

Claim Case Studies & Legislation Sandbox Maintenance and Documentation

Facts

The City owned and operated many Municipal parks which they inspected and maintained regularly. The larger, busier parks were inspected daily. They also employed security personnel for these parks as an additional safety measure.

During the summer, a mother brought her 3 month old daughter to the park and sat her in the sandbox. The baby girl immediately started to cry. When the mother lifted her daughter out of the sand, there was a needle sticking into her child's rear end.

The baby was taken to the doctor. The girl would require blood tests every year for three years to ensure that she had not contracted anything from the needle stick injury.

Issue

How could a park that was inspected daily have a needle in the sandbox?

Findings

The summer inspections of the park were mostly completed by students employed by the City during the summer months. The inspection records showed that the sand box had been raked daily. It was a checklist, and the appropriate box had been checked off every day that summer. The manner in which the documents were filled out looked suspect. There was never anything noted as being wrong, or being found; always just the checked boxes. The summer students were then asked if they could swear to the fact that they had raked the sandbox every single day. The summer students could not.

Lessons Learned

The importance of accurate documentation should be part of all staff training including part time and seasonal employees. Instructions should be included in all manuals. Train staff on the importance of these documents, how they are to be completed and when they are to be completed.

Also consider the format of your documents. They should be created to achieve the objectives and keep in mind the following:

- Customized checklists and reports should be specific to each facet of operation
- Use Industry/Association documents where possible
- Actions completed to be specific
- Inspection & maintenance documents have to stand on their own and pass the "test of time" as they may be called on at a later date

For example, instead of:

Inspected Sandbox Yes ___ No ___

Consider:

Raked Sandbox Yes ___ No ___

_____ No foreign objects found

_____ Object was found & discarded

_____ Amount of sand was added

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