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April 2007 Newsletter

## Playground Safety

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### Editors Note:

We get asked why we put out a monthly informational newsletter to our subscribers. The main reason is that we want to present current topics our agents will encounter as they deal with their church/synagogue clients. Secondly, we want to demonstrate that our entire marketing thrust is you, the local agent. All of our marketing materials and insurance proposals highlight the importance of having you, the local agent, as the church or synagogues insurance representative.

### How safe is your church's playground?

Churches today are building more or more elaborate playgrounds and themed areas to attract kids. In the past most of these areas have been outside, but the latest trend is for inside net enclosed structures. For obvious risk management reasons, we recommend that any new playground equipment be professionally installed. The new systems are a lot more involved and professionals know exactly what will happen when kids are in a play structure.

Here are some S.A.F.E. tips courtesy of the National Program for Playground Safety:

#### SUPERVISION

The lack of supervision is the contributing cause of most playground injuries. In addition to just watching, supervisors should know how to respond to emergencies via proper training. The National Program for Playground Safety has an educational supervision training kit that illustrates a training process.

#### AGE APPROPRIATENESS

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, playground equipment should be age appropriate for children age groups 2 to 5 and 5 to 12. In addition, it is recommended that the two areas be separated if possible.

#### FALL SURFACING

It is a given that if children are playing, they will fall. The goal is to provide as soft a surface as possible for them to fall on. Appropriate surfaces can include loose fill materials such as sand, wood chips, or rubber chips. The depth of the fill material needed depends on the height of the playground equipment. In general, a 12 inch depth provides adequate protection for falls less than 8 feet. Note: certain rubber mats or rubber like materials may be acceptable for indoor installations.

#### EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Routine maintenance such as the following should be conducted based on manufacture's recommendations:

- 1) Check the equipment for breaks, gaps and entanglements
- 2) Periodic sealing, staining or painting wooden play structures
- 3) Check for missing or damaged equipment components
- 4) No openings gaps should range between 3.5 to 9 inches where body parts could be trapped
- 5) Remove scattered debris, litter, body waste or rocks

For more detailed information please go to the following link: [National Program for Playground Safety](#).

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