

AS 4685:2014 Playground Equipment and Surfacing Main Changes to the Standard



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The **Kidsafe NSW Playground Advisory Unit** has developed this information sheet to highlight the main changes to the Standard.

Australia's new Standard for playground equipment is based on the European Standard EN 1176. The new Standard takes account of specific Australian safety and design requirements relating to treatment of timber, UV factors, use of moveable equipment and height restrictions for upper body equipment. It provides playground owners and designers greater design flexibility and equipment choices.

The Australian Standard aims to improve both safety and fun through thoughtful design and good risk management.

Kidsafe NSW Playground Advisory Unit encourages the development of safe, creative play environments that meet Australian Standards. We work with playground owners and designers who want the best quality and safety outcomes for children.

The main changes are:

New Definitions

- supervised early childhood services (SECS)
- moveable play equipment
- upper body equipment
- easily accessible equipment
- steep play element



Change to Terminology

- Impact area—previously known as the fall zone.

Raised Minimal Fall Height

- Playground equipment that measures 0.6m (previously 0.5m) or more above ground level requires a falling space and impact area.

Increased Fall Heights

The maximum fall height for playground equipment:

- All Age settings (schools and public playgrounds) 3m (previously 2.5m)
- SECS 1.8m (previously 1.5m)

This is measured from the playing surface to the intended point of body support e.g. foot, hand, or seated position.

Reduced Falling Space/Impact Area

For static equipment items with platforms 0.6–1.5m above ground, the falling space/impact area is 1.5m. AS 4685:2014 presents a graded system of falling space/ impact area for fall heights of more than 1.5m.

- A falling space/impact area of 2.5m is required for the maximum 3m platform height in all age settings.
- A falling space/impact area of 1.7m is required for the maximum 1.8m platform height in SECS.
- Falling space/impact area for rocking equipment Types 1-4 has been reduced to 1m.

Changes to Upper Body Equipment for SECS

- Raised level of hand support to 1.8m (previously 1.5m) for equipment such as monkey bars and track rides .

Inclusion of Free Height of Fall (FHoF) for Climbing

When full body support is a combination of feet/legs and hands, e.g. climbing ropes and sliding poles, maximum foot support is 3m to surface below and maximum hand support is 4m to the surface below (FHoF measured from maximum hand support less 1m).



child safety is no accident



Reduced Height of Guardrails and Barriers

Guardrails measure between 600-850mm (previously 650-750mm) from the surface of the platform, stairs or ramp.

Barriers measure at least 700mm (previously 900mm) from the surface of the platform, stairs or ramp.



Changes to Entrapment Testing

- Additional small head probe "E" for bound head and neck entrapment testing
- Additional ranges introduced for partially bound head and neck entrapment testing
- Height of testing for finger entrapment hazards reduced to 1m above ground level (previously 1.2m)

Restricted Use of Treated Timber

CCA and creosote treated timber can no longer be used for above or in ground construction of playground items including equipment, fencing, garden walls, park furniture, picnic tables, exterior seating etc.



Inclusion of Equipment Types

Swing

- *Type 4 Contact Swing* a group of swings suspended from cross beams arranged around a central axis.



Slides

- *Type 1 Slide* short run-out section with long impact area
- *Type 2 Slide* long run-out section with short impact area

Carousel

- *Type C Spinning Mushroom/ Hanging Glide* where the user station is rigid or flexible



Rocking equipment

- *Type 5 Sweeping Seesaw* multi-directional rocking item where both vertical and horizontal movement takes place
- *Type 6 Overhead Single Axis Seesaw* equipment item with a single overhead rocking axis, where the user stations are flexibly suspended below to provide an additional limited swinging motion



Inclusion of Moveable Equipment

Moveable equipment includes items such as trestles and attachments, portable forts and climbing apparatus.



The maximum fall height for moveable equipment is 1.5m (at the highest foot support and / or platform).

A minimal falling space and impact area of 1.5m is required for equipment items that measure 600mm or more above ground level.