

Gloucester City Council

Environmental Health Factsheet

SAFETY IN PUBLIC HOUSE AND HOTEL GARDENS

Many proprietors of Hotels and Public Houses have long appreciated the commercial benefits of providing customer leisure facilities within the grounds of the establishment, particularly in the summer months. Unfortunately some proprietors fail to recognise that the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 and the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 apply as much to these outdoor pursuits as they do to the work activities themselves.

This factsheet gives practical advice on safety matters which must be considered in respect of the more common leisure facilities associated with catering establishments. Local authority Environmental Health Officers will be able to provide more specific advice in individual cases.

Children's Play Equipment

From national statistics it is possible to identify the main reasons for playground accidents. Management problems include poor equipment design or failure to comply with relevant standards; unsuitable equipment for the intended age group; incorrect installation and poor inspection and maintenance. Users also cause problems ... they may misuse equipment, wear unsuitable clothes or use equipment in poor weather conditions. Parents frequently fail to supervise their children. Managers must, to some extent, take into account foreseeable misuse when providing play equipment.

Providers of play equipment should:-

- Obtain professional design and layout advice.
- Ensure equipment complies with BS EN 1176 Playground Equipment.
- Assess the need for safety (i.e. - *impact absorbing*) surfacing under and around equipment. Loose fill materials such as bark and shingle or synthetic surfaces are suitable if they satisfy BS EN 1177 Impact Absorbing Playground Surfacing - Safety Requirements and Test Methods.
- Carry out post installation inspections on a regular programmed basis. Annual inspections should be carried out by an independent specialist.



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- Repair faults quickly and, if necessary, take equipment out of use in the meantime.
- Plan and budget for maintenance and replacement of equipment.

Bouncy Castles

A number of accidents have occurred involving "Bouncy Castles" and other inflatable bouncing devices. Many of these are due to a failure to supervise their use. Some typical examples of safety hazards and remedies are listed below:-

HAZARD	PRECAUTIONS
Blowing over or away of the whole structure	All anchorage points must be used.
Accidental spilling of users	Gym mats or similar (<i>at least 3 cm thick</i>) should be provided to cover hard surfaces next to open sides.
Injury caused to users by themselves Or others (<i>e.g. older children disregarding young ones</i>)	Supervise activities at all times (fix upper and lower age limits for users) Prohibit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bouncing on front apron • Climbing on walls • Rough horse play Ensure users remove footwear and any hard or sharp objects from their person.
Overcrowding or overloading	Fix maximum number of users.
Air loss due to blower failure, disconnection or power supply interruption	Fence off blower and protect electrical wiring.

If inflatable bouncing devices are provided for longer periods, the operator must also ensure the periodic examination, inspection and maintenance of the device.

Lighting

Artificial lighting of external areas must be provided to ensure that customers can move around safely during the hours of darkness if leisure facilities are to be used at night. It may be necessary to prevent the use of certain items of equipment, such as climbing frames if artificial lighting produces strong shadows. Depending on the nature of the hazards in the area it may be necessary to provide emergency lighting in case the normal installation fails.

Electrical Safety

Any socket outlets provided outdoors must be of a special design to protect them from water and damp atmospheres.

Electrical equipment used outdoors must be of a suitable design and should preferably be operated from a safety isolating transformer or connected through a residual current circuit breaker which will cut off the power if a dangerous fault develops. Lighting can often be supplied at extra-low voltage (12v or 25v).

Electrical cables must be suitably protected against environmental or mechanical damage and should be inaccessible to the public.

Beware of overhead electricity cables particularly when siting tall items of equipment or when using metal ladders or scaffold poles to erect facilities.

Special Events

Some events involving music, singing or dancing require a Public Entertainment Licence. You should apply to the District Council for a licence at least twenty-eight days prior to the event. However, any event which is likely to attract large numbers of people or which involves bonfires or fireworks must be carefully organised and controlled. It is advisable to notify the District Council and the emergency services even if a licence is not required. Consider the following:-

- All electrical systems (including portable equipment) must be regularly inspected and maintained by a competent person.
- Ensure that there is ample space to accommodate spectators and to provide appropriate separation from the display area. Use adequate strong barriers where necessary.
- Decide on the maximum safe number of spectators for the event and stick to it.
- Provide a sufficient number of responsible, well-briefed stewards who can be easily identified and make sure exits and entrances are well marked and free from obstruction.
- Prepare a drill for calling emergency services and make adequate provision for first aid.

Other Hazards

Where gardens are next to natural hazards such as streams, lakes, busy roads or steep embankments, consideration should be given to securely fencing off these hazards from areas where children play. Access could be provided through a self-closing gate which has a catch that children cannot reach.

Ornamental ponds should be fenced off or covered with strong mesh.

Glass breakages in beer gardens are inevitable and splinters of glass in grass present a particular hazard to young children who may be barefoot or crawl. Customers using the garden should, preferably, be served with plastic glasses, otherwise parents should be warned of the danger by suitable signs, grass should be kept short and breakages carefully picked up as soon as they occur.

Barbeque and 'Pig-Roasts'

Hot equipment and surfaces must be fenced off from the public and the fire should be supervised at all times. Hot ashes must be raked over and doused with water after the event.

Further Advice or Information

British Standard Publications are available from:-

HMSO, 33 Wine Street, Bristol. BS1 2BQ (Telephone 0272-264306)