

Slides



Slides are one of the most popular play equipment items in a playspace. Slides are enjoyable for users of all ages. Slides allow children to an opportunity to play, promote balance, coordination and physical activity. Slides help to strengthen the torso, arms and shoulders and are great for children's brain development.

Types of slides

Slides come in a variety of types such as straight, wavy, or spiral descent either by means of an open slide chute or a tube. Slides can be either free-standing, part of a composite structure, or built on a natural or constructed slope (embankment or mound slide).

Materials

Avoid using exposed metals on the platforms, chutes, and steps. When exposed to direct sunlight the metal may reach temperatures high enough to cause serious contact burn injuries in a matter of seconds. Provide shade for metal slides or use other materials that may reduce the surface temperature such as plastic or fibreglass.

Access

Access to a free-standing slide is usually by a ladder with rungs, or a stairway with steps. Slides may also be part of a composite play structure, so children will gain access from other parts of the structure. A platform should be provided to assist the transition from standing to sitting at the entrance to the slide. Mound or embankment slides may use the ground for access however the installation of a platform or solid surfacing at the entrance to the slide is recommended to assist with wear and erosion control.

Australian Standard for Slides

AS 4685.3 Playground equipment – Particular safety requirements and test methods for slides specifies particular safety requirements to minimise the risk of injury to children when using slides. It is recommended that when purchasing a slide, the slide and components conform with this Standard.

Requirements of AS4685:

- Slides should not have any spaces or gaps that could trap cords, clothing, hair and fingers between the platform and the slide chute or in any joins in the slide chute.
- The provision of a crossbar above the entrance of slides measuring more than 1000mm above playing surface. Crossbars are required to be positioned 600mm – 900mm above the starting section of the slide.
- A free space of 1000mm to either side of the centre of the slide (or centre of ride down on double slide).
- Different coloured layers of gel coat in the sliding surface to identify excessive wear before users are exposed to glass fibres.



Falling Space and Impact Area

Falling space and impact areas are required surrounding slides elevated more than 600mm above the playing surface to conform with AS 4685.

An impact area filled with certified surfacing (1m rating) is required to be provided to the sides of the run-out section and beyond the end of all slides.

- **Type 1 Slide** (short run-out section with long Impact area): the impact area is at least 2000mm beyond the end of the slide.
- **Type 2 Slide** (long run-out section with short impact area): the impact area is at least 1000mm beyond the end of the slide.

Contact *Kidsafe* for further information.

Roller slides

Roller slides offer an enhanced sensory experience. Roller slides should conform with AS 4685.3. The space between rollers and rollers and stationary parts of the structure should not present a finger pinch/crush hazard. It is recommended that rollers be restricted to roll in only one direction. Frequent inspections are recommended to ensure that there are no missing rollers or broken bearings, that the rollers roll evenly and there are no entrapment hazards for cords, toggles, clothing or hair.

Embankment/Mound slides

Embankment/mound slides can be built into natural or constructed slopes, following the line of the embankment. The slide must maintain a free height of fall of less than 600mm so that fall hazards are minimised and negate requirements for impact attenuating surfacing to the sides of the slide. An impact area is still required to the sides of the run-out sections and beyond the end. Embankment slides are a popular natural play element of a playspace. Refer to the information sheet: *Mounds for Play*.



Slide Safety

Younger children require adult supervision and older children should be guided through some basic safety rules. Teaching children to use slides in a safe manner introduces them to taking responsibility for themselves and their playmates. Adults should check the condition of the slide and surrounding area prior to children accessing the slide.

Child safe practices when using slides:

- Take one step at a time and hold onto the handrail when climbing the ladder or stairs to the top of the slide. Climbing up the slide bed to get to the top is not safe or recommended.
- Always slide down feet first in a seated position, not head first on your back or stomach.
- Slide down individually and try not to overcrowd the platform while waiting for a turn. Young children may sit on the lap of an adult.
- Always check that the bottom of the slide is clear before sliding down. When children reach the bottom they should get off and move away from the end of the slide so it's clear for others to slide down.



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