



School Playground

The most important part of your school's playground may be what's underneath it. Have you checked lately to see what that surface looks like?



Asphalt and concrete, obviously, are out. Even soils and hard-packed dirt don't absorb shocks well, and grass and turf are too susceptible to wear and environmental conditions. Instead, today's playgrounds use loose fill or synthetics such as rubber as a surface. Just because your playground had proper surfacing when it was installed, however, doesn't mean it still does. Surfacing must be inspected and maintained regularly, a task that often goes undone.

Sujit Tavkar, Assistant General Manager at Raymond Sport, says that "parents and school officials need to inspect their playground surfacing to ensure it meets standard safety regulations, especially when it comes to critical fall heights. The last thing that any parent wants is for their child to get seriously injured because the surface under a playground is unsafe."

Playground surfacing comes in three types: organic loose fill, inorganic loose fill, and synthetics. Organic loose fill includes bark mulch; wood chips; and shredded hardwood, called engineered wood fibers. Inorganic loose fill includes sand and gravel. Synthetic surfacing includes rubber, rubber over foam mats or tiles, poured urethane, and rubber composites.

Although loose fill surfaces are often inexpensive they require high maintenance and supervision of surface levels and depths. Failure to inspect and maintain loose fill surfaces often means it becomes unsafe and does not absorb impact forces potentially increasing the risk of serious injury,

including death. Synthetic materials such as safety tiles or seamless rubber are engineered with high elasticity to ensure superior shock absorption & hence significantly reduces the risk of fall-related injuries not only absorbs impact force at critical fall heights but it is a much more resilient, durable, non toxic, slip resistant and water permeable surface. Its also great application for areas such as pool surrounding and decks, wet areas, path ways and jogging tracks.

Rubber Safety Tiles and Seamless Rubber also known as 'pour-in-place rubber' are the ideal surface can be installed onto any hard and or compact surface under playground equipment. The depth of the tiles or the seamless rubber is determined by the operating height of the play structure and it is strongly suggested to seek professional advice to help you play it safe. The added bonus is that a synthetic surface ensures that no wood mulch pieces and or sand get into children's shoes and clothing and there is no limit to the designs that can be created with the wide variety of colors available.

Playgrounds provide hours of outdoor fun for children, but accidents can turn playtime into a nightmare. Unfortunate many of these mishaps can be avoided by installing the appropriate safety surfacing together with teaching some important rules to promote safety and accident prevention on the playground. For more information about which safety playground surface suits you and your budget please contact the expert safety man Sujit Tavkar at Raymond Sport on +971 4 339 13 31 Ext 112.

Every year parent across the country spend tens of thousands of dirhams on new playground equipment. It's a good investment, too. Playgrounds have improved tremendously. Monkey bars coated with lead paint and located above unforgiving asphalt have been replaced by equipment engineered for safety and child development.

Today's playgrounds are not only fun for kids, they help children develop motor skills and coordination, imagination, confidence, and social skills.

But it's easy to forget all that when a child gets hurt. And despite all of the consideration about safety, children do get hurt. Reports from North America indicate that the federal government estimates that 200,000 children are treated in emergency rooms every year for playground injuries. Almost 60 percent of those injuries are from falls, so if you're wondering how safe your school playground is, look down.

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