



ASCIP *RISK ALERT!*

Date: April 27, 2001

Attention: ASCIP Members

Subject: Razor Blades Found on Playground Equipment

Recently, in certain public parks in Orange County, California, unidentified persons have placed razor blades in slide bed section joints and in other areas of playground equipment where users are likely to be injured by them. New findings of razor blades in playground equipment have been reported in other nearby cities. Although some reports indicate that this is a unique situation, ASCIP staff recalls past reports of previous incidents in other areas where bits of broken glass had been glued to playground sliding poles, nails and screws had been driven through playground slide beds, and foreign substances poured onto the play equipment.

ASCIP has long recommended that every playground be visually inspected each day prior to first use by pupils. Such inspections are intended to provide playground owners or operators with an opportunity to discover damage to the equipment, vandalism, foreign objects or substances in or on the equipment or the safety surfacing, and other conditions which could be harmful to pupils or to other users.

If not apprehended, the possibility exists that those responsible for these recent acts may move to another area and continue their activities or that copycat vandals may begin to try and gain notoriety for similar crimes. Since many ASCIP members have joint use agreements with their neighboring public parks which may contain play equipment or may have open campus policies permitting public use of school playgrounds during non-school hours, the need to ensure the continued safety of playground equipment is paramount.

ASCIP recommends that **ALL** playgrounds, regardless of whether they are available for public use or solely for the use of pupils on school grounds, be visually inspected each day before first use. Play areas open to the public should be inspected prior to each use. If vandalism or harmful objects placed in the play area are found they should not be disturbed. The play area should be isolated and police should be called immediately. Since such child endangerment is a felony, all instances of this type should be reported to police as a true crime.

Should such activity be observed or suspected and there is a reluctance to contact local police authorities, the information may be provided confidentially using the **WeTip** anonymous crime reporting hotline at **(800) 78-CRIME** at any time. If the crime is being observed when the call is made, inform the **WeTip** operator that "the crime is occurring now!" so they may pass it along to the appropriate law enforcement agency without delay.

Reviewed July, 2006