

Common Areas for Concern

Vandalism

Unfortunately vandalism is on the increase throughout the UK and is not particularly targeted at the destruction of play facilities.

Common problems experienced include malicious damage to play equipment, safety fences and play surfaces.

Suitable patrolling of parks and vigilance by users are found to be the most successful ways of reducing this problem.

It is extremely difficult to make all play facilities vandal proof.

Tiles and wet pour are notoriously attractive to vandals and are extremely expensive to repair after such damage. Melcourt LIAS are the closest that is possible to get to vandal proof surfaces, and are comparatively inexpensive to reinstate.

Dangerous Litter

Items such as broken bottles, sharp edges on cans, can be a problem to varying degrees on all play ground impact absorbing surfaces.

Choice of impact absorbing surface has little effect on reducing their occurrence. However, a child falling on a broken bottle or a rubber tile or wet pour surface is likely to suffer deeper laceration than during an equivalent fall on Melcourt Playbark® LIAS for example. This is because the impact absorbency of bark is much greater than rubber or other synthetic surfaces and the broken glass will be pressed into the LIAS, rather than the child.

Adequate provision and regular emptying of litter bins help to reduce these problems.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the play provider has a legal responsibility to properly inspect play areas and carry out whatever maintenance and cleansing is required.

Stones

Very, very occasionally, a minute quantity of small stones might be present in our LIAS products.

Although we have tight raw material input specifications and ongoing quality control procedures, for various reasons, a few small stones become present which are difficult to detect or remove.

If on one of these rare and infrequent occasions, your consignment contains a few isolated small stones and if these are considered to be a hazard, they should be physically removed by hand, after installation of the LIAS product.

Fire

During 1995-96 and in 1999, Melcourt had all of the combustible products in their LIAS range, excluding the Melcourt Playsand brand, independently tested by WIRA Testing Centre, Leeds.

Fire testing was carried out in accordance with the requirements of BS 4790:1987 "Determination of the Effects of a Small Source of Ignition on Textile Floor Coverings, Hot Metal Nut Method". The fire test methods set out in BS 4790:1987, are in accordance to fulfil the fire test requirements of BS EN 1176.

The test results in accordance with BS 4790:1987, found that all Melcourt LIAS products tested had a "low" classification for the radius of effects of ignition, i.e. up to 35 mm.

Playground fires are almost always the result of deliberate vandalism, often with substantial parts of the play equipment being destroyed too.

Melcourt LIAS products have not been pre-treated with a fire retarding agent.

Wood Shards

Melcourt's loose impact surfaces, are made from natural materials.

During the manufacturing and screening process a very small proportion of larger pieces of wood, referred to as 'wood shards', may fall through the screens and be included in the finished product.

If these wood shards are considered to be a hazard, they can be physically removed, by hand, once the surface has been installed.

Continued

Common Areas for Concern (Continued)

Fungus Growth

The materials used to manufacture Melcourt LIAS products are natural, organic and unadulterated with any chemicals. Under some circumstances, typically in the damp, warm months of autumn, they can support the growth of toadstools and other fungi. We have never had any reported instances of fungi known to be harmful to either human, plant or animal, and in over two decades have never received a single notification of any harm caused by the products from such causes

Under normal circumstances any fungal growth generally disappears when the weather changes, but if considered necessary, it can be physically removed from the site.

Animal Fouling

The possibility of fouling by cats and dogs is often given as a drawback to installing loose fill surfaces. However, there is little evidence that any one surface, other than grass, is more susceptible to this nuisance than others. Indeed animals generally do not like large expanses of loose impact absorbing surfaces and dogs especially dislike the larger particle size surfaces because of the shifting nature of the material, together with it being an irritant when it gets between their paws.

As a requirement of Part 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1995, play providers are required to ensure that animal fouling is cleared up as soon as is practicably possible.

The National Playing Fields Association has recently introduced new guidelines on the issues of animals in public parks. RoSPA also has a leaflet.

How Long Will the LIAS Last?

The effective serviceable life of LIAS will depend on the particular type of LIAS, the quality of installation and aftercare, the type of play equipment on the site and the number of children using the facility.

LIAS life expectancy is between 2-8 years. Refer to the 'Melcourt Product Specification and Performance Guide', item 8, for more specific details.



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