

Play Areas & Play Equipment

[To be read in conjunction with Practice Note 3]

The management of Play Areas and Play Equipment is very similar to Mechanical Equipment. Both Legislation and Best Practice are governed by the same principles, with more emphasis on the users and risk associated with its use.

Play Equipment must be:

- Fit for purpose
- Robust enough to withstand the type of treatment you would expect from the profile of visitor you attract.
- Properly maintained, which includes cleaning and defect free whenever in use.
- Inspected on a daily basis before use, and a weekly thorough inspection. The inspection regimes robust and recorded.
- Subject to a risk assessment, and wherever possible, the risk of equipment failure or foreseeable injury removed by making extra provisions or a change of design. If it is not possible to remove the risk, then you must prevent the use of the equipment, particularly if the equipment has become damaged or affected by adverse weather conditions. You should extend the assessment to include the possibility of damage occurring.
- Pro-actively managed to ensure where damage has occurred which renders the equipment harmful to the intended users, it is quickly identified and dealt with.

There are two additional British Standards, BSEN 1176 & BSEN 1177 that applies to play equipment and play areas. By downloading the free of charge guides below, you will have invaluable assistance when designing and managing your equipment and play areas. To repeat this information in this guidance would not be helpful as there are a number of different scenarios that need to be considered when designing you facilities.

- www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sectors/cactus/5_04_11.pdf has been produced by the HSE and deals with the areas they believe should be covered in a risk assessment. It also refers to other guidance they have produced which is also downloadable F.O.C.
- www.pipa.org.uk/downloads/PIPAoutline.pdf is essential guidance for the management of inflatable play equipment.
- <http://www.adips.co.uk>
- <http://playinspections.co.uk/outdoor-playgrounds>

Play Areas must be carefully planned. 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.

- You must ensure you are not inadvertently introduced a hazard by failing to foresee an obvious weakness. A good example is where ball games are permitted. The ball will go outside the play area by accident and it is where the ball lands that may be an issue. Deep water or an animal enclosure will pose a risk to anybody who attempts to retrieve the ball. Signage asking for no ball games in this area may be needed, but also informing the public where they are permitted to play. You should 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 where ball games may be played.
- You must, as part of your risk assessments, identify whether there is a risk to the user of the play area or equipment during periods of adverse weather. Handle or steps for instance may become slippery.
- You need to ensure areas such as sand pits can be covered up at the end of each day to ensure it is not available to other animals such as cats to use as welfare facilities. Where it is impossible to cover the pit, then careful inspection each morning before the facility is open must be carried out.

Play Equipment must be maintained within the manufacturers design and guidance. This equipment will have been specifically designed and installed to the specification required in BSEN1176 & BSEN1177. If you have self-designed or self-installed the equipment, it is imperative you have it inspected by an independent play equipment inspector registered with the RPII to ensure you are compliant.

Static Play Equipment, after the equipment has been installed, must be regularly inspected by yourselves to ensure you are maintaining the safety features of the equipment. The inspection period will depend on the frequency of use. Your independent inspector will assist with advising you on how frequent and what needs to be checked.

Inflatable equipment must be independently inspected every 12 months by a PIPA registered inspector.

Other types of mechanical rides or play are required to have an ADIPS inspection every 12 months.

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

1. Make sure you have any Manufacturers Handbooks for the equipment you use if they are available. If the equipment is self designed and constructed, make sure you have some designs to demonstrate loadings and the criteria you have applied.
2. **Make sure any equipment that is redundant or temporarily unfit for use is obviously identified and not able to be used.** Play equipment that is unfit for use and cannot be removed must be physically blocked off from use. Signs and bits of tape are easily taken down or can become detached.
3. **Make sure you have a record file which shows the inspections of the item of equipment.** The record should show not only what has happened but also what is planned to happen. This is known as a Planned Preventative Maintenance Programme [PPMP]. This should include:
 - An individual identification number if you have more than one item of equipment of the same design e.g. swings.
 - A defect reporting and management procedure that ensures the defect is dealt with in a timely manner. Such a system will also stipulate what defects renders the equipment Unsafe for Use.
 - A signature of inspection before the item of equipment returns to operational duty after repair. This should be completed by a senior member of the operational staff.
4. **Make sure you have placed a notice regarding the removal of outdoor shoes when using those items of equipment where it is necessary. Regular monitoring is highly recommended.**
5. **Make sure hand washing facilities are nearby.** It is recommended that you have a hand wash station within sight of the play area, or the very least, a sign erected informing the users where their nearest hand wash can be located.
6. **Guard rails or fences must be designed to prevent persons from climbing over or under and thus gaining access to a dangerous or unauthorised area.**
7. **Steps and ladders need to be firmly fixed and the steps defect free**
8. **Sharp edges need to be rounded off where people are climbing or holding on for balance**
9. **Balance aids or handrails must be fitted at the correct height to assist the intended user of the equipment.**
10. **A daily inspection regime for all items of regular contact areas such as seats, handle etc. This regime must be supplemented by additional cleaning when accidental incidents occur.**
11. **Age limits clearly identified where they apply**
12. **Weight limits clearly identified where they apply**
13. **Signage that gives clear instructions as to how the equipment is to be used and if possible in picture format**
14. **A method of locking out or immobilisation any equipment when a defect is identified that renders it unsafe for use.**
15. **Ensure all inflatable play equipment are either fitted with the PIPA tag or you are managing your equipment within the spirit of the PIPA Scheme. It is also essential that air receivers and blowers be serviced and tested by a competent service engineer at least annually.**

Risk Assessment Play Areas & Play Equipment

Hazard Identified	Examples of how increased risk or failure can occur	Likelihood	Severity
Falls from Height	Structural failure Wear and Tear Lack of correct provisions Poor design or installation	Very possible	Fatal or Severe Illness
Collapse of an item of play equipment	Lack of correct provisions Poor design or installation Lack of regular inspection	Possible	Hospitalisation
Cuts or abrasions to users where equipment has become damaged	Wear and Tear Poor design or installation 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 15 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, extra supervision will be required
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 Play Areas & Play Equipment

Date of review: _____ Person completing the review: _____

	Requirement	Comp ✓
1	We have Manufacturers Handbooks for the equipment you use. If the equipment is self designed and constructed, make sure you have some designs to demonstrate loadings and the criteria you have applied.	
2	We make sure any equipment that is redundant or temporarily unfit for use is obviously identified and not able to be used.	
3	Have you planned your next 12 monthly equipment inspections	
4	Have you completed the actions identified on your most recent annual inspections	
5	We have a record file which shows the inspections of the item of equipment.	
6	There is a notice and are monitoring the removal of outdoor shoes when using those items of equipment where it is necessary.	
7	Hand washing facilities are nearby.	
8	Guard rails or fences are designed to prevent persons from climbing over or under and thus gaining access to a dangerous or unauthorised area.	
9	Steps and ladders are firmly fixed and the steps defect free	
10	Sharp edges are rounded off where people are climbing or holding on for balance	
11	Balance aids or handrails are fitted at the correct height to assist the intended user of the equipment. They also offer the support that is not only desired, but also what it is perceived to provide.	
12	We have a daily, cleaning regime for all items of regular contact areas such as seats, handle etc.	
13	Age limits clearly identify where they apply	
14	Weight limits clearly identify where they apply	
15	Signage that gives clear instructions as to how the equipment is to be used is erected	
16	A method of locking out or immobilisation any equipment when a defect is identified that renders it unsafe for use.	
17	All inflatable play equipment are either fitted with the PIPA tag or you are managing your equipment within the spirit of the PIPA Scheme. It is also essential that air receivers and blowers be serviced and tested by a competent service engineer at least annually.	



National Farm Attractions Industry Guidance Health and Safety Best Practice Note 4

Daily Checklist

[Items of Equipment]

Date of review: _____

Person completing the review: _____

Item of Equipment: _____

Item of Equipment: _____

What is to be checked	What you are looking for	Fit for use ✓		What is to be checked	What you are looking for	Fit for use ✓

Item of Equipment: _____

Item of Equipment: _____

What is to be checked	What you are looking for	Fit for use ✓		What is to be checked	What you are looking for	Fit for use ✓



Planned Preventative Maintenance Plan

Item of Plant/Equipment: _____

Item	Defected [Date]	Planned Service / Repair [Date]	Action to be taken	Authorised signature to return equipment for use