

Public Open Areas and Picnic / Recreational Areas

The management of Picnic and Recreational Areas is often overlooked during the planning stages of an attraction. The visual effect of badly positioned tables, ground that is over used or facilities that are poorly thought out is often the memory that families will go away with.

There is a similarity in the health and safety requirements with those outlined in Practice Note 4 – Play Areas, so some of the advice is repeated. The activities in a picnic area are very similar and indeed in many cases are the same area.

When planning the area, it is often a good idea to think about what people will want to use the area for and what facilities they will require. Most families requirements are space, faeces free, and a clean - litter free environment. There is no doubt that those attractions that provide picnic tables are more appreciated than those who do not, but they are not mandatory. The occasional farm attraction that opens to the public a few times a year would not be expected to provide the same facilities as those who open all through the season and usually charge a higher entrance fee.

It is also a good idea to consider how you differentiate between any area such as farm yards and storage areas of large machinery, that you do not intend the public to have access in, but are attractive to the inquisitive mind. You must also be able to show that you are aware that picnicking families and contact with animal faeces have been linked where outbreaks of ingested diseases such as Ecoli and Salmonella.

There are some very basic requirements that all attractions or open farms are expected to follow.

The measures highlighted in green are essential to maintaining legal compliance.

- 1. You must complete a risk assessment for this area of your activity and either have completed the installation of control measures or you can demonstrate a planned delivery of the controls**
- 2. You must be able to show that thought has to be given to the effective design and layout and the methods of management you intend to operate. Ball games or other types of games will be played in this area and need to be considered when designing the layout and safety provisions. This is particularly important when expanding your facilities or attractions. Your safeguards are easily compromised and they should always be subject to a risk assessment review.**
- 3. You must have completed a risk assessment, identifying what controls you have in place to safeguard the public. This is particularly important in managing those areas you DO NOT intend the public to have access; how have you informed the public where they may or may not go AND how have you provided effective barriers.**
- 4. Any area you are designating as a Picnic or Recreational Area must have been free from farm or attraction animal occupation for at least 28 days prior to its use [DEFRA]. They must also be double fenced to ensure contact with animals is avoided.**
- 5. The area must have been regularly cut and rolled in that 28 day period to assist in the breaking down of animal faeces residue [DEFRA].**
- 6. Meeting, Picnic and Recreational Areas where ball games etc can be played must be clearly identified so as to inform the public where they may carry out these activities in as risk free environment as practically possible.**
- 7. Attention must be given when planning the area to the fencing of animals in such a way that animal contact is avoided.**
- 8. Clear signage regarding hand washing is required at the entrances and around the location. These signs must identify where the nearest hand wash facility is to be found.**
9. Staff must be requested to be vigilant when carrying out their respective duties in order to identify holes that can cause ankle injuries, and Wasp / Bee nests.

- 10. Picnic tables must be fit for purpose and structurally sound. Picnic tables are considered an item of equipment and must be inspected on a regular basis for breakage or splintering. Any table not considered useable must be physically removed from the area to prevent its use.**
- 11. Picnic tables must be cleaned on a daily basis.**
12. Adequate numbers of litter bins must be provided. The poorly placed bin or an inadequate number of bins will lead to a litter problem which will not only detract from the visual effect; it may also introduce a vermin problem as well.
- 13. The area must be free from any farm implements and equipment other than those used as play equipment.**
- 14. Areas that are not open to the public must be closed off and signed as clearly as possible. The single length of rope or string and a badly written sign on a piece of cardboard is not a sufficient deterrent.**
- 15. Gates, fencing and other permanent must be securely fixed and in good repair. Hinges made out of rope will not be accepted. Where there is doubt as to whether a risk is present, then the item should be removed.**
- 16. The use of barbed wire fencing is prohibited where the public may walk or stand in a close proximity of the fence. Where a farm is open on an occasional day, the placing of secondary fencing to act as a public guard is recommended. Rope and post may be sufficient for this purpose or a temporary electric fence on the animal side of the paddock.**
- 17. Regular litter picking must be carried out throughout the day. It is noticeable that those farm parks that have a visible litter picking regime encourages the public to use the bins also.**
- 18. Where a Ball or Frisbee game may be played, it is possible that it may go into an animal pen or an area which is out of bounds. To ensure the public do not try to retrieve the ball themselves, put a sign up asking the public to contact a member of staff before they enter the area of risk. It might also be necessary to provide a facility to clean the ball before it is handled. It might also be helpful to provide higher netting or fencing in the area.**

Risk Assessment Play Areas & Play Equipment

Hazard Identified	Examples of how increased risk or failure can occur	Likelihood	Severity
Slips. Trips or fall of public.	Uneven surface for a recreational area. Wear and tear of surface Lack of inspection Poor design or installation	Very possible	Hospitalisation
Injury to public. Damage to clothing	Implements or equipment left unattended in the area occupied by public. Unsuitable fencing Lack of inspection	Possible	Hospitalisation
Infection to members of the public	Lack of correct planning or provisions Lack of correct signage Lack of facilities in useable distance or location	Possible	Hospitalisation

Control Measures Introduced	Predicted Outcome	Additional measures required
Introduction of 18 listed control measures	Reduction of risk to an acceptable level and you can demonstrate you are applying best practice	Continual monitoring to ensure the control measures work throughout the season
Introduction of all essential control measures only	You still run the risk that the controls may not be as effective as you desire and you may not be able to claim you are operating best practice	Introduction of the remainder is recommended.
Introduction of selective controls only	You will run the risk of incidents that would be considered as under your influence and the likelihood of enforcement action is very possible You also run the risk of a member of the public making a false accusation	Full safety review be carried out with and action be taken to introduce controls within the next 6 months.
Lack of any control measures	Enforcement action is highly probable as you will not be complying with your legal obligations.	Closure of activities until controls are fully introduced

Risk Assessment Controls Checklist

Picnic and Recreational Areas

Date of review: _____ Person completing the review: _____

	Requirement	Comp ✓
2	I have completed a risk assessment for the Picnic and Recreational Areas and , identified what controls are in place and what is required	
3	The area designated as a Picnic or Recreational Area has been free from farm or attraction animal occupation for at least 28 days prior to its use.	
4	The area must has been regularly cut and rolled in that 28 day period to assist in the breaking down of animal faeces residue.	
5	Meeting, Picnic and Recreational Areas are clearly identified.	
6	The fencing of animals is such that animal contact is avoided. Signage is erected to inform the visitors not to touch animals whilst eating or drinking near the animal enclosures that overlook the picnic area.	
7	Clear signage regarding hand washing is erected at the entrances and around the location. These signs identify where the nearest hand wash facility is to be found.	
8	Staff have been requested to be vigilant for the presence of holes that can cause ankle injuries, and Wasp / Bee nests.	
9	Picnic tables are fit for purpose and structurally sound.	
10	Picnic tables are cleaned on a daily basis.	
11	Adequate numbers of litter bins are be provided.	
12	The area is free from any farm implements and equipment.	
13	Areas that are not open to the public are closed off and signed as clearly as possible.	
14	Gates, fencing and other permanent are securely fixed and in good repair. Where there is doubt as to whether a risk is present, then the item is has been removed.	
15	The use of barbed wire fencing is prohibited. Where a farm is open on an occasional day, the placing of secondary fencing to act as a public guard is recommended.	
16	Regular litter picking is carried out throughout the day.	
17	Where a Ball or Frisbee game may be played, a sign up asking the public to contact a member of staff before they enter the area of risk has been erected. A ball or Frisbee cleaning facility is available.	