



August 29, 2006

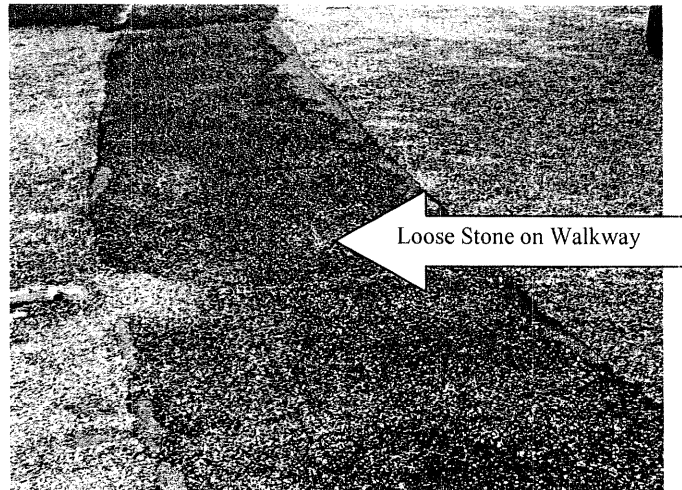
Ms. Karen Parsells, Principal
Marlborough School
23 School Street
Marlborough, New Hampshire 03455

Re: Playground Inspection

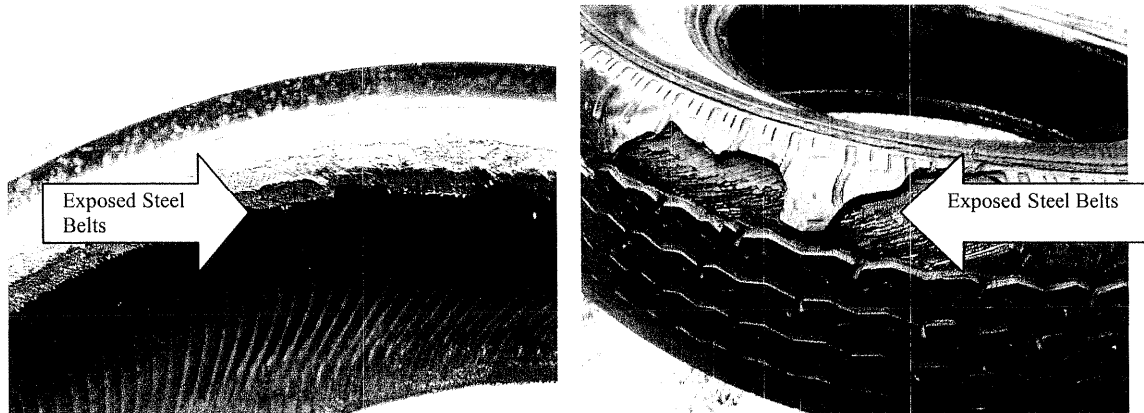
Dear Ms. Parsells:

As a follow up to my inspection of the playground at the Marlborough School, I have the following observations and recommendations. The inspection was conducted for compliance with the U.S. Consumer Safety Product Commission's (CPSC's) Handbook for Public Playground Safety (enclosed), and the American Society for Testing and Materials International's (ASTMI's) Playground Audit Guide.

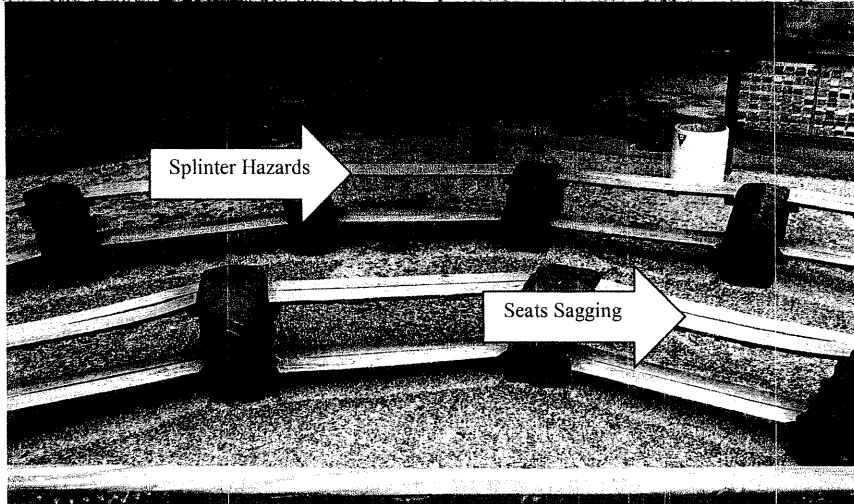
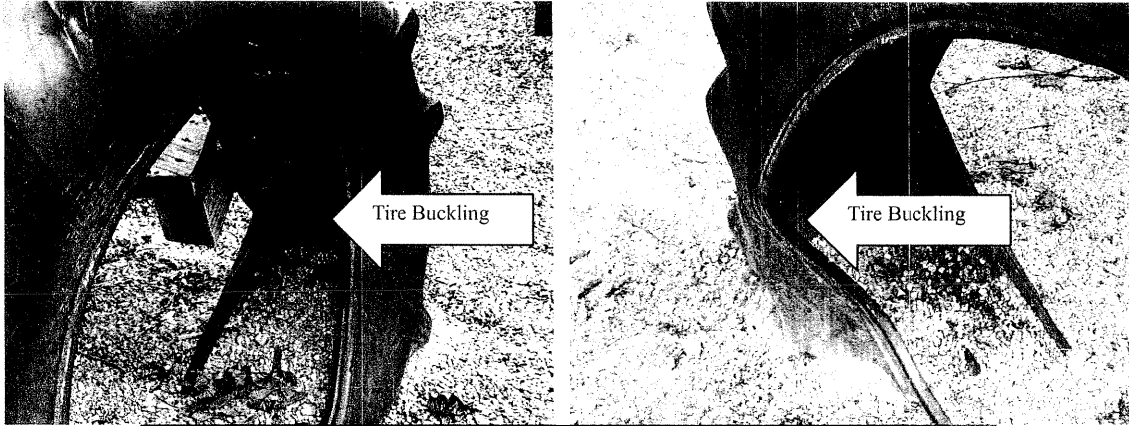
- ♦ The use zones of the equipment are inadequate for the following structures: The horizontal climber, overhead rings and balance beam, multi tire swing, regular swings, and the amphitheater. See the enclosed Handbook for Public Playground Safety for proper use zones for equipment.
- ♦ The surfacing material (coarse gravel or pea stone) is an adequate surfacing material, however, it is not of adequate depth throughout most of the playground. The bottom portion however is somewhat compacted and needs to be turned or tilled to maintain its impact absorbing properties. The use zones (minimum of 6 feet from each piece of equipment) should be the primary focus of this activity. Care should be taken to occasionally sweep the surfacing material off of the paved walkways to minimize the risk of a slip and fall due to the loose stone on the hard surface. See table 1 on page 5 of the enclosed Handbook for Public Playground Safety.



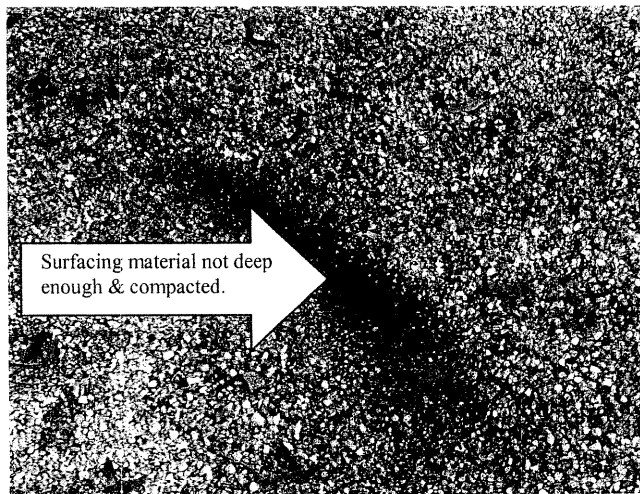
- ♦ The tire swing has several tires where steel belts are exposed creating a significant potential for a laceration. The tires should be replaced or removed immediately to minimize this risk. Additionally, the use zone around this piece of equipment is not adequate. This is one area where the surfacing material is not adequate in depth (6 inches), and there is not enough room around the swing (6 feet).



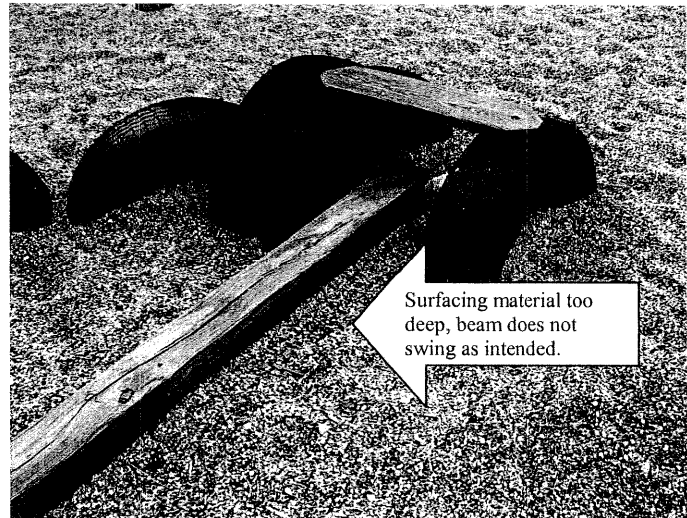
- ♦ The tires that support the amphitheater seating are weakening due to age, and are at risk of collapsing under the weight of several occupants. This is a concern since the tires are exposed underneath the seats, and a child could be inside a tire when it collapses. This structure should be removed or the tires replaced as soon as possible. There are also areas where the wood is splitting, and could break and there is a potential for splinters as well.



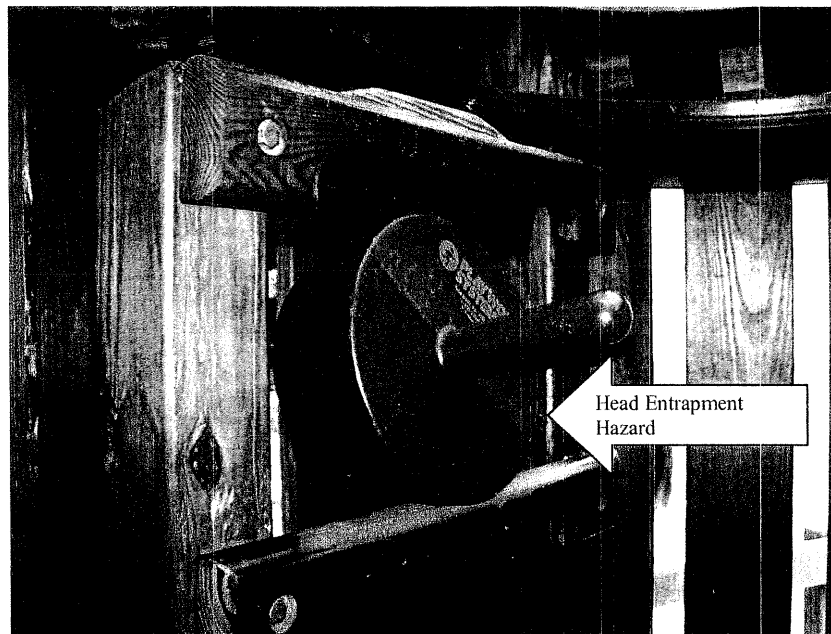
- ◆ Surfacing material needs to be added under the climbers to a depth of nine inches (9") based on the height of the climbers. The existing material should be tilled first, then additional material added to secure the proper depth.



- ♦ The swinging balance beam (ground element) has too much surfacing material under it causing it to not operate properly. It is recommended that the surfacing material be removed to a depth of 5 inches under the beam to allow for the element to swing as intended.

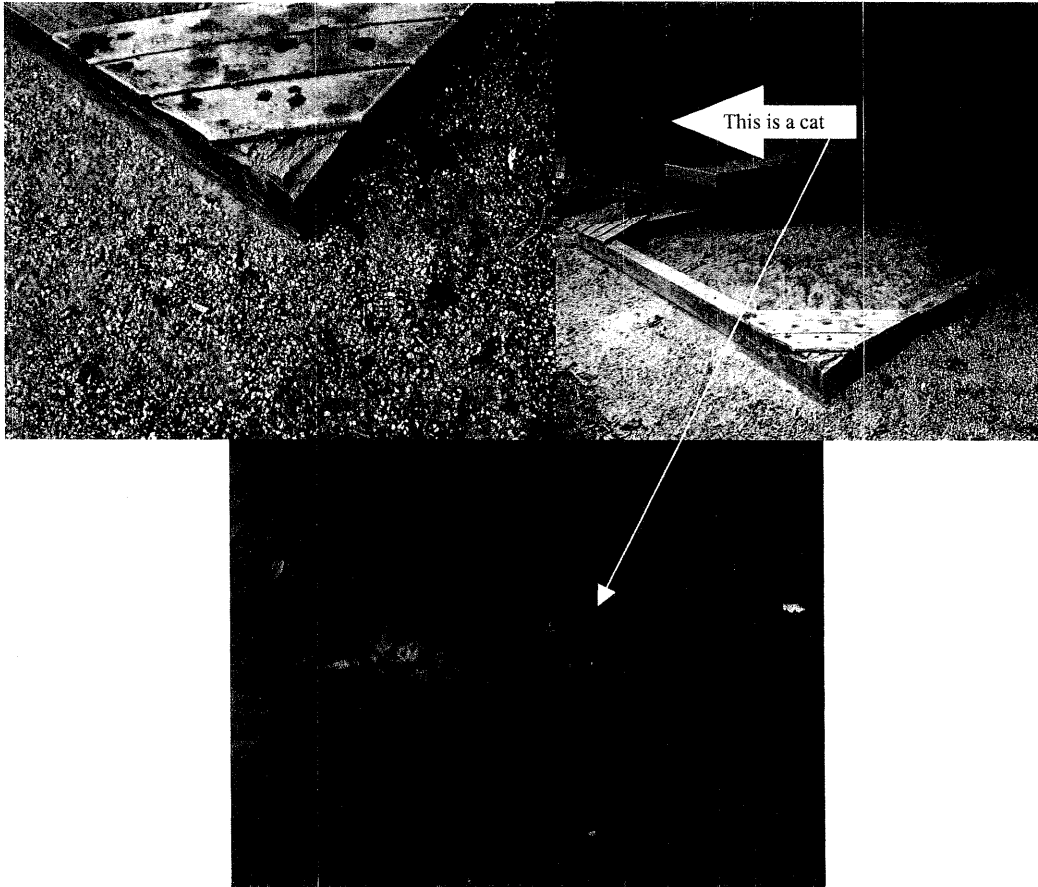


- ♦ The top step inside the castle climber is a potential head entrapment hazard due to the close spacing of the top two rungs of the ladder. It is recommended that the steps be separated to greater than nine inches (9") but not more than 15 inches (15") apart.

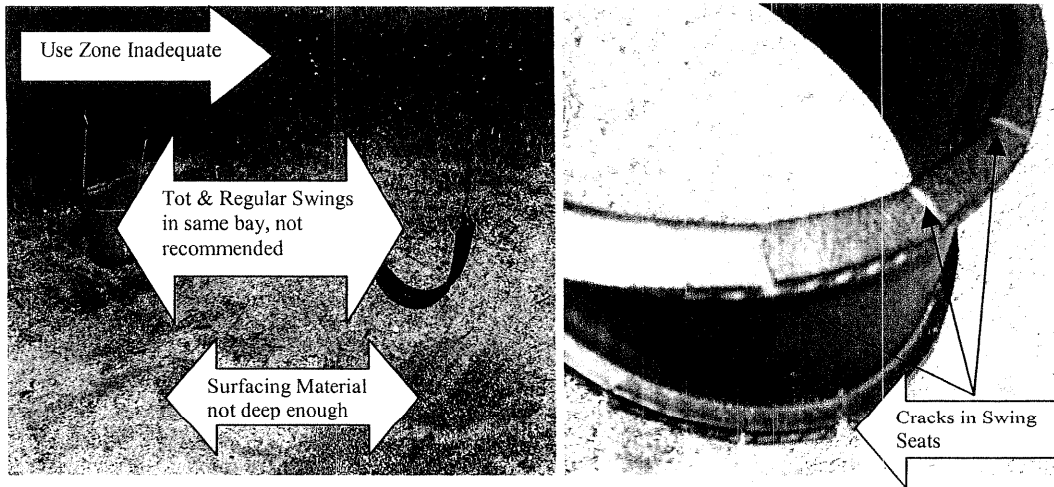


- ♦ Signage should be posted at the entrance to the playground to list the rules, the age appropriateness of the equipment, and supervision guidelines. It is recommended that the school attorney be contacted for suggestions on the wording of the signs.

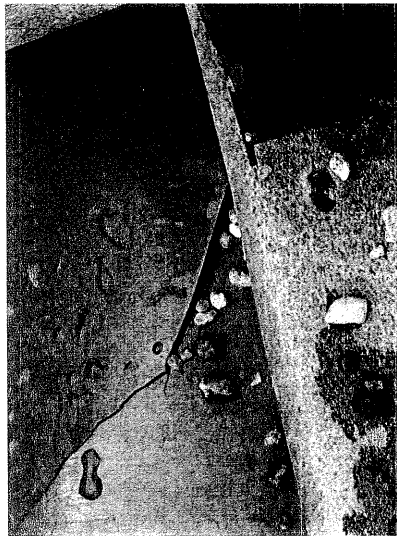
- ♦ The sandbox has several areas where splinters are a potential hazard. Additionally, sand boxes should be checked regularly for animal feces (raccoons, cats...), and removed as necessary. If this is a regular occurrence, consideration should be given to covering the sandbox when not in use.



- ♦ The use zone for the swings is inadequate and should be extended to include six feet out from each end of the swing set and 20 feet in front of and behind the swings based on the 10-foot height of the pivot point. Several swing seats are cracked and should be replaced as soon as possible, and the spacing is not compliant with ASTM/CPSC Guidelines (swings should be at least 24 inches apart, and 30 inches from the swing structure). Also, tot swings are not recommended in the same bay as regular swings.



- ♦ There is a crack in the plastic at the top of the slide that should be repaired immediately to prevent the risk of an entanglement hazard.



- ♦ Continued inspection and maintenance is recommended to maintain the good condition of the playground. Consulting the Handbook for Public Playground Safety can provide you with a Public Playground Inspection form, and information on maintaining compliance with ASTM/CPSC compliance.

The information reported herein was developed from inspector observation and/or other sources considered reliable. No warranty as to completeness or correctness is implied and no liability for loss or damage arising from use of this report is assumed. Every effort was made to identify unsafe conditions and procedures, however no claim is made to having observed all unsafe conditions.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 224-7447 X251, or mcomai@nhlgc.org.

Sincerely,

New Hampshire Local Government Center

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew P. Comai".

Matthew P. Comai
School Risk Management Representative

MPC/cml

cc: file