A technical reference bulletin by the Risk Control Services Department of the Glatfelter Insurance Group

## **RISK COMMUNIQUÉ**

Glatfelter

<mark>Religious</mark> Practice™

## **Playground Surface Material Selection**

The chart below summarizes the CPSC comments regarding various categories of playground surfacing material. In general, hard materials and soil are not recommended. Compact materials should only be used under equipment whose maximum height is five feet or less. Organic or inorganic loose materials both provide excellent protection with organic materials providing more protection.

The drawback of organic and inorganic loose materials is that they are effective only if they are properly maintained. This requires frequent grading and leveling in order to maintain a suggested depth of six inches. A boundary framework, which helps to keep the material beneath the equipment, will lessen the amount of maintenance required. These materials also require maintenance to eliminate insects, animal excrement, and other litter.

	Organic Loose (Pine bark nuggets, shredded bark, etc.)	Inorganic Loose (Sand, pea gravel, shredded tires, etc.)	Compact (Outdoor rubber mats, synthetics, etc.)	Soil/Grass	Concrete Asphalt
Cushioning Potential	Depends on air trapped within and between particles	May combine with dirt or other matter reducing cushioning properties.	Depends upon the foundation or surface over, which the material is installed.	Minimal protection	None
	May decompose or mix with dirt over time and lose cushioning properties		Rubber mats generally pro-vide protection from falls 5 feet or less		
Environmental Effects	Cushioning decreased by rainy or humid weather	Cushioning decreased by rainy or humid weather	Attractive targets for defacing, ignition, or other vandalism	May freeze and harden	Varied
	Materials may freeze when wet	Some materials (i.e., sand) may freeze when wet			
	Wet materials may promote the growth of communicable diseases	Some types of rocks re-lease dust and are difficult to walk on			
Maintenance	Frequent grading and leveling necessary to maintain depth. Necessary to eliminate insects, animal excrement, and litter	Frequent grading and leveling necessary to maintain depth Necessary to eliminate insects, animal excrement, and litter	Little is required	Grass is difficult to maintain in heavy traffic areas	Little required
Other	Highest cushioning potential of all surfacing materials	Washed round pea-size gravel makes a good surface	Must be used on level, uniform surface	Better than concrete or asphalt but generally <b>not</b> <b>recommended</b>	NOT RECOMMENDED

## PLAYGROUND SURFACING MATERIALS

This is a sample guideline furnished to you by Glatfelter Religious Practice. Your organization should review it and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization's needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm, or damage to personnel, property, and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your Glatfelter Religious Practice Representative at (800) 233-1957. © 2012 GRP. All Rights Reserved Page 1