

Information Sheet Number 38

Cleaning of Balls, Ball Pools and Indoor Play Areas

Introduction

Annexe D of BS 8409, is the British Standard Code of practice for Indoor Play Areas. All Indoor Play Area operators are advised to make sure that they have a copy of the standard.

RoSPA recommends that all staff are trained in procedures for dealing with local soiling and relevant cleaning materials should be available in a secure storage location

General Areas-

- 1) PVC fabrics and surfaces should be washed down with detergent solution.
- 2) Slides and PVC surfaces intended to be slippery should also be washed with a detergent solution and sprayed with anti-static silicone based polish.
- 3) All areas should be kept dust and litter free. Regular cleaning of all parts (accessible or otherwise) of the area should be undertaken. Particular care should be taken to ensure that catering and adjacent areas are regularly cleaned and that food and drinks are not allowed into the main frame.

It is important that the silicone is applied sparingly and kept away from other surfaces where slipping would be a hazard also some polishes contain materials e.g. beeswax, which can attract dirt. Excessive silicone, or other polish, on slides can lead to excessive speeds with subsequent accidents. Where accidentally applied excess polish can be removed with White Spirit.

Ball Pools-

Operators should follow manufacturer's guidelines.

Main points include;

Local soiling -evacuate and close ball pool , remove and clean affected balls, routine cleaning should be undertaken when ball pool is closed, remove all balls and place in net bags, wash in water containing a detergent solution, immerse in a solution of sanitizer, drain and allow to air dry fully, clean base and sides and dry, inspect before replacing .

Unless prompt action is taken to deal with the soiling this can become widespread and require the prolonged closure and complete emptying of the ball pool.

A plastics bin or similar container placed over the balls may be used to isolate and remove them, protective clothing and gloves should be used and all punctured/damaged balls removed and all traces of detergent should be removed.

There are numerous companies who undertake ball pool cleaning.

Ball pools alone should have a maximum depth of 450mm in a toddler area and 600mm in a junior area to minimise the danger of accidents from concealment. Ball pools should not be entered directly from a slide. Balls should be a minimum diameter of 70mm to prevent choking, ball pool surfaces should have continuous level bases and slides that are easily cleanable (carpet not recommended).

There is no dedicated frequency of clean. This is down to manufacturer's instructions and a common sense approach by the operator. High use areas will require a greater frequency of cleaning

The provision of a clean "spare" set of balls means that shut down time due to ball cleaning can be kept to a minimum.