

# RISK SIMPLIFIED

## RESOURCES

[ASTM Soccer Goal Safety](#)

[California Department of Pesticide Regulation - Managing Pests](#)

[Consumer Product Safety Commission--Moveable Soccer Goals](#)

## QUESTIONS

[Contact PRISM Risk Control](#)

Or call 916.850.7300

## Preparing for Outdoor Activities

By Scarlett Sadler

Any time schools are beginning preparation for outdoor activities, there are a few basic risk control principles to keep in mind. Outdoor activities can take place in various locations of a school site; however the most common is on outdoor athletic fields. Following the winter months all outdoor athletic facilities should be thoroughly inspected to ensure that staff, students and visitors avoid injuries.

Areas to inspect include, but are not limited to:



### Playing Surfaces

- Walk fields and evaluate their condition. Look for uneven surfaces, holes, mounds of dirt, or standing water.
- Fill uneven areas and use a heavy roller to smooth out surfaces.
- Holes or mounds of dirt could indicate that you have pests such as moles or gophers. According to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), "the sooner you detect the presence of gophers and take action, the more successful you will be in controlling them." Monitor fields weekly and take note of active mounds.
- Evaluate field conditions for weeds. Maintain healthy turf by aerating and overseeding. Reduce white clover and other herbaceous weeds which are preferred food for gophers.

- Identify areas where gophers are moving into fields and install exclusion fencing along fence lines, at least 24" deep and 18" above the level of the soil.
- If you see standing water or if there is an indication of flooding, inspect all irrigation heads for damage or leaks. Depending on the type of soil that is used in your fields you may need to aerate for proper drainage.

### Fencing

- If your fields are fenced ensure that all fencing is secure and in good condition.
- Chain link fence panels should be inspected for stability and damage to edges, mesh, and posts.
- If there is any damage to any part of the fence ensure that access is limited until the fence can be repaired or replaced as needed.

## Bleachers

- Inspect bleachers for structural stability, smooth seating surfaces, and intact guardrails and handrails.
- Bleacher structures should be inspected for missing or damaged hardware as well as intact ground anchoring.
- Compromised structures could lead to bleachers tipping over or collapsing. Inspect all nuts, bolts and welded joints especially on the frame and on the bracing of the bleachers.
- When inspecting seating surfaces look for dangerous protrusions, such as nails, splinters, and bolts, if any of these items are found they should be eliminated.
- All handrails and guardrails should be securely attached to the base and provide adequate protection from falling on the sides and rear of the bleachers.
- Inspect all stairs and walking surfaces to ensure there are no trip or fall hazards.

## Goals and Goal Posts

- Goals can be set up as a permanent fixture however goal nets and posts need routine maintenance to ensure they are in good condition.
- Some facilities may also use moveable goals so that the fields can be used for other purposes when the goals are removed. If you are using

moveable goals ensure that the goals are securely anchored during use, this can be done with sandbags, stakes or auger anchors. Moveable goals should be used on level (flat) fields.

## Transition Areas

- While you may have an activity occurring on one field, visitors, students, and staff often access all areas of the campus.
- Transitions from a sidewalk to a grassy area or from one field to another should be inspected for uneven walkways and surfaces.
- If you identify areas of concern, you should mark the area and call out the transition to reduce the likelihood of a trip or fall.

## Walking Paths

- Inspect all sidewalks and walking paths to ensure they are free from obstruction, cracks and undermining holes that could cause tripping hazards.
- You should also inspect the grounds for human made cut-through paths that have been created by heavy foot traffic as a short cut from one area to another.
- Human made cut-through paths are often unmaintained and present tripping hazards for those who use them. These paths should be addressed by the legitimizing the cut-

through either by placement of a sidewalk or designated paths or eliminating the cut-through.

## Lighting

- Inspect all field lighting and ensure lights are in working and operational order.
- Lighting should adequately light all playing fields and walking paths.



## Best Practice

Moving forward, best practice would be to set up a Field Management Schedule to ensure that these concerns as well as any others do not continue to be an issue year around. A little bit of preventative maintenance can go a long way. We hope these tips will help ensure your outdoor athletic fields are safe for all students, staff and visitors.

For additional details or assistance, please [contact](#) PRISM Risk Control.