

IPEMA

INTERNATIONAL
PLAY EQUIPMENT
MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

Frequently Asked Questions about various types of playground surfaces.

FAQ's EVO.2





Questions most frequently asked about poured in place rubber

1. What is a typical poured in place surface made of?

A typical poured in place (PIP) system consists of a cushion layer composed of recycled tire rubber that is buffed or ground to specific sizes and a wear course layer made of either EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer) or TPV (Thermal Plastic Vulcanized) granules that come in a variety of colors. The cushion layer and the wear course layers are held together by either a Aromatic or Aliphatic binding agents and typically installed over a crushed stone, asphalt, or concrete sub-base.

2. What is the installation process ?

The cushion layer is combined with the binding agents at specific ratios in a mortar mixer and poured onto the pad and troweled into place by hand using specified guide rods. Depending on the size of the project, the cushion layer is allowed to dry (over night if necessary) before the wear course is installed. Once the cushion layer is dry, the wear course granules are again mixed using specific amounts of binder and then applied with guide rods and trowels. The wear course is normally allowed to dry at least 48hrs before foot traffic is allowed.

3. Is poured in place surfacing accessible?

Yes. Provided the surface is installed within slope limit requirements by the ADA, PIP provides a safe, accessible surface. Ask the manufacturer to provide test results per ASTM F1951 from a qualified lab.

4. Does PIP come in different colors?

Yes. There is an exhaustive amount of colors available. Ask your PIP dealer for details.

4. How should PIP surfacing be maintained?

Loose debris such as sand, dirt and small stones on top of PIP surfacing can produce slip hazards and shorten the life of the surface. It is recommended that periodic removal of this loose debris be performed with a blower or vacuum every two to three weeks. Dry sweeping or scrubbing will remove the loose litter, but can force more fine particles into porous opening of some surfaces. Some cleaning agents can harm the binding agents and cause premature break down of the surface. Before using chemicals on the surface, ask the manufacturer for recommended maintenance practices for their particular surface system.

5. What can I use to remove snow or ice?

Calcium Chloride is an acceptable solution. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use.

6. How long will my PIP surface last ?

This varies depending on the manufacturer and the system that you purchase. Ask your supplier for details.

7. Can PIP be repaired?

Yes, but since the PIP system is proprietary to the manufacturer/supplier, it may not be within the ability of the owner/operator to conduct an adequate repair. Ask your supplier before attempting. Remember, failure to repair the surface in a timely manner may cause the damaged area to get larger and increase the cost of the repair.



Questions most frequently asked about rubber tile systems

1. What are rubber tiles made from?

Typically, rubber tiles are manufactured from recycled tires. The tires are ground and contaminants such as cords and metal are removed.

2. What is the typical subsurface for rubber tiles?

Rubber tiles are typically installed over sub-surfaces such as concrete, asphalt or compacted granular. Your manufacturer can recommend what works best for your particular play area.

3. Are rubber tiles accessible?

Yes. Provided they are installed properly and the play area itself is relatively level (i.e. within ADA guidelines of 6% running slope / 2% cross slope). Always inspect tiles for gaps larger than 1/2" and changes in level of over 1/2" deep. Repair or correct as needed.

4. How should a rubber tile surface be maintained?

Routine maintenance should include sweeping or blowing the surface off using a leaf blower to ensure that abrasive materials, such as sand, are removed from the tile surface. Vacuum the surface periodically in areas where abrasive materials such as sand may be tracked on to the surface.

Cleaning with moderate use of household or commercial cleaners that contain odor suppressants and disinfectants is appropriate for most tiles. Dilute the cleaning agent as recommended by the manufacturer.

4. How should a rubber tile surface be maintained? (continued)

Apply to the surface using a mop or scrubbing device. This should remove most stains. Use only PH neutral based cleaning agents that do not contain bleach or citrus. Check with the manufacturer of the tile for recommendations.

Advanced maintenance can include steam vacuuming with or without cleaning agents to remove built up dirt and stains. Follow instructions. Power washing is normally acceptable too but keep the wand tip at a minimum of 8 inches from the surface to prevent damage.

Can my tile surface be repaired if damage or vandalism occurs?

Yes. Most tile systems include methods to remove worn or damaged tiles so that the entire surface does not have to be replaced. A professional installer is recommended to perform this task. Ask your manufacturer for certified installers in your area.



Questions most frequently asked about Engineered Wood Fiber

1. What exactly is Engineered Wood Fiber?

Processed wood, ground to a fibrous consistency, randomly sized not typically over 2" in length, free of hazardous substances and meets ASTM F2075 standard for EWF.

2. Why not just install wood chips?

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) has determined that wood chips are not considered an accessible playground surface.

3. Why spend more for Engineered Wood Fiber?

Engineered Wood Fiber is manufactured specifically for use in playgrounds using raw materials that are typically free of twig and leaf material.

4. How long does Engineered Wood Fiber last?

Engineered wood fiber will maintain its cushioning properties for the life of the playground, provided the depth is maintained by occasional top-offs. EWF does not decompose as mulch does.

5. How do I know that Engineered Wood Fiber meets safety standards?

Engineered Wood Fiber has been tested in accordance with ASTM F1292 impact tests, ASTM F2075 for purity and quality, and ASTM F1951 for accessibility. EWF meets or exceeds ASTM Standards and CPSC guidelines. Ask your manufacturer for test results.

6. Is Engineered Wood Fiber accessible?

Engineered Wood Fiber meets the specifications of the ASTM F1951 Standard for Accessibility according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), provided there is proper drainage, are installed correctly and appropriately maintained. See # 12.

7. Has burning been a problem?

No, burning has not been a problem. Flammability test results are available from your supplier upon request.

8. What if broken glass falls on the wood fiber surface?

Broken glass and debris typically stay on top of Engineered Wood Fiber and are easily removed by raking.

9. Is Engineered Wood Fiber treated?

Engineered Wood Fiber is not chemically treated and is totally natural.

10. What contains the Engineered Wood Fiber?

You can border EWF with playground borders or landscape timbers for an aboveground installation or excavate to have the play area flush with the surrounding land.

11. Aren't insects a problem with wood?

No. Typically, insects such as termites prefer larger pieces of wood to bore into. After thousands of installations nationwide, Engineered Wood Fiber neither attracts or repels insects.

12. How is Engineered Wood Fiber maintained?

Occasional raking and tamping, as usage dictates is necessary to keep the play area in good condition. According to usage, climate and the condition of the drainage system below, the surface will need to be topped off with fresh EWF periodically. Accessories like wear mats are available for high use areas to help maintain accessibility and limit maintenance. See IPEMA's positional statement for installation recommendations—click here: www.ipema.org-installation-recommendations-for-EWF.

13. What about splinters?

Splinters normally occur when contact is made with fixed or rigid wood surfaces. Engineered wood fiber tends to give or move upon contact so splinters are not a problem.

14. What if children eat it?

Engineered Wood Fiber is an all-natural wood product and not chemically treated in any way.



Questions most frequently asked about Engineered Wood Fiber

15. What is the dark brown water that sometimes appears from underneath the EWF after the first rain shower?

The dark water is actually nature's preservative in the wood called tannins and is harmless to humans. The tannins will eventually dissipate after rain washes them off the wood.

16. Can Engineered Wood Fiber become a litter box for animals?

No. Once the Engineered Wood Fiber has been installed and settled, it will knit together forming a uniform surface.

17. Why is drainage necessary for my Engineered Wood Fiber surface?

A proper drainage system will not only help slow the decay rate of the EWF surface but will also help keep the surface more resilient during colder weather.

18. What about fungus or mold that can occur on the EWF surface?

Nuisance molds are a natural occurrence as wood decomposes and may develop on the surface of EWF in wet weather and temperatures are $>35^{\circ}$. Once the EWF dries out, the molds go away. A good way to keep your EWF dry is to install a working drainage system below the surface. Direct sunlight will also help. To get rid of the mold, carefully remove present mold and apply a mixture of HD laundry detergent and water (1:3) to the surface. Several applications may be necessary.

19. Should I rototill my Engineered Wood Fiber surface periodically?

No. Engineered Wood Fiber is impact tested in a compacted state which is not only resilient but accessible for those with disabilities. To keep your EWF surface safe and accessible, top off as needed and do not rototill your EWF surfacing.



Questions most frequently asked about loose fill rubber

1. What is Rubber Mulch?

Rubber Mulch is a loose fill playground safety surface offering head impact protection to protect children when they fall. 3rd party certification can be obtained at www.IPEMA.org.

2. What is Rubber Mulch made from?

Rubber Mulch is typically manufactured from recycled rubber.

3. How big are the pieces of rubber?

The pieces of rubber range in size from 1/4" to 1".

4. Is there metal in Rubber Mulch?

Rubber mulch is 99.99% metal free. This means that while it isn't 100% metal free, there is a minimal risk of getting pricked by a piece of metal. Manufacturers utilize specialized magnets and metal detection technology to ensure as much metal as possible is removed and that the children have a safe surface to play on.

5. Is Rubber Mulch wheel chair accessible?

Rubber Mulch has been determined to be wheel chair accessible per the current ADAAG Guidelines for determining wheel chair accessibility of playground safety surfaces. The current guideline requires the playground safety surface to pass the ASTM F1951-99 test.

6. How do I Install Rubber Mulch?

In playground applications, the user should refer to the manufacturers installation guidelines. In general, installation requires preparation of the site so that the ground is level and drains well. The area either needs to be excavated to a depth equal to the required installation depth (refer to manufacturer's recommendation) or a perimeter barrier needs to be installed to reduce product migration into surrounding areas. Installation is usually achieved by spreading and compaction of the material to the desired install depth (again, refer to manufacturer's recommendation).

7. How do I Maintain Rubber Mulch?

In a playground application, the surface should be maintained on an as-needed basis by raking high spots down and filling in voids to maintain as level a surface as possible. This assures that the impact attenuating properties of the surface is maintained. Leaves and other organic material on top of the rubber mulch can usually be cleaned up with a leaf blower with minimal displacement of the rubber mulch.

8. What colors of Rubber Mulch are available?

Rubber Mulch comes in a variety of colors depending on the manufacturer. Most manufacturers offer a warranty ensuring the color will last for years.



Questions most frequently asked about synthetic turf

1. What is synthetic turf made of?

Depending on the manufacturer, artificial turf can be made from PE (Polyethylene), PP (Polypropylene) or nylon fibers or a combination of these materials.

2. Is synthetic turf flammable?

No. Ask your manufacturer for flammability test results.

3. What makes up a synthetic turf system?

Most synthetic turf systems installed today include a drainage layer, a multi-layered backing system, and resilient "grass" blades that are often infilled with recycled crumb rubber or special sand infills. In some applications, the turf is installed over a resilient pad to give the turf surface more impact resiliency.

4. Is Lead used to make synthetic turf ?

No. Today's synthetic turf is made without lead as a pigment ingredient. This change in the pigment formulations was made in response to the CPSC's request of all industries that lead be removed from all children's products, if possible.

5. Is heat a factor on synthetic turf?

During the summer months, on hot sunny days, synthetic turf will be hotter than natural grass. Having water play during these times or utilizing shade structures is a good idea.

6. How should synthetic turf be maintained?

Keep debris off by sweeping, blowing, or hosing the surface off. Broom regularly (at least weekly) with a stiff shop broom to revitalize the fiber and (if infill is used) keep infill level. Clean spills as they occur. Blot up spills with a towel. Clean with water and a mild detergent and flush with clean water. Blot with dry towel to remove moisture. If infill is present, remove the infill with a shop vacuum, clean the turf as described above, and replace with new infill. Paint vandalism can usually be removed using ammonia, rinse thoroughly. If using cleaning agents other than mild detergent, check with manufacturer prior to use. Most cleaning agents will not harm fibers, but solvents can damage the backing. If infill is used as part of the impact resiliency of the system; check the depth frequently in high use areas such as under swings and slide exits. Add infill as necessary.

7. Can I install synthetic turf myself?

Some manufacturers will require that their turf be installed by a professional installation crew due to warranty and liability issues. It's best to check with your supplier before attempting to install it yourself.