

It's time to play...are your playgrounds and parks ready for all the fun?

By **Debbi Sellers**

With the weather warming up and summer just around the corner, people are spending more time outside and park usage is on the rise. Now is the time for members to conduct comprehensive inspections of all playgrounds to determine their condition.

Start with conducting a safety audit which consists of evaluating each playground, play equipment, surfacing and signage using current policies and procedures and current Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and American Society for Testing & Material (ASTM) standards and guidelines. The audit should identify non-compliant and compliant conditions. Once the safety audit has been completed, continue to inspect playgrounds and equipment on a regular basis.

Due to the high volume of use in the summer, routine (high frequency) inspections should be conducted. The frequency of inspections should be based on playground size, age and condition of the equipment, playground usage and frequency of repairs, vandalism, and reported incidents. The purpose of these high frequency inspections is to ensure that frequent, ongoing routine maintenance is being performed. The playground area should be inspected for general, obvious potential hazards such as litter, surfacing, maintenance concerns, vandalism, and proper equipment function.

WCIA recommends using an inspection checklist such as those offered by the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) and the National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI). This allows employees conducting the inspections to document and maintain a written record of the condition of the playground and equipment at a particular point in time, including, when and what corrective measures were taken for any hazard identified.

At a minimum, the inspection checklist should include, but not be limited to the following:

- a) Full name of the person who performed the inspection,
- b) Date and time the inspection was performed,
- c) Identification of specific areas/items that were inspected (name of the park, playground, surfacing, and equipment),
- d) Documentation of findings (identify all deficiencies in writing),

- e) Identification of corrective action taken,
- f) Supervisor review, and
- g) Request for follow-up action.

All WCIA Senior Risk Management Representatives are Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI) and can assist you in creating your inspection checklists or answer questions you may have regarding playground inspections and maintenance. For additional information on playground inspections, please see PAR.05 in the WCIA Liability Resource Manual. The Liability Resource Manual is available through the Member Resources page on the WCIA website: <http://www.wciapool.org/member-resources>

Members also have an opportunity to become certified in parks playground inspections! The Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA) hosts CPSI certification courses each year; more information is available by visiting www.wrpatoday.org. Click on Training and Education to locate CPSI course dates and locations. WCIA supports our members' participation by providing reimbursement for individual completion of CPSI course attendance and exam. Please visit www.wciapool.org and click on Training and Education, then Training Reimbursements and locate CPSI on the program list and follow the prompts. Questions? Contact memberservices@wciapool.org or 206-575-6046.