

**Guidance on the planning,
design, installation, and
de-commissioning of fixed
outdoor play equipment**



Introduction

This guidance aims to set standards in accordance with health and safety legislation and industry best practice. The HSE makes it clear that, as a regulator, it recognises the benefits of allowing children and young people of all ages and abilities to have challenging play opportunities, Coventry City Council fully supports the provision of play. A sensible and proportionate approach should be taken to control risks with the selection, design, installation and de-commissioning of equipment. When considering developing a play space it is important to carefully take into account the on-going costs of maintenance and inspection of the equipment. Although there is no specific legislation on play safety in the UK, there is a duty to ensure the health and safety of users of the equipment, and ensure that the equipment is suitable, safe, maintained and risk assessments are undertaken.

The agreed European standards EN1176 – detail industry best practice with regard to the design, installation and maintenance of equipment. EN1177 – details industry best practice with impacting playground surfaces, including test methods.

Planning and design

When planning a play space it is likely that you will need to engage with, and appoint competent contractors to assist with the project. It is important that you have a clear agreement of what is expected from all parties to prevent mis-understandings. Consideration should also be given to allowing disabled and non-disabled children play together. There are a variety of different types of impact absorbent surfaces (safety surfaces) available; advice should be sought at this stage to ensure that the safety surface being laid is the most appropriate for the equipment being installed. All equipment and surfaces should conform to EN1176 and EN1177.

The Generation and Community Team, City Services and Development Directorate and Health and Safety Services can assist with the project.

Consideration should be given to the following at the planning and design stage:

- Identification of a suitable location
- Provision of adequate resources and outline design and development plan
- Appointment of project manager and designer (this may be a team of people)
- Design concepts, equipment selection and safety surfaces
- Application of required notifications, permissions and site/land surveys (the results of the surveys may well affect when the project timings i.e. protection of great crested newts).
- Procurement/tendering and selection and appointment of competent contractors
- Insurance requirements

Installation

A key named person or team must take overall control of the project and manage the construction phase. Regardless of whether your project would be considered a CDM notifiable project or not, it is recommended that the principals of the CDM regulations are applied. This will assist with the effective management of the project and contractors. You should be satisfied that competent contractors have been appointed. Project specific risk assessments and method statements should be developed and followed by all parties involved in the project.

The contractors should provide re-assurance that any sub-contractors are considered competent to undertake the task.

Appropriate safety management systems may include:

- Effective communication, co-operation and co-ordination systems
- The sharing of information about known hazards
- Systems to prevent unauthorised access to the site
- Being satisfied that notice applications have been applied for and approved
- Installing the equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions

Completion of works

Upon completion of the equipment installation and prior to first use, the equipment should be inspected by a competent person who is capable of inspecting to EN 1176 and EN 1177. The level of competency required is that of an individual who has been trained to carry out annual and post-installation inspections. A certificate of conformity and testing should be provided by the inspector. A risk assessment should also be developed incorporating details from the manufacturer's risk assessment.

Decommissioning

When play equipment has reached the end of its life, it is important to ensure that unauthorised people in particular children cannot access the equipment. The decommissioning process should be carried out promptly and the area should be segregated and made secure. The equipment should be made safe for example removing swing seats and chains from the swing bays until such time when the bays can be removed.

Further information

<http://www.playinspectors.com/RPII-Inspectors>

<http://www.api-play.org/api-member-details/outdoor-manufacturers>.

<http://www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/playsafety/default.aspx>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>

Legislation and relevant standards

Health and Safety at Work act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2007

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

BS EN 1176 BS EN 1177

Contacts

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