

Dangers of Playgrounds in High Temperatures



With summertime comes increased recreational time for children on outdoor playground equipment. In both public and private parks, as well as personal properties, schools, and other institutions, playground slides have been recorded to reach temperatures exceeding 160 degrees, which is hot enough to cause first, second, and sometimes even three-degree burns, for users. Furthermore, it is important to note that while the Consumer Protection and Safety Commission

makes explicit mention to avoid metal surfaces in favor of other alternatives, such as plastic, plastic slides can cause burns as well.

For example, Madyson Gomez, an 18-month-old in Des Moines, Iowa, was going down a plastic slide recorded at 163 degrees when she received second-degree burns on her knees and stomach, as well as on hands where golf-ball size blisters developed. Slides, however, are not the only culprit. Fire poles, monkey bars, and swings can also cause physical harm. A black swing seat was recorded at 120 degrees, which experts agree is hot enough to cause serious burns in a matter of minutes. For temperatures over 140 degrees, it could only take a few seconds.

In addition to these surfaces, one should also be aware of the danger in the black rubber safety mats found on playground bases. While created to absorb the shock of falls that often occur on playgrounds, these mats with their dark pigment absorb a great deal of heat, making it dangerous, particularly in water parks where most children are without shoes or other protection for their feet. In one of the most recent cases, a fourteen-month-old boy, Kian Mehran-Lodge, was at a park in Brooklyn, New York when he ran from the sprinkler area to the black protective area, which was recorded at an astounding 166.9 degrees. In a matter of two seconds, he received second-degree burns on the bottom of his feet. Mehran-Lodge was just one of more than a dozen children who faced similar injuries.



In order to avoid or lessen the likelihood of these types of injuries, parents and users can take a few simple steps, including:

- Choosing to use playground equipment that is under shade or at cooler times in the day.
- Parents should check the temperature of equipment before using it.
- Take note of precautionary signs in recreational areas.
- Always wear shoes, preferably sneakers or closed-toe shoes that cannot fall off.
- If you or your child does get burned, apply cool water to the area for several minutes and then consult your physician. Most burns to children require medical attention.

