

Fully compliant  
with LATEST British and  
European Play Standards

**Melcourt**<sup>®</sup>

Proven • Safe • Sustainable

*Natural, safe*  
**PLAY SURFACE**  
*Solutions*

# Melcourt®

Proven • Safe • Sustainable

## 10 excellent reasons to choose Melcourt:

- ✓ Melcourt is widely recognised as the leading Loose Impact Absorbing Surfaces (LIAS) supplier to the play industry, having built up an enviable reputation for product development and innovation for over 25 years
- ✓ All Melcourt LIAS products are made from naturally occurring, environmentally friendly, sustainable and easily recyclable materials
- ✓ All Melcourt LIAS products conform to the examples of specifications as set out in BS EN 1176
- ✓ Each product has been independently tested in accordance with the requirements of BS EN 1176, for critical fall height assessment, as well as BS 4790 for fire resistance
- ✓ Melcourt offers the widest product choice available, in terms of product type, quality, performance and durability, as well as price and value for money
- ✓ Melcourt are active members of all relevant trade associations, including The Association of Play Industries and The British Association of Landscape Industries, and operate in accordance with each association's Code of Practice
- ✓ Melcourt's customer service and technical support is second to none. Our website is the most comprehensive of its type in the world
- ✓ All Melcourt products are available nationwide, ex-stock, in loose bulk or pre-packed load quantities, with prompt and reliable timed delivery to site
- ✓ Melcourt's unique network of appointed stockists are ready to service customers requirements up to 25m<sup>3</sup> of the most popular LIAS products
- ✓ The children love it!



## Melcourt play surface solutions at a glance



### Playbark® 10/50

The UK's leading L.I.A.S. bark brand developed by Melcourt and extensively used in outdoor play areas. Fully compliant and tested in accordance with the latest British and European Standards BS EN 1176, 1177 and BS 4790.



### Playbark® 8/25

As for Playbark® 10/50 but with a nominal particle size range of 8-25 mm. Most suitable to use in playgrounds used primarily by children under 6 years old. Fully compliant and tested in accordance with the latest British and European Standards BS EN 1176, 1177 and BS 4790.



### Playchips®

Carefully screened virgin British conifer and/or hardwood chips. Fully compliant and tested in accordance with the latest British and European Standards BS EN 1176, 1177 and BS 4790. Playchips® are also Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.



### Kushyfall®

Melcourt Kushyfall® is made from selected clean "fiberised" conifer chips. Fully compliant and tested in accordance with the latest British and European Standards BS EN 1176, 1177 and BS 4790. Kushyfall® is also Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.



### Softfall™

British conifer wood shavings, particularly useful when the play surface budget is extremely tight. Fully compliant and tested in accordance with the latest British and European Standards BS EN 1176, 1177 and BS 4790.



### Playsand™

A naturally occurring, British silica sand that has been washed and screened and consequently will not stain children's clothes when playing. Fully compliant and tested in accordance with the latest British and European Standards BS EN 1176 and 1177.

# A simple choice for happy children – and a happier planet

## Melcourt products:

- are totally natural
- are from renewable, sustainable sources
- are completely recyclable
- have NO landfill implications

When Melcourt play surfaces reach the end of their life you can recycle them. Other types of surfaces have to go to landfill.



■ Should children play on something that came out of the forest, or something that came out of a factory? More and more play providers are thinking about the environmental impact of the choices they make when planning play provision. The choices could hardly be more stark when it comes to the selection of impact absorbing material for use under and near the play equipment.

■ Melcourt LIAS materials are totally natural, they're gleaned from sustainable renewable forest sources, little extra carbon is generated in their grading and production, they require no special equipment to lay, and when they've reached the end of their useful life they can be spread on gardens or allotments to recycle back into the earth.

■ Wet pour rubber matting involves vast amounts of energy consumption in their processing.

At the end of its useful life, rubber matting like this can only be used for landfill.

**Looked at in this way, you can quickly see that play surfaces needn't cost the Earth.**

## How do play surface types compare?

	Melcourt Products	Rubber Surfaces
Natural material	✓	✗
Recyclable	✓	✗
Compostable	✓	✗
Free of landfill implications	✓	✗
Inexpensive to install	✓	✗
Environmentally friendly	✓	✗
Easily laid by amateur groups	✓	✗
Forest Stewardship Council certified	✓	✗

**Safer play surfaces like this needn't cost the Earth**

# Dispelling the myths about Loose Impact Absorbing Surfaces (L.I.A.S)...for good...

## Myth Number 1

**'L.I.A.S. surfaces are cheap to install, but very expensive to maintain, making them far more expensive than rubber tiles or wet-pour surfaces.'**

### NOT TRUE!

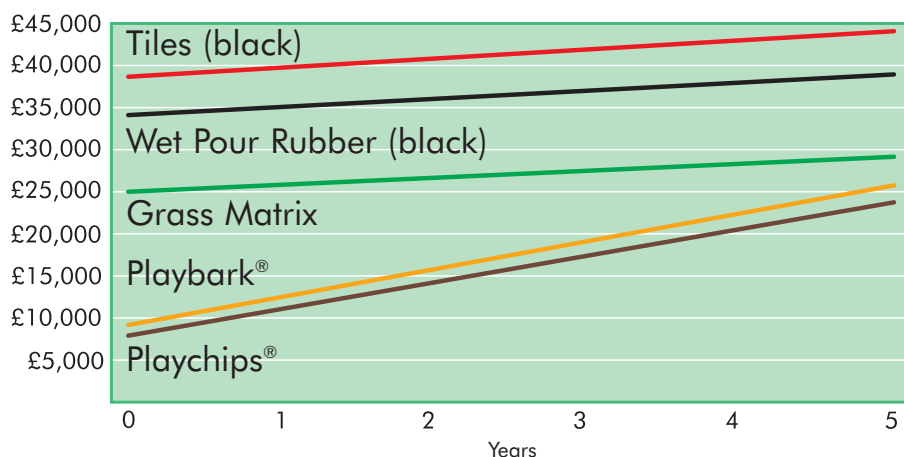
- The cost breakdown below was compiled for us by an independent API member, who is a well respected and experienced playground installation contractor. It is not our intention to prove that one surface type was cheaper than another. However, for many years, it has been said that because of the high maintenance cost of loose fill surface, their 'whole life cost' was far higher than say, wet pour rubber.
- If you would like to comment on these costings or have had other experiences, we would like to hear from you.

Surface Type	Capital Cost	Maintenance Costs over 5 years	Disposal/Landfill Costs	Total Full life Costs*
Loose Impact Absorbing Surfaces (L.I.A.S.)				
Playchips® – woodchips	£8,318	£15,800	£0	£24,118
Playbark® 10/50 – bark chips	£9,066	£16,800	£0	£25,866
Grass Matrix	£25,000	£0	£4,000	£29,000
Wet Pour Rubber (black)	£33,946	£1,000	£4,000	£38,946
Tiles (black)	£37,744	£3,000	£4,000	£44,744

\*Many playgrounds, particularly in rural areas, are maintained by unpaid volunteers. In these cases, the 'full life' costs of Loose Impact Surfaces, could be reduced by a further £13,800.

The Grass Matrix option includes a Maintenance Contract in the capital cost. Other suppliers of this type of product might charge extra for subsequent maintenance.

## The real costs over time: **L.I.A.S. delivers best value at every stage**



These calculations show that, on average, L.I.A.S. natural play surfaces cost **44% LESS** over the life of the product than wet-pour rubber or tiles – and have **NO** end-of-life landfill costs.

### Important points to consider:

- Melcourt Playchips® represent the lowest cost option over a 5 year period.
- If the Wet Pour Rubber or Tiles had been coloured, not black, this would have increased the capital costs by between 25 and 50%, for these surface types.
- Bark and wood chip products are more environmentally sustainable than any of the other surface types.
- Melcourt Playchips® are produced from graded UK conifer/hardwood chips and are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified. They are **not** made from recycled post consumer wood waste, i.e. shredded pallets, waste timber etc.

- There is a rightful place for each surface type. In carrying out this costing exercise, we have tried to highlight realistic capital, maintenance and disposal costs over a full life period.
- The area to be surfaced was 20 x 18 metres i.e. 360 square metres, using products to give a 2.40 metre critical fall height. Costs based on those at 1st June 2008, with all products and installation being in accordance with all relevant British and European Standards.
- The full details of these calculations – and guidance on the safety standards can be found on our website:

[www.melcourt.co.uk](http://www.melcourt.co.uk)

## Myth Number 2

***'Dogs and cats are more attracted to play areas with L.I.A.S. surfaces and will frequently foul them.'***

**Not true!**

- Dogs and cats will foul in many places including grassed areas, flower beds, pavements – even on rubber matting! It is the pet owner's responsibility to clear up after their pets.
- Dog proof fencing, with self-closing gates around the play area will also help.

## Myth Number 3

***'L.I.A.S. easily catches fire.'***

**Not true!**

- We have had our play surface products independently tested in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 4790.
- In all cases, the test results recorded that each product had a 'low' classification for ignition. (See our website for full details)



## Myth Number 4

***'Hypodermic needles and glass can easily be hidden in L.I.A.S. surfaces.'***

**Hang on a moment**

- This is an extremely unlikely occurrence – in fact such an incident has never been reported to us in over 25 years of supplying LIAS materials for childrens play!
- Of course, broken glass can easily be scattered over rubber surfaces. Needles can be stuck into rubber...need we say more?

## Myth Number 5

***'Rubber surfaces are safer than L.I.A.S.'***

**Not true!**

- LIAS surfaces comply to the same safety standards as rubber surfaces. In fact, children playing on rubber surfaces can easily get friction burns and long bone fractures. This is borne out by research carried out, particularly by Dr David Eager, in Australia where they know a thing or two about the outdoor life.
- The fact is that there are no UK statistics to prove that one surface type is safer than another.



**...turn over for more myths busted**

## Myth Number 6

***'A lot of work is needed to successfully maintain LIAS surfaces.'***

### **Not true**

- A simple tool such as a spring tine rake is about all that is required. Simply rake the dispersed material back into place particularly in high use areas.
- In contrast, repairing damage to wet pour surfaces requires specialist tools and training and is not easily carried out by inexperienced people.

## Myth Number 7

***'We hear that bark chips are a popular breeding ground for fleas.'***

### **Not true**

- Bark and wood chip are natural, organic materials. However, they are both very resilient and slow to break down, and offer very little food value to insects. This is precisely why it is very rare to find any form of insect life living and breeding in these surfaces – there is nothing there to interest or sustain them.

## Myth Number 8

***'LIAS causes injury to children by getting wood splinters stuck in them or particles being thrown into their eyes.'***

### **Oh really?**

- One of the great benefits of LIAS is that it provides additional play value and will give additional enjoyment over and above it being an impact absorbing surface.
- Of course bark is made from trees, but the amount of wood contained in the play surface should be carefully set out in the specification. Melcourt Playbark® 10/50 and 8/25 contain less than 2½% wood.
- In contrast, many customers choose Melcourt Playchip® precisely because of its higher wood content.
- The possibility of LIAS causing damage to children's eyes is really no greater than the danger of them getting sand in their eyes at the beach. Are we really suggesting that we should stop children playing in a way that comes naturally?
- Caution is needed when considering a LIAS made from 'post consumer wood waste'. These products are made from shredded pallets and can cause concern if it has not been properly screened for wood and glass contamination. Double check your source of supply, double check the specification.



**If you've had a different experience – let us know!**

# Helping you choose the right Melcourt products

Key	Melcourt Playbark® 10/50	Melcourt Playbark® 8/25	Melcourt Playchips®	Melcourt Kushyfall®	Melcourt Softfall™	Melcourt Playsand™
●● Most suitable						
● Also suitable, subject to local conditions						
✗ Not recommended for this application						
<b>User Type</b>						
Infants (under 6 years)	●	●●	●	●	●	●
Older children	●●	●	●●	●	●	●
Less able children	●●	●●	●	●	●	●
Wheelchair users	✗	●	●	●●	✗	✗
<b>Site Characteristics</b>						
Urban	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●●
Rural	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●●
Exposed	●●	●	●●	●	✗	●
Indoors	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Site Type</b>						
Playgrounds	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Sand pits	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	●●
Trim tracks	●●	●	●●	●	●	✗
Adventure trails	●●	●	●●	●	●	✗
<b>Equipment Type</b>						
Climbing frames	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Space nets	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Monkey Bars	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Swings	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Slides	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Roundabouts	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●
Springers	●●	●●	●●	●	●	✗
Cable runways	●●	●●	●●	●	●	✗



- ROSPA recommends the use of appropriate surfaces under and around playground equipment.
- Surfaces should be selected for their suitability for the type of equipment used, their durability and their maintenance requirements.
- The cost of maintaining loose-fill materials to the correct depths should be balanced against the repair costs of synthetic surfaces.

## Let's talk

- Whether you want a quotation or just advice we are pleased to help.
- Our full contact details are on the back page of this brochure or visit:

[www.melcourt.co.uk](http://www.melcourt.co.uk)

# Melcourt Technical Information Summary

Key	●●●●● Very good	●●●● Good	●●● Moderate	●● Poor	● Very Poor	Melcourt Playbark® 10/50	Melcourt Playbark® 8/25	Melcourt Playchips®	Melcourt Kushyfall®	Melcourt Sofffall™	Melcourt Playsand™
Main constituent						Pine Bark	Pine Bark	Wood	Wood	Wood	Silica sand
Origin						European	European	British	British	British	British
Nominal particle size range						10 – 50mm	8 – 25mm	5 – 40mm	3 – 30mm	1 – 100mm	0.25 – 0.45mm
Wood content						Less than 2.5%	Less than 2.5%	More than 85%	More than 95%	More than 70%	0%
Dust & fines						Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Less than 15%	Minimal
Typical Bulk Density Range						210 – 260 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	210 – 260 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	260 – 310 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	250 – 300 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	80 – 130 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	1450 – 1550 kg/m <sup>3</sup>
Quality range						Deluxe	Deluxe	Deluxe	Contract	Economy	Deluxe
Settlement factor						10%+	10%+	10%+	15%+	20%+	More than 5%
Durability						4 – 6 years	3 – 5 years	2 – 4 years	2 – 4 years	2 – 3 years	6 – 8 years
BS EN 1176 compliance						Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EN 1177 CFH tested at 100, 200, 250 & 300mm depths						Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BS 4790 Fire tested						Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100% resistant
FSC Certified						No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Porosity to rain		●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Resistance to rain erosion		●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Resistance to wind erosion		●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Resistance to fire		●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
Stability on slopes						Up to 30°	Up to 25°	Up to 20°	Up to 20°	Up to 20°	Up to 5°
Consistency of product		●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●

- Origin, Nominal particle size range, Wood Content**  
 The sizes and percentages are nominal. By the nature of these products, it is not practically possible to be exact and there might be a small variation.
- Quality range**  
 Melcourt products are classified in 'deluxe', 'contract' and 'economy' product ranges.
- Settlement factor**  
 This is the likely reduction in product depth, 30 days after installation.
- Durability**  
 These figures are taken from our practical experience. Life expectancy of all LIAS will depend on the original spreading depth and subsequent top-up and maintenance; together with the number of children using the play facility.
- BS EN 1176 Compliance**  
 These products comply with the examples of product specification, as set out in BS EN 1176 Table A.1.
- BS EN 1177**  
 These products have been independently tested by BSI Testing or The Centre for Sports Technology in accordance with the requirements of BS 1177 at depths of 300mm, 200mm, 250mm and 100mm.
- BS EN 4790**  
 These products have been independently tested by WIRA Testing Centre, for fire resistance, according to BS 4790.
- These products are pest, disease and weed free, and have not been treated with methyl-bromide or any additive, colourants or dye.



Melcourt Industries Ltd • Boldridge Brake • Long Newnton • Tetbury • Gloucestershire GL8 8RT

Tel: +44 (0) 1666 502711 • Fax: +44 (0) 1666 504398

Email: mail@melcourt.co.uk • www.melcourt.co.uk



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