

Playground Risk Management Policy

Introduction

This strategy has been prepared to formally recognise the maintenance and inspection regime of Hound Parish Council's play and leisure facilities and the assets within these facilities. The policy will outline the legal responsibilities of the authority and how the Parish Council will meet these responsibilities through a system of inspection, assessing risk and responses to faults and risks. Playgrounds by their very nature should provide a degree of risk and challenges to the users. The policy will therefore summarise the Parish Council's objectives in providing challenging play while identifying an acceptable degree of risk.

Legal Requirements

There is no specific legislation on play safety. However, the key legislation is the:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1992
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Hound Parish Council and their staff have a duty to take actions to ensure the safety of people at work and members of the public who may be affected by the facilities provided by the Local Authority. It is governed by the test of "reasonable practicability". In other words, it is reasonable to correct major hazards; it is unreasonable to spend considerable resources on minor faults where risk is negligible and potential injury very minor.

Industry Standards and Guidance

These standards and Safety Guidelines are not a legal requirement but are considered to be good professional working practice.

EN1176 – Playground Equipment

EN1176 is the European Standard which replaced the old British Standards. The standard is not retrospective and provides advice on design layout and the inspection of playground equipment. Contained within the guidance are the following key recommendations:

- That if the equipment is not safe, access by the public should be prevented
- The equipment must be inspected and maintained
- An inspection record should be maintained for 21 years

Civil Legislation

In the event of a serious accident, claims are based on negligence: that is, the department responsible for play took or failed to take some action which made the accident worse or more likely to happen than would otherwise have been the case. The defence will be based on Hound Parish Council's Risk Management Policy with evidence such as records of inspections and maintenance, compliance with the Standards and relevant risk assessments.

The policy will set out the methodology that the Parish Council will use in managing and maintaining the playgrounds within their control. The policy will take into account the authority's legal responsibilities and outline a method of inspections and maintenance given the resources available to the authority.

Balancing Risks and Benefits

The Parish Council will always try and ensure the following are offered:

- Natural elements
- Fabricated and natural materials and tools
- Challenging
- Free movement
- Stimulating
- Variety
- Play with Identity
- Varied social interaction
- Exploration
- Develop skills
- Youth disadvantaged (SEM)

Hound Parish Council will ensure these points are adhered to in the development of new and existing play provision. In providing these environments the Parish Council will manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks and hazards.

Playground Inspection Methodology

Hound Parish Council is responsible for 3 areas that will adhere to the guidance set out in this document. The areas include playgrounds, fitness equipment and a multi use games area (MUGA). The responsibility for the operational regular inspection of the play and leisure facilities in Hound will be carried out by our grounds team.

Currently the responsibility for litter picking and grounds maintenance of the playgrounds of the play and leisure facilities in Hound is conducted by the grounds team. The staff will repair/replace any obvious hazard or arrange for a contractor to conduct repair and make the area safe until complete.

This section of the strategy will identify the Parish Council's methodology in managing the authority's assets following:

- Inspections Frequency and Type
- Inspection Type Definitions
- Assessing the Level of Risk

- Summary of Risks

Inspection Frequency & Type

The table below details the frequency of inspections and the inspector responsible for carrying out the on-site inspections. The inspector and frequency rates are currently feasible given resources available to Hound Parish Council.

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION	INSPECTION TYPE	INSPECTOR
Daily	Visual	Grounds team
Weekly	Operational	Grounds team
Monthly	Operational	Shawyers
Annual	Annual Detailed	RoSPA (or other external organisation)
Bespoke	Reactive	RoSPA (or other external organisation)

All inspections will be carried out and the results safely stored in line with our Retention of Documents Policy.

The Parish Council will ensure all inspectors receive the appropriate training to carry out the inspections of play and leisure facilities.

Inspection Type – Definitions

Routine Visual Inspections – EN 1176-7.6.2a - LOOK & SEE

It includes the identification of obvious hazards resulting from use, weather and vandalism, broken parts or bottles, litter, graffiti, equipment misuse.

Through existing contract arrangements contractors working on behalf of the Parish Council will arrange the litter clearance and grounds maintenance in accordance with a performance quality standard. Obvious hazards as described above will be reported to the Parish Office. Visual inspections are not recorded in the same manner but if a defect is found, immediate action will be taken to resolve it by the grounds team.

Operational Inspection – EN1176-76.2b - POKE & PROD

Operational Inspections provide a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of all equipment and surfaces especially for wear.

It is recommended that inspections should be carried out every 1 – 3 months. Initially all areas will receive a monthly operational inspection. Frequency of Operational inspectors may alter to a period of no longer than 3 months in certain areas. In using resources better, the Parish Council may alter frequencies of the operational inspections and this decision will be dependent on the grading of the area which will consider factors such as popularity, profile and equipment type.

- Check repairs carried out by others; rust and rot; bearings.
- Cleanliness
- Equipment Ground Clearance
- Exposed Foundations
- Sharp Edges
- Missing Parts
- Excessive Wear (of moving parts)
- Structural Integrity

Inspectors will be trained to RPII Operational Inspector's level enabling them to perform an operational inspection.

Annual Main Inspection – EN1176-7.6.2c

These inspections will be carried out every 12 months, not exceeding 14 months.

The annual inspections are to be carried out by an independent inspector.

Operational and annual inspections, whether carried out by a Council employee or contractor working on behalf of the Council can be inspected and recorded using the same method and system.

Bespoke Inspections

These inspections can be carried out by the Clerk, our Health & Safety Officer and/or an independent inspector. The inspection method is carried out using the same inspection system as all other inspections carried out by in house and external contractors. Typically bespoke inspections are a consequence of an enquiry from a parishioner, an accident in a play facility, in response to an urgent request or to carry out a post installation inspection of new equipment. Bespoke inspections are also carried out as a method of verifying and checking existing inspections.

Accidents, Enquiries and Claims

The Parish Council will record all accidents and enquiries relating to the play areas and facilities within them. The details of the enquiry, complaint or accident will be recorded within the same system used for issuing and recording inspections. Recording incidents in this manner will enable the authority to illustrate a clear chain of information from the inspection, the associated risk, details of works and repairs carried out and any information related to an accident or enquiry. This information will enable the authority to defend itself against claims and also be an effective management tool for future improvements.

Hound's Priority Approach

The criteria used to prioritise the play areas will take into account the location of the facility, the play value of the equipment and space along with the popularity of the area. Therefore the resources (inspection regime, budget allocation and Section 106 project proposals) allocated to the management of play and leisure facilities will be indicative of the criteria used in prioritisation. The more popular and well used playgrounds will receive a higher frequency of inspection and a priority in regard to maintenance and repairs

Using techniques approved by Play England, the Parish Council will categorise and prioritise the play areas within the Authority's management into the following:

Destination

A larger space or facility which children and young people are willing to travel longer distances or travel independently. Also, where they can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wide range of play experiences.

Community

A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk with ease.

Door Step

A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children, can play with known adults.

Assessing Level of Risk

The level of risk will be assessed by the Council's Officer, contractor or independent inspector with sufficient knowledge. Inspectors will be qualified to carry out risk assessments in addition to the specific play inspection

Methodology

The risk assessment utilises the 5x5 methodology and risk is assigned as a product of probability and severity.

Risk Score = Probability x Severity

A final quantitative risk rating of immediate, high, medium or low is then obtained from an outcome matrix based upon the final score.

Risk Rating

Having obtained a risk score, the qualitative risk rating is obtained using the following matrix. Probability is a measure of the likelihood of an event happening. In managing play risk, the probability score will also take into consideration the location (is the area well used by children) and the popularity of individual pieces of equipment within that location.

These factors will combine to produce a score for the likelihood from injury from the hazard identified.

PROBABILITY	SEVERITY				
	1	2	3	4	5
1 (Rare)	1	2	3	4	5
2 (Unlikely)	2	4	6	8	10
3 (Possible)	3	6	9	12	15
4 (Likely)	4	8	12	16	20
5 (Certain)	5	10	15	20	25

Rating	Risk	Action
1-9	Low	Monitor situation, action required in the event of any deterioration or exceptional circumstances likely to affect risk rating e.g. review of risk assessment following an accident. Action will be required on some situations where indicated.
10-15	Medium	Monitor situation, action required as soon as practicable and within defined time frame, to reduce risk to lowest practicable level e.g. provision of suitable fencing and gates around play area.

16-24	High	Immediate action required to remove risk or reduce to its lowest reasonably practiced level e.g. replacement of severely worn swing chains.
25	Immediate	Immediate action required and access by the public must be prevented.

Severity Score	Severity of injury
1 Very Low	No injury likely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged or soiled clothing, minor bruising
2 Slight	Minor injury <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laceration or bruising requiring first aid only
3 Moderate	Injury requiring medical intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laceration requiring stitches • Sprain, fracture of small bones of hand or foot
4 High	Serious injury including hospitalisation for observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concussion • Fracture of long bones of leg/arm • Back/neck injuries • Fractured skull
5 Very High	Severe injury involving the potential for permanent disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amputation • Loss of sight • Spinal injury • Fatality

Summary of Risks: Acceptable Risks, Actions & Time Frames

Immediate	Action advised to be undertaken immediately and the operator or appropriate representative must be notified from the site by telephone.
High	May continue in use. Action required should be indicated in the inspection. Remedial action to be carried out within 3 months. Earlier intervention will be carried out if repairs are standard and there is no requirement to order specialised parts.
Moderate	May continue in use until the budget is available to undertake the necessary action and/or repairs to form a planned maintenance schedule.
Low	May continue in use, but should be monitored and may still require remedial action. The necessary action should be indicated in the inspection report where appropriate.