



# Risk management news

Camps

Vol. 1, 2015

## Congratulations 2014 Safety 1st award winners!

The Markel Safety 1st Award recipients for 2014 are:

### 10+ year camp recipients

AO Camps  
Camp Bear Track  
Camp Fern for Boys and Girls  
Camp Marimeta for Girls  
Camp Ronald McDonald  
at Eagle Lake  
Pompositicut Farm Day Camp  
Setebaid Services, Inc.

### 6-9 year camp recipients

4-H Camp Middlesex  
Camp Aranzazu  
Camp High Rocks, Inc.  
Camp Howe  
Camp Nicolet for Girls  
Camp Odayin  
Camp Olympia  
Camps 'R' Us  
Camp Ton-A-Wandah  
Camp Watonka

Evans Creek Retreat  
Upward Bound Camp  
for Special Needs, Inc.  
Galileo Learning  
Happy Acres Ranch  
Living Well Village  
Melody Pines Day Camp, Inc.  
Our Kids Day Camp  
Princeton University  
Sports Camps  
Sandy Hollow Day Camp  
Sports Plus Day Camp  
Summer's Edge Day Camp  
& Tennis School  
Tamarack Day Camp  
Youth Camps For Christ, Inc

### 2-5 year camp recipients

C5 Youth Foundation of  
Southern California  
Camp Coyote  
Camp Doodles

Camp Gilbert  
Camp Holiday Trails  
Camp Longfellow  
Camp Mont Shenandoah Ltd.  
Camp Natoma  
Camp Taum Sauk  
Coyote Trails Schools  
of Nature  
Green River Preserve  
Greenbrier County Youth Camp  
HappyLand Day Camp  
Inside Out – Stop. Look.  
Listen. Learn.  
Kingston's Camp, Inc.  
Kostopulos Dream Foundation  
Lake Placid Camp and  
Conference Center  
Longacre  
Outpost Summer Camps  
Rainbow Camp  
Red Pine Camp for Girls  
Summer Art Academy



Summerkids  
Tate's Day Camp  
The Ballibay Camps  
Theatre Arts Center NY  
Wonderland Camp Foundation

### First year camp recipients

Camp Kinneret Summer  
Day Camp  
Camp Tekoa  
KG Beach Camps  
Night Eagle Wilderness  
Adventures, Inc  
The Road Less Traveled

## Is your camp's play area hiding something dirty?

The National Playground Safety Institute (NSPI) has identified 12 of the leading causes of injuries on playgrounds, which they call the "Dirty Dozen."

**Improper protective surfacing:** Hard surfaces under and around play equipment can cause injuries if children fall. Replace these surfaces with materials that are soft enough to cushion a fall, such as hardwood fiber/mulch, sand, or pea gravel. Maintain these surfaces at a depth of 12 inches, don't allow them to become compacted, and make sure they are free of standing water and debris. You can also use unitary materials (synthetic or rubber tiles, shredded rubber, and mats) under play equipment. Consult a vendor certified in playground safety before installing these materials.

**Inadequate use zones:** A use zone is the area under and around play equipment where a child might fall. Make sure to cover use zones with protective surfacing material that extends a minimum of 6 feet in all directions from the edge of the equipment. Some equipment (slides between 6 and 8 feet high and swing sets) needs a larger use zone.



Continued on page 2



**Protrusion/entanglement hazards:** A protrusion hazard is anything that could impale or cut a child who might fall against it. An entanglement hazard is anything that could catch an item of clothing or jewelry worn around a child’s neck. Children have been strangled when a drawstring from a hood or a necklace catches on an exposed bolt end or open “S” type hook on play equipment. Pay special attention to the area at the top of slides, where gaps and spaces could catch clothing. Anchor ropes securely at both ends so they cannot form a loop or noose.

**Entrapment in openings:** Children often enter enclosed openings on play equipment feet first and try to slide through the opening. Even if the opening is large enough to allow the child’s body to pass through, it may entrap the child’s head. Generally, openings on play equipment should measure less than 3-1/2 inches or greater than 9 inches. Pay special attention to openings at the top of a slide, between platforms, and on climbers where the distance between rungs might be less than 9 inches.

**Insufficient equipment spacing:** If there is not enough space between pieces of play equipment, children can fall off one structure and strike another. Each item of play equipment has a use zone around it, and for certain types of equipment, these



use zones may overlap. Equipment less than 30 inches high can overlap use zones with 6 feet between each structure. Equipment higher than 30 inches must have 9 feet between each structure. The to-fro area of swings, exit area of slides, standing rocking equipment, and merry-go rounds cannot overlap use zones. Install swings and other pieces of moving equipment in an area away from other play equipment.

**Trip hazards:** Exposed concrete footings, abrupt changes in surface elevations, containment borders, tree roots, tree stumps, and rocks are all common trip hazards that are often found in play environments.

**Lack of supervision:** Increased supervision in play areas directly relates to increased safety and fewer injuries. Design your play area so that it is easy for caregivers to observe children at play. Position supervisors so they can immediately respond to emergencies. Make sure that elevated play equipment is supervised at all times.



**Age-inappropriate activities:** Make sure that your play equipment is age-appropriate for the children who will use it. Areas for preschool age children (2-5) should be separate from areas for school age children (5-12).

**Lack of maintenance:** A sloppily maintained play area is dangerous, and can invite vandalism. Make sure play equipment has no missing, broken, or worn-out components, and that all hardware and parts are secure. Maintain the surface material of your play equipment, whether wood, metal, or plastic. Inspect equipment frequently, and replace it as necessary. It is a good practice to keep a record of all maintenance and safety checks.

**Pinch, crush, and sharp-edged hazards:** Inspect play equipment to make sure that there are no sharp edges or points that could cut a child. Check moving components, such as suspension bridges, track rides, merry-go-rounds, seesaws, and some swings, to make sure that there are no moving parts or mechanisms that might crush a child’s fingers.



**Platforms with no guardrails:** Make sure elevated surfaces (platforms, ramps, and bridge ways) have guardrails or barriers to prevent falls. Preschool age children are at greater risk from falls, so equipment intended for this age group should have guardrails on elevated surfaces higher than 20 inches and protective barriers on platforms higher than 30 inches. Equipment intended for school-age children should have guardrails on elevated surfaces higher than 30 inches and barriers on platforms above 48 inches.

**Equipment not recommended for public playgrounds:**

Because accidents have been associated with the following types of equipment, the Consumer Product Safety Commission discourages their use on public playgrounds:

- Heavy swings such as animal figure swings and multiple occupancy/glider swings
- Free-swinging ropes that may fray or form a loop
- Swinging exercise rings and trapeze bars

You can learn more about play area safety from the National Recreation and Park association at [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org).



## Inspect your smoke detectors before you need them

Next time you change the battery in your smoke detectors, check the age of it as well. According to the US Fire Administration, most alarms have a life span of about 8-10 years. After this time, the entire unit should be replaced. Most alarms have their date of manufacture listed inside the unit. If you cannot find a date of manufacture on the alarm, consider it one that needs to be replaced. When you install the new alarm, write the date of purchase inside the cover.

If your fire alarm is battery powered only, then replacement is simple and can be done by just about anyone with a screwdriver. If your alarm is “hard-wired” it should be inspected and replaced by a certified electrician. It is also important to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations on maintenance and replacement of an alarm, so be sure to review them carefully when you buy a new one or inspect your current alarm.

Other fire alarm maintenance tips include:

- Install new batteries at least once a year (schedule this as part of your pre-camp inspection)
- Test the alarm monthly
- Clean smoke alarms with a vacuum without removing the alarm cover
- If your smoke alarm starts making a “chirping” noise, replace the batteries and reset it

During camp season, it is important to routinely inspect smoke detectors located in cabins to ensure they have not been disabled.

## 2015 Webinar series

Mark your calendar and register for free safety training webinars

**WEBINAR 1: Cracking kids' secret code**

Tuesday, January 20, 1:00PM EST  
by *Dr. Chris Thurber*

**WEBINAR 2: Camp crises – The new world**

Tuesday, February 17, 1:00PM EST  
by *Harry Rhulen*

**WEBINAR 3: Managing challenging camper behavior**

Tuesday, April 7, 1:00PM EST  
by *Bob Ditter*

**WEBINAR 4: What makes a good camp counselor?  
It's not what you think!**

Tuesday, May 12, 1:00PM EST  
by *Scott Arizala*

For more information and to reserve your spot, visit [campinsurance.com](http://campinsurance.com) and click on **Safety Resources**.



Or use your smart phone to scan the QR code and go directly to the Markel webinar information and registration page.



## Markel can help

Have a safety or risk management question, concern, or idea for our next newsletter?

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