

Fall Zones



Playground injuries most frequently occur when a child falls from play equipment onto a hard surface. Providing tested playground surfacing and reducing the height of equipment will help to reduce the severity of injuries.

Tested playground surfacing is required under and surrounding play equipment with fall heights greater than 500mm above ground level. These surfaces must have proof of testing in accordance with AS/NZS 4422:1996 .

Fall Zones required by AS 4685:2004

AS 4685:2004 presents a graded system of fall zones for specific free height of fall, for playground equipment. The extent of the fall zone is measured from a point directly below the elevated part of the equipment where the equipment measures 500mm or more above surface level.

The required fall zone varies depending on specific equipment e.g. swings; and the setting in which the equipment is used e.g. supervised early childhood settings or schools and public settings.

When purchasing new equipment the fall zone can be determined by the manufacturer in accordance with AS 4685:2004. Request and retain *written* confirmation of this from the manufacturer to eliminate potential issues with playground inspections.

Varying fall zones apply for each other type of moving equipment such as swings, rocking equipment (e.g. spring rockers, see saws), runways (e.g. flying foxes) and carousels. *Kidsafe NSW* is available to discuss the fall zone and surfacing requirements detailed in the Australian Standards for different items. Note: the fall zone for swings and carousels may not overlap with fall zones for other equipment items.

Fall Zones for Swings

AS 4685:2004 allows for a reduction in the amount of certified surfacing required for swings that are self aligning. Contact *Kidsafe NSW* for further information.

Fall Zones for Runways

A minimum 2000mm (1500mm for early childhood settings) fall zone shall be provided to each lateral side of the runway cable. In addition, a minimum 2000mm fall zone is required beyond the end of the maximum swinging position of the grip or seat.

Fall Zones for Rocking Equipment

A minimum fall zone of 1500mm is required surrounding the equipment. 2000mm fall zone is required between two pieces of rocking equipment.

Fall Zones for Carousels

A free space of 2000mm is required surrounding the carousel.

Fall Zones for Slides

Fall zones are required to be provided surrounding slides elevated more than 500mm above playing surface in accordance with AS 4685:2004. In addition, a 2000mm run out section fall zone filled with certified surfacing (1m rating) is required to be provided from the end of the slide.

Fall Zones for Mobile Equipment

Kidsafe NSW recommends that a minimum fall zone of 2500mm (1900mm early childhood settings) be provided surrounding mobile equipment items measuring more than 500mm above playing surface. Refer to *Kidsafe NSW* fact sheet titled *Non-Fixed or Mobile Equipment*.