

# Fact Sheet: CPSC, EPA & CDC on Artificial Turf Safety & Precautions

## CPSC and EPA Retract Prior Assurances Regarding Artificial Turf; CDC Warnings for Artificial Turf Precautions & Lead Exposure Remain

Both the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have pulled back from their previous statements regarding artificial turf, acknowledging the multiple concerns raised by the scientific and public communities about the product. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies artificial turf as one of seven sources of lead exposure for children, recommending precautions posted at field entrances to warn of steps to avoid exposure risks.

### CPSC (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission) Retraction:

- The CPSC has stepped back from its 2008 public statements via a press release that downplayed concerns about artificial turf. The current CPSC Chairman Elliot Kaye "...has deep concerns with the (2008) press release and it is not the agency's current position."<sup>1</sup>
- Children's products need greater scrutiny. The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 directed the CPSC to assess children's products for toxic chemicals, especially lead and phthalates. However, despite legal challenges and evidence of artificial turf being marketed as a children's product, the agency has sat on its own enforcement review of the product.<sup>2</sup> Numerous medical professionals have documented the greater impact of chemicals on children because of their developing bodies.<sup>3</sup>
- **UNREGULATED:** CPSC was lobbied by ISRI (Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries) and members of the artificial surface industry, then determined NOT to consider playgrounds and fields as children's products. Thus these surfaces are not regulated.<sup>4</sup>

### EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Retraction:

- EPA acknowledges that their prior stance downplaying concern was not supported by their scientific research. Their 2009 press release did not make clear that their results were very limited; since then, they have acknowledged that no conclusions could be drawn from their work and that more work was needed.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CPSC no longer stands behind safety of artificial turf, 29 April 2015, <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/local/cpsc-says-they-no-longer-think-crumb-rubber-artifi/nk6Ch/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION STUMBLES ON ARTIFICIAL TURF: CPSC Slow-Walks Its Review of Tire Crumb Playgrounds as Children's Products, 19/2/15: <http://www.peer.org/news/news-releases/2015/02/19/u.s.-product-safety-commission-stumbles-on-artificial-turf/>

<sup>3</sup> "Dr. Phillip Landrigan, M.D., epidemiologist and Director of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine Children's Environmental Health Center in New York submitted a letter to the City expressing his concerns that the major chemical components of crumb rubber, styrene and butadiene, are a neurotoxin and proven human carcinogen, respectively, and that the types of exposure risks have not been adequately studied." (Source: Superior Court of the State of California, County of Sand Francisco, Case No. CPF-12 512566, filed Oct. 12, 2012, p. 4:

[http://www.synturf.org/images/2012.10.12.Beach\\_Chalet\\_Complaint\\_-\\_FINAL\\_endorsed.pdf](http://www.synturf.org/images/2012.10.12.Beach_Chalet_Complaint_-_FINAL_endorsed.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> CPSC artificial turf products meeting, May 12, 2008, [http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/doc/7\\_12\\_12\\_CPSC\\_minutes.pdf](http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/doc/7_12_12_CPSC_minutes.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> EPA response to PEER filing, Dec 16, 2013, [http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/epa/12\\_23\\_13\\_EPA\\_retraction.pdf](http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/epa/12_23_13_EPA_retraction.pdf)

- **EPA has abandoned attempts to promote tire recycling**, amid growing concern from critics about the contents of tires.<sup>6</sup>
  - Laura Allen, spokeswoman for the EPA, said the agency is no longer affiliated with the [Scrap Tire] Workgroup and has no current initiatives to reduce tires in landfills. The agency ended staff participation in the independent Workgroup in May 2014, and closed out administrative participation at the end of 2014. The agency also says more testing on crumb rubber is needed and that states and local agencies should be responsible for conducting that research.
  - "The EPA made a mistake in promoting this. That's my personal view," said Suzanne Wuerthele, a former EPA toxicologist who is now retired. "This was a serious no-brainer. You take something with all kinds of hazardous materials and make it something kids play on? It seems like a dumb idea."
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in its response to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) Request for Correction 13002<sup>7</sup>, notes the following recommendations for users of synthetic turf surfaces:
  - Both the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that young children wash their hands frequently after playing outside and always before they eat. The EPA also recommends these practices.<sup>8</sup>

## CDC (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission) Warnings:

- CDC identifies artificial turf as one of seven sources of lead exposure for children.<sup>9</sup>
- **A CDC Health Advisory<sup>10</sup> warns the public of potential exposure to lead in artificial turf** stating "To protect the public, in particular young children, consider posting signs" warning of precautions to be taken when using artificial turf surfaces. The precautions relate to lead exposure, not extreme heat risks:
  1. After playing on the field, individuals are encouraged to perform aggressive hand and body washing for at least 20 seconds using soap and warm water.
  2. Clothes worn on the field should be taken off and turned inside out as soon as possible after using the field to avoid tracking contaminated dust to other places. In vehicles, people can sit on a large towel or blanket if it is not feasible to remove their clothes. These clothes, towels, and blankets should be washed separately and shoes worn on the field should be kept outside of the home.
  3. Eating while on the field or turf product is discouraged.
  4. Avoid contaminating drinking containers with dust and fibers from the field. When not drinking, close them and keep them in a bag, cooler, or other covered container on the side of the field.

This fact sheet is provided by the national Safe Healthy Playing Fields Coalition to inform decision makers and residents of the current position of federal agencies on the topic of synthetic or artificial turf. The SHPFC is dedicated to sharing information about the costs, health and safety of both natural and synthetic turf fields and surfaces for children, adults and the environment in which we live. Supporting documentation is available on the SHPFC website [www.SafeHealthyPlayingFields.org](http://www.SafeHealthyPlayingFields.org) # # #

<sup>6</sup> San Francisco Chronicle reporter [Melody Gutierrez](http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Critics-say-EPA-played-dual-role-in-recycled-tire-6094382.php?t=842be8062083ae78b0&cmpid=twitter-premium#/0) February 21, 2015 article: <http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Critics-say-EPA-played-dual-role-in-recycled-tire-6094382.php?t=842be8062083ae78b0&cmpid=twitter-premium#/0>

<sup>7</sup> RFC 13002, March 2013, <http://epa.gov/quality/informationguidelines/documents/13002.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> EPA publication titled The Use of Recycled Tire Materials on Playgrounds & Artificial Turf Fields [http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/epa/12\\_23\\_13\\_EPA\\_retraction.pdf](http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/epa/12_23_13_EPA_retraction.pdf), as published with retraction in response to PEER Request for Correction, December 16, 2013, [http://www.epa.gov/nerl/features/tire\\_crumbs.html](http://www.epa.gov/nerl/features/tire_crumbs.html).

<sup>9</sup> Fields that are old, that are used frequently, and that are exposed to the weather break down into dust as the turf fibers are worn or demonstrate progressive signs of weathering, including fibers that are abraded, faded or broken. These factors should be considered when evaluating the potential for harmful lead exposures from a given field. <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/artificialturf.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory published 18 June 2008 <http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/25186> on Potential exposure to lead in artificial turf.