

Playground & COVID-19

Facilities Management Guidance Document

Playgrounds around the United States and world have largely been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Program for Playground Safety supports these recommendations and encourages early childhood programs, schools, and communities to be attentive in our collective effort to slow the spread of the virus. NPPS understands the difficult decisions to identify best practices as our communities begin to lift restrictions to playgrounds and other recreational facilities. The following are suggestions that we believe will make for better, safer and more informed experiences for your visitors.

1. Install and Maintain Signage: Post Playground Guidance for Visitors

There is potential for confusion among visitors about expectations for playground use, particularly as state, county, and municipal guidelines vary and potentially change from day to day. Post the expectations for use in a highly visible area(s). Clarification of these policies will decrease confusion about appropriate practices, particularly as the situation is dynamic and changing.

Please communicate with your community!

2. Clearly Identify Maintenance Procedures to Visitors

It is expected that there will be apprehension and varying expectations from visitors regarding the maintenance – and particularly the sanitation – as children and families begin to return to use playgrounds. While Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance suggests that it is impractical and an inefficient use of resources to spray disinfectants on outdoor areas, it is understandable that expectations for sanitation efforts on playgrounds may vary across communities and installations.

It is likely that some maintenance plans will call for increased frequency and spray downs of equipment. NPPS encourages particular attention to be paid to high-touch surfaces, such as handrails with EPA approved disinfectants for COVID-19 and other pathogens.



Recognizing that sanitation efforts allow only a temporary return to baseline sanitary conditions, NPPS believes **it is critical to communicate with your visitors to inform them of the frequency and actions that are taken for playground maintenance.** In this way, visitors may make informed decisions on their comfort with the children under their care to utilize the equipment. Do expect that some visitors may be attempting to sterilize areas of equipment on their own and we suggest to address this in your posted rules.

3. Sanitizer & Sunscreen Recommendations

While there are increased concerns over viral transmission in this current time, environmental health considerations are important for children’s play areas. NPPS has encouraged adults to pack both sanitizer and sunscreen for their visits. Where possible, NPPS suggests the installation of sanitizer and sunscreen stations. It is vitally important to provide sanitizer for use before, during, and after playground visits – since wash facilities are often in limited availability near playgrounds. Similarly, NPPS recommends providing sunscreen along side sanitizing stations as many adult skin cancers are linked to childhood sun exposure. Both stations provide an important opportunity to address the importance of public health at playground facilities.

4. CDC Guidance

If you desire more supporting information, particularly regarding sanitation of playgrounds for COVID-19, the CDC has issued several documents which provide guidance for practices involving, in particular, sanitation of outdoor areas.



Visit playgroundsafety.org to learn about playground injury prevention tips and what you can do to create S.A.F.E.™ and fun playgrounds.