

Press release

DEKRA: Not all playgrounds are well maintained

Be Vigilant When Playing and Climbing

- Ensure play area has effective fall protection
- Remove bicycle helmets before playing
- Exercise caution if equipment is visibly damaged

The warmer weather attracts greater numbers of children to playgrounds. In a safe environment, they are free to satisfy their urge to move around and experience their environment in a playful way. But not all playgrounds are sufficiently maintained to ensure risk-free playing and climbing. As a result, it is advisable to look out for any abnormalities during a visit, say DEKRA playground experts.

Wherever children move around, injuries and accidents invariably occur. According to a representative study by the Austrian Road Safety Board (KFV) and the German Foundation for Safety in Sports (SSiS), 28 percent of respondents would like to see more action taken to prevent accidents at playgrounds.

Falling from equipment is the most common cause of accidents

A report by the Center for Research on Child Accidents at University Hospital in Graz, Austria, views the condition of playgrounds as an important part of accident prevention. This applies in particular to the shock-absorbent fall protection materials such as sand, gravel, and bark chippings, and the impact surfacing, which must be kept free of hard objects. This is because the report cites falls from play equipment as the most common cause of accidents. Falling from climbing equipment is common, as is falling from or being hit by swings.

Safety standards not always met

In the experience of DEKRA playground inspectors, dangers can also arise from deficiencies in the technical and structural safety of playgrounds. Wear and tear, inadequate inspection, and lack of maintenance, in particular, but also vandalism and the effects of the weather can contribute to equipment or installations no longer meeting the applicable safety standards.

“We recommend that parents and caregivers keep their eyes open after the winter and spring months and pay attention to the condition of the area and equipment,” says Romuald Barysch, DEKRA’s specialist responsible for play, sport, and leisure facilities.

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Beware of loose parts

The experts frequently notice unsound wooden beams and components that have become loose. "Caution is also always advised when individual parts are missing from equipment or there is visible damage," explains Barysch. Missing parts can create gaps in which children risk having their heads, bodies, or extremities caught.

Do not place scooters or bicycles under climbing equipment

Care should also be taken to avoid placing objects such as scooters or bicycles in areas under playground and climbing equipment where children could fall and injure themselves. If children leave their cycling helmets on, this creates a risk that they may get caught on climbing equipment. The same thing can also happen with scarves and loose cords on clothing.

Anyone who notices any deficiencies should contact the operator, whose contact details should be displayed near the playground entrance.

About DEKRA

DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for almost 100 years. Founded in 1925 in Berlin as Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein e.V., it is today one of the world's leading expert organizations. DEKRA SE is a subsidiary of DEKRA e.V. and manages the Group's operating business. In 2022, DEKRA generated sales totaling nearly EUR 3.8 billion. The company currently employs almost 49,000 people in approximately 60 countries on five continents. With qualified and independent expert services, they provide safety on the road, at work and at home. These services range from vehicle inspection and expert appraisals to claims services, industrial and building inspections, advisory and training services, testing and certification of products and systems, also in the digital world, as well as temporary work. The vision for the company's 100th birthday in 2025 is that DEKRA will be the global partner for a safe, secure, and sustainable world. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now ranking in the top one percent of sustainable businesses.