



How to install our IPEMA certified PlayCushion™ for playground safety surfacing:

Installing PlayCushion™ mulch for safety surfacing:

Before installing wood mulch to cushion a playground surface, a system for containing the material must be in place. For example, an excavated pit or retaining wall around the perimeter of the playground will function efficiently in enclosing the mulch. The establishment of such a barrier will decrease loss of product due to regular use (displacement by children or wind, etc.) and from washing away easily during rain. In addition, PlayCushion™ mulch should *never* be installed over hard surfaces such as concrete or asphalt.

One of the most important factors in creating a safe playground surface is to install PlayCushion™ mulch at an adequate depth. Parker's PlayCushion™ mulch was tested (by the Detroit Testing Laboratory, Inc., phone number (586) 754-9000) at a depth of twelve inches and proved safe for a fall from playground equipment up to thirteen feet. When spreading mulch around playground equipment, one should attempt to spread as evenly as possible. Nonetheless, after spreading mulch over the entire play area, inspections should be made to ensure that no spaces exist with less than 14-16 inches of PlayCushion™. Generally, the entire playground surface should give some resistance while walking on it. However, if you believe that a particular area may be inadequately covered, measure the depth to make sure that the mulch is a minimum of 14 inches.

PlayCushion™ mulch should be spread at the required depth in all fall zones throughout the play area. Fall zones around play equipment are determined by the type of apparatus. Slides have a fall zone of four feet plus the height of the slide; in other words, one should spread 14-16 inches of PlayCushion™ mulch in the area of 4+x' from the exit of the slide. Swings have a fall zone of twice the height of the pivot. Thus, if a swing set is 12' tall, one should spread 14-16 of mulch over 24 feet in front and behind the set. In general, all other equipment requires a fall zone of at least six feet (covered in mulch) in all directions.

Maintenance of PlayCushion™ mulch on the playground:

PlayCushion™ that is in high-use areas may become compressed more quickly than in less trafficked areas. To reduce this, one may rake or till the PlayCushion™ mulch weekly, or as needed, to reduce compaction. Also, high use areas may be subjected to increased trash accumulation. Discarded items can be potential hazards, contributing to injuries such as cuts or punctures. Regular raking, cleaning, and inspection of the area will keep the PlayCushion™ mulch free of foreign dangers and enable it to perform its protective duty.

Since PlayCushion™ is an organic material, it is subject to becoming crushed after much use and decomposing. Therefore, additional PlayCushion™ mulch may be needed to be installed yearly or every six months. However, since Parker's PlayCushion™ mulch is made of cypress which is naturally decay and insect resistant, one should not have a problem with insect infestation or premature rotting of the material. Since wood mulch is a loose material that provides good drainage, one does not need to install an elaborate drainage system around the play area. Nevertheless, the area should not be designed as to allow pooling of excess water. Finally, although PlayCushion™ mulch usually lasts well on slopes, extreme rain may cause the loss of some material and necessitate the installation of more material.