

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Amendment No. 1
to
AS 4685.0:2017
Playground equipment and surfacing
Part 0: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation

REVISED TEXT

The 2017 edition of AS 4685.0 is amended as follows; the amendment(s) should be inserted in the appropriate place(s).

SUMMARY: This Amendment applies to the Foreword, Clauses 5.19 (new), 6.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.5, 8.4.

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Foreword

After first paragraph, *add* the following:

It is important to recognize the value to children of engaging with nature. The incorporation of natural materials as design elements in a playground can add significant play, aesthetic and environmental value.

Natural elements incorporated into playgrounds are inherently diverse and open-ended, and many offer the benefit that children can manipulate them for their own play purposes. Such nature-based play environments can help build creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills. Access to nature has been shown to improve children's psychological well-being and encourage stewardship of the environment.

Unlike manufactured products and materials, natural elements are not necessarily predictable. Natural elements encourage children to develop risk management skills as they negotiate natural environments, and build resilience through exposure to falls and minor injuries as they learn to adapt their behaviour to the playground setting.

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Clause 5.19 (new)

After Clause 5.18, *add* the following:

5.19 Outdoor play environment

A space intended for play which is exposed to the sky, weather and seasonal variations.

NOTE: This does not preclude provision for shade. An outdoor play environment cannot be fully enclosed or simulated.

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Clause 6.1

- 1 First paragraph, *delete* 'Playgrounds are typically provided in many settings, including—' and *replace* with:

Playgrounds are typically provided in many indoor and/or outdoor settings, including—

- 2 After last paragraph, *add* the following:

It should be recognized that a well-designed outdoor play environment provides opportunities to experience nature and weather conditions that cannot be replicated within the confines of a building.

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Clause 6.3.1

Delete list and *replace* with the following:

- (a) the needs of children or community;
 - (b) the needs of children in a SECS (Supervised Early Childhood Services) to directly access an outdoor play environment;
 - (c) the age range, size and ability level of the users;
 - (d) the degree of crowding; and
 - (e) the level and type of supervision.
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Clause 6.3.5

Delete text, including notes, and *replace* with the following:

Natural play elements incorporated into a playground are subject to the requirements of AS 4685 (series). Where the requirements of this Standard cannot be applied to natural elements incorporated into a playground, a risk benefit assessment shall be undertaken to determine the suitability of such elements.

Designers and operators should consider the specific context of each play setting in weighing up the risks and benefits associated with the use of natural materials.

NOTES:

- 1 The use of a risk benefit assessment does not allow the replacement of manufactured items with natural elements in an effort to avoid the requirements of the Standards.
 - 2 For example, it may not be practical or desirable to place barriers or handrails on a log or boulder. In this instance impact-attenuating surfacing, in accordance with AS 4422, should be provided in the impact area corresponding to the h_f . The impact area should be free of obstacles that could cause injury and hazardous situations, e.g. entrapment. Consideration should be given to preventing easy access to hazardous situations.
 - 3 The context is especially applicable to the management of loose elements in playgrounds. Playing with branches, pebbles and other loose elements offers significant benefit to children, and school and park managers should consider strategies to manage such activities rather than exclude them.
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