

Playgrounds (Responsibilities & Inspection Requirements)

Thousands of children are injured on playgrounds across Canada every year. The majority of injuries occur from falls. With the latest release of CSA Z614 – Children’s playground equipment and surfacing standard, this is an opportune time to talk about what your requirements are in regards to maintaining a safe, operational playground.



The CSA Z614 standard requires that all owners of playgrounds plan for and provide a regular maintenance and inspection schedule for all playgrounds, playground equipment and surfacing materials. **Playgrounds are a Grey Area with many School Districts. The CSA Z614 standard is not a requirement per se, but the content of the standard is utilized in any court case or decisions when it comes to injury litigation that may involve playgrounds.**

Scope – Where does Playground Standard Apply

1. Applies to all new playgrounds, playground components and protective surfacing installed after the release of the current standard.
2. Applies to any additions, replacement parts for , playgrounds installed after the release of the current edition

Your Responsibilities

1. You are required to maintain a safe playground.
2. You are required to provide a documented, preferably digital, inspection process.
3. The recommended inspection procedure according to the current CSA standard is daily visual inspections, monthly documented inspections with an annual all- inclusive playground inspection review.
4. You should also develop a follow up system whereby once a recommendation has been made after an inspection takes place there is a follow up procedure to ensure compliance or repair over a pre-determined time period.



Inspection & Maintenance requirements should encompass

CSA Z614 - Section 11 – Recommended Inspection and Maintenance Procedures

1. A program of daily and monthly inspection & maintenance schedules should be created by the owner;
2. A Checklist should be developed, preferably digital, makes it easier to access and track information.
3. Inspections shall include but are not limited to:
 - a. Checking the entire playground area for hazardous debris and litter;
 - b. Checking for any damage to equipment;
 - c. Checking for any broken, missing or loose equipment;
 - d. Checking for strings or ropes of any kind and removing them;
 - e. Checking fall surface area, repairing, maintaining as required.

CSA Z614 - Section 11.3 – Inspection of the Playspace

- a. Provide a daily and weekly visual inspection of the playspace;
- b. Provide a detailed monthly inspection, documented, with follow up;
- c. Provide an annual written report, discuss inspections over the past year and actions taken to mediate recommendations, problems and concerns.

Conclusion

So in conclusion remember the following:

1. It is your playground- you are required to inspect, maintain and repair it.
2. Conduct a Risk Analysis or Needs assessment. This is the who, what, where, why, when section.
3. Identify all areas to be inspected. Makes it easier to develop specific ways of developing an inspection program that will meet the requirements of the CSA Z614 standard.
4. Talk to Risk Management professionals, people in your industry, staff and various other organizations.

For additional information on inspection, maintenance, audits and training, contact:

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Alan has provided Loss Control Services to school districts, municipalities, industry, and government operations for over 32 years. He has developed a set of training programs (workshops) & Audits (safety related) to help all organizations accumulate and prioritize information and develop short and long term compliance plans. Alan is based out of Prince George, BC but provides services throughout Western Canada.