide inspection, maintenance, and repair guidelines for their equipment. School districts should use this information to develop site-specific procedures for inspection schedules, maintenance requests, repair documentation, and equipment replacement planning.

To ensure playgrounds remain safe and compliant, routine inspections and maintenance activities should be conducted throughout the year, supplemented by comprehensive annual or semi-annual inspections.



## ***Routine Playground Inspections***

Regular inspections help identify immediate safety hazards as well as early signs of wear and deterioration before they result in injuries or costly repairs. Inspection procedures should be tailored to the specific playground equipment and surfacing materials but should include, at a minimum, the following:

### ***Loose-Fill Surfacing***

- Verify adequate depth and even distribution of material.
- Look for exposed concrete footings, hard-packed areas, erosion, or exposed weed barriers, which may indicate insufficient surfacing material.
- Rake and replenish surfacing as needed.

### ***Unitary Surfacing***

- Inspect for cracks, tears, separation, holes, or excessive wear.
- Check for tripping hazards and areas where impact attenuation may be compromised.
- Inspect for curling or lifting tile corners.

## ***Equipment Condition***

- Inspect for missing, damaged, or loose components.
- Check all bolts, fasteners, clamps, and hardware for proper installation and tightness.
- Identify signs of corrosion, metal fatigue, splintering, cracking, worn/missing rubber coating, or structural deterioration.
- Verify moving components operate properly and safely.

## ***Vandalism and Environmental Hazards***

- Inspect for graffiti, vandalism, fire damage, or intentional equipment damage.
- Remove dangerous materials such as broken glass, sharp objects, and litter.
- Check for insect nests, animal activity, or vegetation that may create hazards.

## ***Signage and Labeling***

- Verify that manufacturer labels remain legible and in place.
- Confirm age-appropriateness labels, supervision recommendations, and safety warnings are present and visible.

## ***Comprehensive Annual or Semi-Annual Inspections***

In addition to routine inspections, each playground should undergo a detailed annual or semi-annual inspection to:

- Document equipment inventory and condition.
- Identify long-term maintenance needs.
- Evaluate equipment life expectancy.
- Assist with budgeting and capital replacement planning.
- Verify compliance with applicable safety standards and manufacturer recommendations.

## ***Reporting and Corrective Action***

All inspection findings should be documented and reported promptly to the appropriate district department for maintenance and repair.

When a hazard presents an immediate risk to student safety, the affected equipment or playground area should be closed and secured until repairs are completed. Temporary barriers and signage should be installed to prevent access. Student safety must always take precedence over equipment availability.

District staff should also consider community use, after-hours access, and scheduled field activities when determining playground closures and repair timelines.

## ***Protecting Students Through Prevention***

Consistent inspections, timely repairs, and thorough documentation help prevent injuries, extend equipment life, maintain regulatory compliance, and ensure students have safe places to learn and play.

Resource: SIA's video [Conducting a Routine Playground Inspection](#) is available on our YouTube channel