



Risk Management Considerations for In-Ground Trampolines

Trampolines can be enjoyable, sociable, and good for fitness especially for young children. The growing popularity of trampolines in leisure environments, rather than family backyards, is set to take off in a new direction with the release of in-ground trampolines that can be installed in parks and public places. In-ground trampolines have become increasingly popular because of the belief that they are safer than the standard above ground trampoline.

Misconceptions

- In-ground trampolines are safer because the jump is not as high.
- False: though the jumper is closer to the ground, without a proper safety enclosure in place they can still fall from a high distance, often landing on the hard surface of a retaining wall.
- In-ground trampolines will feel as bouncy and comfortable as above ground trampolines.
- False: if the trampoline pit does not allow for proper air-flow in can feel as though you're jumping on a hard surface.

Best Practice for Design

The Owner/Operator of a recreational in-ground trampoline should consider the following before installing the play equipment:

- Spacing and Installation Regulations:
 - When digging the pit, the recommended depth is 16-18 inches around the edges and 30 inches in the centre.
 - Include space for a retaining wall around the trampoline to prevent dirt from collapsing into the pit.
 - To ensure proper airflow, dig a pit that is slightly shallower than the height of the trampoline leaving approximately 2 inches above grade followed by a gentle slope to the surrounding grade.
 - Ensure adequate clearance to any overhead obstruction.
 - Follow the manufacturer's install manual and safety instructions.
- Drainage
 - Water will cause rust and other problems if the trampoline does not have proper drainage. When

designing the retaining wall incorporate perforated drainage pipes that drain into a gutter or storm drain.

- **Cleaning and Maintenance**
 - Regular maintenance should be performed on the springs, jumping mat, and frame of the trampoline to ensure no insect infestations or rust have built up from the excess water.
 - Cleaning can be performed using mild soap and warm water. Use a soft brush to scrub off as much dirt as possible. Rinse with water and dry with a towel.
 - A conditioner and UV protectant should be used on the pad and jump mat to protect from the sun.
 - Regularly check the surface surrounding the trampoline. Over time, the soil or impact-absorbing surface can settle, exposing the top of the trampoline frame. The surrounding surface should always be flush with the top of the frame.
- **Safety Enclosure**
 - Install a safety net to help prevent ground impact from a fall and avoid intentional jumping off the trampoline.
 - Enclosures also ensure that a child enters and exits the trampoline safely.

Using the Trampoline

Most trampoline related injuries occur when colliding with another person on the trampoline, landing improperly while jumping, performing stunts, falling off the trampoline, and falling onto the trampoline's springs or frame. Children should be encouraged to understand their limitations and not to try moves beyond their experience or ability.

A logbook of inspections and injury incidents should be maintained. In order to ensure maximum safety, signage should be posted regarding safety rules, including but not limited to:

- Staff or mature supervision is required when the trampoline is being used.
- Only one person can use the trampoline at a time.
- Trampoline use by children under six years of age is not recommended.
- The area around the trampoline must be clear of objects.
- Users should remove all jewellery and hard shoes.
- No food or drink permitted in the area.
- Do not attempt somersaults on the trampoline.
- Never jump onto the trampoline from a higher place.
- Never use a trampoline as a springboard to other objects.

If possible, for example in a daycare, all staff should be fully aware of the emergency procedures for trampolining incidents and at least one qualified first-aid provider should be present at all times. The equipment should be inspected by a suitable person before every use. The trampoline should only be used if it has shock-absorbing pads that completely cover the springs, hooks and frame. If equipment is damaged, it should be taken out of use immediately and reported to the responsible safety manager.