

AS 4685.1:2021



STANDARDS  
Australia

# Playground equipment and surfacing

## Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods (EN 1176-1:2017, MOD)

*This national standard is the adoption of EN 1176-1:2017 with national modifications as set out in the Appendix ZZ to take account of Australian conditions, with the permission of the European Committee for Standardization — CEN, Rue de la Science 23, B — 1040 Brussels, Belgium.*



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Association of Rotational Moulders Australasia  
Australian Industry Group  
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects  
Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service  
Consumers' Federation of Australia  
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Engineers Australia  
Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia  
Kidsafe Australia  
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# Playground equipment and surfacing

## Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods (EN 1176-1:2017, MOD)

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## Preface

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee CS-005, Playground Equipment, to supersede AS 4685.1:2014, *Playground equipment and surfacing, Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods (EN 1176-1:2008, MOD)*.

If a Standard is referenced in legislation, the legislative instrument or regulation specifies the date on which the Standard or Amendment comes into effect. Regulatory Authorities have indicated 12 months as an appropriate transition period from the date of publication for the application of this Standard. Refer to the relevant regulatory authority for further information.

The objective of this document is to specify general safety requirements for permanently installed public playground equipment and surfacing. Additional safety requirements for specific pieces of playground equipment are specified in subsequent parts of this document.

This document also specifies the requirements that will protect the child from hazards that they might be unable to foresee when using the equipment as intended, or in a manner that can be reasonably anticipated.

This document covers playground equipment for all children. It has been prepared with full recognition of the need for supervision of young children and of less able or less competent children.

The purpose of this document is to ensure a proper level of safety when playing in, on or around playground equipment, and at the same time to promote activities and features known to benefit children because they provide valuable experiences that will enable them to cope with situations outside the playground.

This document is applicable to playground equipment intended for individual and collective use by children. It is also applicable to equipment and units installed as children's playground equipment although they are not manufactured as such, but exclude those items defined as toys in EN 71 and the European Toys Safety Directive.

This document is not applicable to adventure playgrounds with the exception of those items which have been commercially sourced.

**NOTE** Adventure playgrounds are fenced, secured playgrounds, run and staffed in accordance with the widely accepted principles that encourage children's development and often use self-built equipment.

The use of electricity in play equipment, either as a play activity or as a motive force, is outside the scope of this document. The attention of users is drawn to local national standards and regulations which are to be complied with when using electricity.

Play equipment placed in water and where water can be seen as impact attenuating surfacing is not fully covered by this document and additional risks are associated with wet environments.

This document does not cover the risk of exposure to excessive levels of UV radiation.

This document is an adoption with national modifications, and has been reproduced from, EN 1176-1:2017, *Playground equipment and surfacing — Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods*. The modifications are additional requirements and are set out in [Appendix ZZ](#), which has been added at the end of the source text.

[Appendix ZZ](#) lists the variations to EN 1176-1:2017 for the application of this document in Australia.

As this document has been reproduced from an International Standard, the following applies:

- (a) In the source text "this part of EN 1176" should read "this document".
- (b) A full point substitutes for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.

Australian or Australian/New Zealand Standards that are identical adoptions of international normative references may be used interchangeably. Refer to the online catalogue for information on specific Standards.

The terms “normative” and “informative” are used in Standards to define the application of the appendices or annexes to which they apply. A “normative” appendix or annex is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an “informative” appendix or annex is only for information and guidance.

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## Contents

	Page
European foreword.....	4
Introduction .....	7
<b>1 Scope.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2 Normative references.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4 Safety requirements.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4.1 Materials.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4.1.1 General.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4.1.2 Flammability.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4.1.3 Timber and associated products .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.1.4 Metals .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.1.5 Synthetics.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.1.6 Dangerous substances.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.2 Design and manufacture.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.2.1 General.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.2.2 Structural integrity.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.2.3 Accessibility for adults.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4.2.4 Protection against falling .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4.2.5 Finish of equipment .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.2.6 Moving parts .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.2.7 Protection against entrapment.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.2.8 Protection against injuries during movement and falling.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>4.2.9 Means of access .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.2.10 Connections.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.2.11 Consumable components .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.2.12 Ropes .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.2.13 Chains .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4.2.14 Foundations .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4.2.15 Heavy suspended rigid beams.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>4.2.16 Bouncing facilities.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>5 Verification of compliance and reports .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>5.1 General.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>5.2 Confirming the adequate level of impact attenuation after installation of impact attenuating surfacing.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6 Information to be provided by the manufacturer/supplier .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.1 Information to be provided by the manufacturer/supplier of playground equipment.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.1.1 General product information.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.1.2 Pre-information.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>6.1.3 Installation information .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>6.1.4 Inspection and maintenance information.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>6.2 Information to be provided by the manufacturer or supplier of impact attenuating surfacing.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6.2.1 Pre-information for impact attenuating surfacing .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6.2.2 Installation information for impact attenuating surfacing.....</b>	<b>51</b>

6.2.3	Inspection and maintenance information for impact attenuating surfacing.....	51
6.2.4	Identification of impact attenuating playground surfacing.....	52
7	Marking.....	52
7.1	Equipment identification.....	52
7.2	Basic level mark.....	52
	Annex A (normative) Loads.....	53
	Annex B (normative) Method of calculation of structural integrity.....	60
	Annex C (normative) Physical testing of structural integrity.....	75
	Annex D (normative) Test methods for entrapment.....	74
	Annex E (informative) Overview of possible entrapment situations.....	89
	Annex F (informative) Illustrations of calculation of free height of fall (FHF).....	91
	Annex G (informative) Illustration of sieve test.....	97
	Annex H (normative) Procedure for confirming the adequate level of impact attenuation after installation of impact attenuating surfacing.....	99
	Annex I (informative) A-deviations.....	100
	Bibliography.....	102

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## European foreword

This document (EN 1176-1:2017) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 136 “Sports, playground and other recreational facilities and equipment”, the secretariat of which is held by DIN.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by April 2018, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by October 2018.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

This document supersedes EN 1176-1:2008.

EN 1176 “Playground equipment and surfacing” consists of the following parts:

- Part 1: *General safety requirements and test methods*
- Part 2: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for swings*
- Part 3: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for slides*
- Part 4: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for cableways*
- Part 5: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for carousels*
- Part 6: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment*
- Part 7: *Guidance on installation, inspection, maintenance and operation*
- Part 10: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for fully enclosed play equipment*
- Part 11: *Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for spatial network*

This part of EN 1176 should be read in conjunction with:

- EN 1177, *Impact attenuation of playground surfacing — Determination of critical fall height*;
- CEN/TR 16467:2013, *Playground equipment accessible for all children*;
- CEN/TR 16590:2014, *Collection of rationales for EN 1176*;
- CEN/TR 16096:2012, *Playground equipment for children, replies to requests for interpretation of EN 1176:2003 and its parts*;
- CEN/TR 16879:2016, *Siting of playground and other recreational facilities — Advice on methods for positioning and separation*.

For inflatable play equipment, see EN 14960, *Inflatable play equipment — Safety requirements and test methods*.

The main changes from the previous edition of this standard are as follows:

- a) Reference to CEN/TR 16467:2013, CEN/TR 16598:2014, CEN/TR 16396:2012, CEN/TR 16879:2016 added;
- b) Scope amended to include reference to 'permanently installed' also reference to electricity, water and UV added;
- c) Clause 3.25 definition of easily accessible improved;
- d) New definitions added for impact attenuating surfacing, adequate level of impact attenuation, forced movement, bouncing facilities, suspension bed, one post equipment, post installation inspection, fireman's pole and tunnel;
- e) Clause 4.2.4.1 amended to agree with Figure 8;
- f) Clause 4.2.4.3 and 4.2.4.4 detail of measurement of 500 mm opening added;
- g) Clause 4.2.7.1 new sentence adding reference to Clause 4.2.7.2;
- h) Figure 13 amended to show direction of travel;
- i) Clause 4.2.8.1 cross reference to Table 2 added;
- j) Table 2 amended to clarify distinctions for climbing and hanging fall heights;
- k) Figure 14 amended to include two types of net structure in fall height examples;
- l) Clause 4.2.8.2.5 clarification of overlapping falling spaces added;
- m) Clause 4.2.8.5.2 and Table 4 revised to align with changes to EN 1177;
- n) Clause 4.2.9.5 major rewrite to clarify requirements for easily accessible equipment;
- o) Clause 4.2.12.2 inclusion of reference to use of probe E;
- p) New Clause 4.2.16 giving requirements for bouncing facilities;
- q) Clauses 5.2 and Annex F relating to Impact Attenuating Surfacing added;
- r) Clauses 6.2 amended to give more information on Impact Attenuating Surfacing;
- s) A.2.2, notes 1 and 2 now included as part of requirements;
- t) D.4.2 last paragraph now includes additional test requirement for holes behind holes;
- u) New test (D.5) and Figure (D.13) for testing chain openings added;
- v) New Figure (D.12) showing application of finger probes in test situations;
- w) New test (D.6) for bouncing facilities;
- x) New Annex F showing illustrations of free height of fall;
- y) New Annex G showing illustration of sieve test results and sieve curve;

- z) New Annex H "Procedure for confirming the adequate level of impact attenuation after installation of impact attenuating surfacing" added;
- aa) Annex I "A-Deviations" updated.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

## Introduction

For the quality of reading and understanding this standard, the following wording is used:

- shall = requirement;
- should = recommendation;
- may = permission;
- can = possibility.

It is not the purpose of the requirements of this standard to lessen the contribution that playground equipment makes to the child's development and/or play, which is meaningful from an educational point of view.

This standard acknowledges the difficulties of addressing safety issues by age criteria alone because the ability to handle risk is based on the individual users' level of skills and not age. Also, users other than the intended age range will almost certainly make use of the playground equipment.

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time playing. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. Play provision should aim at managing the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm.

The principles of safety management are applicable both to workplaces in general as well as to play provision. However, the balance between safety and benefits is likely to be different in the two environments. In play provision, exposure to some degree of risk might be of benefit because it satisfies a basic human need and gives children the chance to learn about risk and consequences in a controlled environment.

Respecting the characteristics of children's play and the way children benefit from playing on the playground with regard to development, children need to learn to cope with risk and this can lead to bumps and bruises and even occasionally a broken limb. The aim of this standard is first and foremost to prevent accidents with a disabling or fatal consequence, and secondly to lessen serious consequences caused by the occasional mishap that inevitably will occur in children's pursuit of expanding their level of competence, be it socially, intellectually or physically.

Refusal of admittance and access as a safety precaution is problematic due to, for example, breach in supervision or help by peers. Requirements of significant importance, such as head and neck entrapment and protection against inadvertent falls, have been written with this in mind. It is also recognized that there is an increasing need for play provision to be accessible to users with disabilities. This of course requires play areas to provide a balance between safety and the offer of the required level of challenge and stimulation to all possible groups of users. However, for the purposes of protection against head and neck entrapment, this standard does not take into account children with an increased head size e.g. hydrocephalus or Down's syndrome or wearing helmets.

For further information about making play provision suitable for less able users a CEN Technical Report is available which discusses the challenges in provision and possible solutions that designers can consider. See the European foreword for details of this document.

In addition to the short-term risks that are associated with a playground, there is a risk that the playing child is overexposed to the ultraviolet radiation of the sun. Too much ultraviolet radiation and sunburns in childhood increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Therefore, the playgrounds should be organized in a way that takes into account of the availability of shade options, and that a part of the playground equipment and recreational areas are placed entirely or partly in shade.

## 1 Scope

This part of EN 1176 specifies general safety requirements for permanently installed public playground equipment and surfacing. Additional safety requirements for specific pieces of playground equipment are specified in subsequent parts of this standard.

This part of EN 1176 covers playground equipment for all children. It has been prepared with full recognition of the need for supervision of young children and of less able or less competent children.

The purpose of this part of EN 1176 is to ensure a proper level of safety when playing in, on or around playground equipment, and at the same time to promote activities and features known to benefit children because they provide valuable experiences that will enable them to cope with situations outside the playground.

This part of EN 1176 is applicable to playground equipment intended for individual and collective use by children. It is also applicable to equipment and units installed as children's playground equipment although they are not manufactured as such, but exclude those items defined as toys in EN 71 and the Toys Safety Directive.

It is not applicable to adventure playgrounds with the exception of those items which have been commercially sourced.

NOTE Adventure playgrounds are fenced, secured playgrounds, run and staffed in accordance with the widely accepted principles that encourage children's development and often use self-built equipment.

This part of EN 1176 specifies the requirements that will protect the child from hazards that they might be unable to foresee when using the equipment as intended, or in a manner that can be reasonably anticipated.

The use of electricity in play equipment, either as a play activity or as a motive force, is outside the scope of this standard. The attention of users is drawn to European and local national standards and regulations which are to be complied with when using electricity.

Play equipment placed in water and where water can be seen as impact attenuating surfacing is not fully covered by this standard and additional risks are associated with wet environments.

The risk of exposure to excessive levels of UV radiation is not covered in this standard.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

EN 335, *Durability of wood and wood-based products — Use classes: definitions, application to solid wood and wood-based products*

EN 350:2016, *Durability of wood and wood-based products — Testing and classification of the durability to biological agents of wood and wood-based materials*

EN 351-1:2007, *Durability of wood and wood-based products — Preservative-treated solid wood — Part 1: Classification of preservative penetration and retention*

EN 636, *Plywood — Specifications*

EN 818-2:1996+A1:2008, *Short link chain for lifting purposes — Safety — Part 2: Medium tolerance chain for chain slings — Grade 8*