

and/or fall height for the play structure installed.

- the surface is installed according to the specifications and duplicates the properties and performance of the tested surface; and
- on site testing by removal of a test core or the use of an MAX / HIC head within one month of the installation.

This will ensure the performance of the surface for impact attenuation at the time of installation. To limit the exposure to liability during subsequent years, the following must be performed:

- test the surface by removal of a core or the use of an MAX / HIC head a minimum of once per year at 3 sites around the play structure;
- provision of a maintenance manual for the surface;
- performance of the maintenance required in the manual.

The extent to which negligence and therefore liability exposure can be established will be in part dependent upon the ability of the plaintiff to find experts that are able to provide evidence with regard to the danger that is present within a site. With the passage of time since the field has come to the forefront of the industry and the volume of information that has been generated in the field of playground injuries and related subjects, there are a significant number of experts available within both industry and academia.

Conclusions

For more than 15 years there has been active discussion and the development of tests and standards within the area of accidents in playgrounds. This volume of information and the ability to test for performance has raised the risk of, and significance of, liability for negligence for designers, specifiers, manufacturers, installers and operators. The availability of information and, in the case of Canada, a National Standard, almost all persons involved in the building of a playground will have skills and experience that will not excuse negligence. In addition the invention of on site test apparatus has now allowed for performance testing of actual conditions at any time.

All of the studies of playground injuries indicate that the majority of the injuries are as a result of an impact with the underlying surface or intermediate platform below play structures. The issuance by IBC of the above mentioned AM 93-02 indicates that the risk of exposure to liability and the potential for litigation is very real, especially when one considers the costs that can be associated with any head injury.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the construction of playgrounds to provide the maximum amount of care as they are able for today and into the future. Failure to do so will inevitably result in injury and financial loss.

Article References are available upon request.

Ontario Energy Network Two Phases for Recreation Facility Profile

As appeared in the January, 1994 issue of Facility Forum, a publication of the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc.

It's time for facility managers to sharpen their pencils and provide valuable input to a survey that will ultimately benefit recreation facilities across the province. The Recreation Facility Profile, the survey currently being developed by the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (O.R.F.A.) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MOEE), got under way in December, 1993 and will be completed in March, 1994. The Angus Reid Group Inc., has been contracted by the O.R.F.A. to administer the survey.

"The study will be done in two phases", said Don Harrison, chairman of O.R.F.A.'s Environment and Energy Committee. "In Phase One, the goal is to make sure we haven't missed any recreation facilities, such as arenas, pools or recreation complexes with multiple uses. Therefore, the first mailing, an inventory package, went to every municipality in Ontario to verify the current list and add any missing facilities."

"Once all the replies are entered into a computer, we will be in a position to start Phase Two by sending out a detailed profile survey to the primary contact in almost every recreation facility in Ontario."

O.R.F.A. members will probably be handling inquiries from their clerks or treasurers who have received the first package and will come to facility managers for assistance. During Phase Two, many O.R.F.A. members will also receive the detailed questionnaire, available in English or French.

The questionnaire will ask about the type of facility (arena, curling rink, pool or sportsplex), its size, age, and the construction materials used to build it. There will be questions on utility consumption, types of equipment used, what retrofits have been completed and if any building automation systems have been installed.

"Once the data is entered into a computer, we can start creating a base of useful information to assist in energy management planning," said O.R.F.A. Executive Director John Milton. "The information base developed from the survey will be key to making energy management in recreation facilities a higher priority."

For more information on this project please contact O.R.F.A. at (416) 495-4200.

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