

Montana Playground Information Sheet

Numbers in red are measured by the assessor

Resilient Surfacing: Surfacing under and around playground equipment which is soft enough to cushion a fall.

Equipment over 18 inches in height that is intended for climbing must have appropriate and adequate resilient surfacing under the equipment.

Minimum Compressed Loose-fill Surfacing Depth

Inches of Loose Fill	Materials	Fall Height (Feet)
6	Shredded/Recycled Rubber	10
9	Sand	4
9	Pea Gravel	5
9	Wood Mulch (Non-CCA)	7
9	Wood Chips	10

*Shredded/recycled rubber loose-fill does not compress in the same manner as other loose-fill materials. However, care should be taken to maintain a constant depth as displacement may still occur.

Unitary surfacing materials must be professionally installed and should have documentation that **ASTM F1292 test data will protect a child from a fall for the installed equipment height.

Use Zone for Stationary Equipment: The area under and around the playground equipment when a child might fall. A use zone should be covered with the required depth of resilient surfacing that extends a minimum of **6 feet** in all directions. This area must also be free of other play equipment/materials. The use zones for climbing equipment can overlap with other climbing equipment. However, swing and slide exit use zones cannot overlap with other equipment.

Equipment Spacing: Proper equipment spacing allows room for children to circulate and prevents the possibility of a child fall from one play structure and striking another play structure or other equipment

Spacing requirements for gross motor play equipment over 30 inches is 9 feet.

Spacing requirements for gross motor play equipment 30 inches and under is 6 feet.

Age Appropriate Equipment: For children from **6 -23 months**, only climbing equipment up to **32 inches** in considered appropriate. For children to the from **2 -5 years** of age, climbing equipment is considered appropriate up to a height of **60 inches**. Arch climber, dome climbers, fulcrum seesaws, and spiral slides more than 360° degrees are not appropriate for preschool and toddler age children. Trampolines, climbing ropes that are not secured at ends, animal figure swings, multiple occupancy swing, rope swing and swinging duel exercise rings and trapeze bars are not appropriate for any age.

Use Zone for Swings: Swings must have resilient surfacing under the equipment that is equivalent to the resilient surfacing required for climbing equipment mentioned above. Preschool children **should not use swings that have a pivot point greater than 8 feet in height**. Resilient surfacing should cover a distance of **twice the length of the pivot point to the ground surface measuring out in both directions of the swing**. There should only be two swings per bay.

Tire swings must have resilient surfacing that is **the length of the pivot point to the swing seat plus 6 feet**. When the tire is pulled toward the support structure, the distance from the top of the tire to the support structure should be at least 30 inches. *For other requirements for swings, please see page 38 of CPSC Document 325.

Requirements for Slides: Slides require the same resilient surfacing as climbing equipment with 6 feet of the resilient surfacing in all directions and an exit area between 6-8 feet. The fall zone for the exit must not overlap with any other equipment's fall zone.

Protrusion and Entanglement Hazards: A protrusion hazard is a component or piece of hardware that might be capable of impaling or cutting a child if a child should fall against the projection. Some protrusions are capable of catching strings or clothing worn around a child's neck. This type of entrapment could result in strangulation. **No protruding bolt ends, narrow gaps in metal or wood, open S hooks on swings, exposed hardware, etc.**

Entrapment Hazards: Children often enter openings feet first and attempt to slide through the opening. If the opening is not large enough to allowing the body to pass through the opening, the child can become entrapped at the head. Generally, there should be no openings that measure between **3 ½ - 9 inches**.

Standards and information for the Montana Playground Information sheet were derived from the Consumer Product Safety Council (CPSC Document 325) Handbook for Public Playground Safety. This sheet is not intended to be a complete list of all hazard types and providers should refer to "The Dirty Dozen" pamphlet, the full CPSC Handbook, the [All About ECERS-3](#), and [Caring for Our Children](#) Fourth Edition for more information.