

This document is provided as guidance and is not a legal document. It does not override or replace the need to be familiar with rules. Current rules may be found on [the DLBC website](#).

Definitions

Stationary play equipment

Stationary play equipment includes play equipment and structures meant to stay in one location while in use. Examples of stationary play equipment include:

- Balance beams
- Climbing equipment
- Merry-go-rounds
- Seesaws or teeter totters
- Slides
- Swings
- Spring rockers

Throughout this document, stationary play equipment will simply be referred to as *play equipment*.

Designated play surface

A designated play surface is an elevated surface accessible to children meant for standing, walking, crawling, sitting, or climbing. Also, any accessible surface at least 2 inches in size with less than a 30 degree angle, regardless of its intended purpose, will be assessed as a designated play surface.

Designated play surfaces are referenced as a general indicator of how high off the ground a child can go while using a piece of play equipment. This reference is used to determine the type and depth of cushioning needed around a piece of equipment.

Use zone

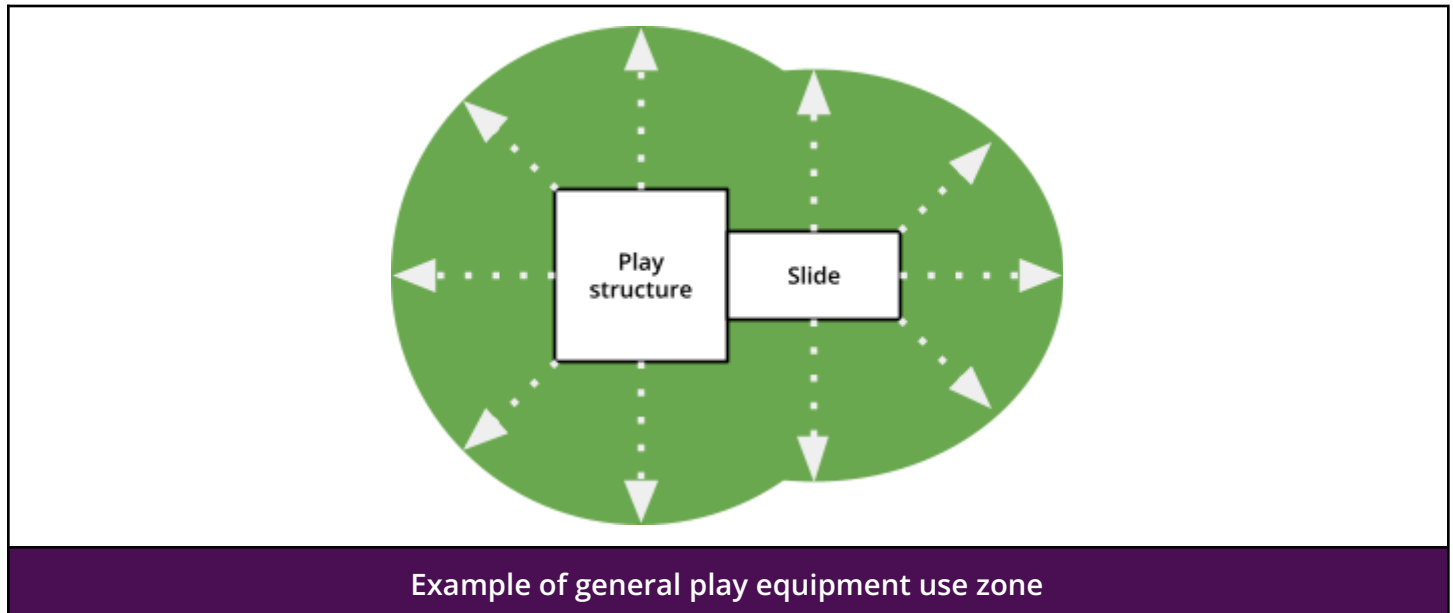
This is the area beneath and surrounding a piece of play equipment. This area must be designated for unrestricted movement (meaning it is kept free of other objects) and is where a child could be expected to land when exiting or falling off of a piece of equipment.

Use zones

General equipment

Play equipment with a designated play surface **18 inches or higher** is required to have a **3-foot use zone** extending from every outermost edge of the equipment.

Below is an example of a use zone surrounding a simple play structure with a slide attached. The arrows indicate where the use zone is measured from. The green area indicates the required use zone. Notice that the shape and size of a use zone will be based on the shape and size of the equipment.



Trampolines

Trampolines are required to have a use zone if they are accessible to children, regardless of whether the trampoline is above or in-ground, the size of the trampoline, or its intended use.

A trampoline may be considered inaccessible if at least one of the following conditions are met:

- The trampoline is enclosed behind a locked fence or a properly secured safety net that is at least 3-feet high.
- The jumping mat is removed from the trampoline.
- The trampoline is placed upside down.

Non-enclosed trampolines, or trampolines without a safety net, are required to have a **6-foot use zone**.

Enclosed trampolines, or trampolines with a properly installed safety net, are required to have a **3-foot use zone**.

Trampolines may not have ladders or other objects in the use zone. Trampolines must also have a shock absorbing pad completely covering the springs, hooks, and frame of the equipment.

Cushioning

General cushioning materials

Approved cushioning materials include:

- Sand
- Gravel
- Shredded rubber products
- Shredded wood products
- Unitary cushioning
- Grass
- Artificial grass
- Mats
- Carpet

Trampoline cushioning materials

Approved cushioning materials for trampolines include:

- Grass
- 6-inch deep cushioning (such as sand or wood chips)
- Other commercial cushioning (such as pour-in-place cushioning)

Other safety concerns

Trampoline use

Before a child is permitted to use a trampoline, their parents must provide written permission. Only children **5-12 years old** may be allowed to use a trampoline.

The following precautions must be taken the entire time a trampoline is in use:

- A caregiver is beside the trampoline supervising.
- Only 1 person at a time is allowed on the trampoline.
- Children are not allowed to do somersaults or flips.
- No one is permitted to go under the trampoline.

Equipment stability

Play equipment must be stable while in use by a child. This may require that equipment be placed on a firm, flat surface, or that the equipment be anchored into the ground to reduce the possibility of the equipment shifting while in use.

Entrapment hazards

An entrapment hazard is an opening or gap in a piece of play equipment where a child's body could fit through, but not their head. Specifically, an opening or gap is considered to be an entrapment hazard if it is greater than 3 ½ x 6 ¼ inches and less than 9 inches in diameter.

Strangulation hazards

Strangulation hazards include items in which children may become entangled, or on which their clothing could become caught. For play equipment, there are 3 specific types of strangulation hazards:

- Protruding bolt ends extending more than 2 threads beyond the face of the nut
- Hardware forming a hook or that leaves a gap between components (includes S-hooks)
- Ropes, cords, or chains attached to a structure and long enough to encircle a child's neck

If a piece of play equipment is intentionally designed to have a rope, cord, or chain long enough to encircle a child's neck, it will not be assessed as a strangulation hazard as long as the equipment is properly assembled and used according to manufacturer guidelines. A common example would be the use of a swing set.

Crush, shearing, or sharp edge hazards

A crush or shearing hazard is present when a piece of play equipment has two parts moving relative to each other, or one part that moves relative to an unmoving part, that come together in such a way that they could crush or sever a child's fingers, toes, or other body part.

Sharp edge hazards include anything that could cut or puncture a child's skin. This may include components or surfaces that have developed a sharp edge due to damage or disrepair.

Tripping hazards

Tripping hazards include any large object over which a child could trip including concrete footings, tree stumps, tree roots, or rocks.