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**BULLETIN: USE OF ENGINEERED WOOD FIBER (EWF)  
AT PLAY AREAS**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Bulletin is to clarify the maintenance of engineered wood fiber at play areas for accessibility.

**Discussion:** Surfaces that comply with ADA Standards for Accessible Design Section 4.5.1 and California Building Code Section 1124B.1 demonstrate accessibility compliance. However, DSA continues to receive complaints regarding the lack of maintenance with regard to the use of EWF products at play areas.

EWF surfaces must be inspected and maintained regularly to ensure continued accessibility compliance because of surface displacement due to user activity or looseness due to moisture. Wear areas should be frequently raked level and maintained at the proper system design depth. Wear mats installed under swings, slide exits, and poles help to prevent excessive wear under these areas. According to usage, the area will also need to be topped off with new product periodically. Additionally, the use of certain binder systems has been shown to improve surface stabilization. See <http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/fplgtr/fplgtr135.pdf>.

When selecting play area surfacing, ASTM F1951-99 *Standard Specification for Determination of Accessibility of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment* is a recommended standard which assesses the accessibility of a surface by measuring the work an individual must exert to propel a wheelchair across the surface. Some engineered wood fiber products have been tested and meet the ASTM F1951-99 standard, and others have not. The fact that a specific product has been tested and meets the ASTM F1951-99 standard does not necessarily mean that all other similar products will meet the standard. When selecting ground surfaces, designers and operators should request information about compliance with the ASTM F1951-99 standard.

Those who choose to select EWF products for play area surfacing should be aware that such selection will affect the frequency and overall cost of maintenance. In some cases, the expense of installing a higher priced surfacing that requires less maintenance could be less than the expense of installing a lower priced surfacing that requires more maintenance.