



GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF PLAY EQUIPMENT ON CHURCH PROPERTY

Example Scenario:

Some play equipment is donated / provided to a church for use in the church garden. The equipment looks OK at first glance and is not brand new, therefore it's age is uncertain and some original fixings are missing or a little rusty.

The children of course love it, but there are clear responsibilities that cannot be ignored and someone (the Church) must take responsibility for its condition, maintenance and safe use. Additionally it's use must be supervised.

All equipment installed outdoors will be subject to wear and tear by the elements, additionally plastic items will be subject to degradation caused by the effects of sunlight, particularly if a plastic item was only manufactured for indoor use.

The Connexion insurers have responded to a general query from the trustees as follows, the text of the response is included in its entirety and Church administrators are advised to take immediate action based on the narrative.

Hi Glynn

I would refer to our email exchange below and I apologise for the delay in coming back to you with an update.

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Your insurers – Ansvar – advise

My team have been working on our new Church Connect policy wording which unfortunately has been delayed (likely Q4) due to other projects taking priority e.g. Insurance Act 2015 & Pool Re terrorism changes.

We do have in mind to use the same special requirement wording that we use under our Charity Connect policy (FA58) for fixed outdoor adventure & playground equipment which is as follows:

FIXED OUTDOOR ADVENTURE AND PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

To ensure that any fixed outdoor adventure and children's playground equipment at the premises is: inspected annually by an independent specialist if the various items of equipment are in a specifically designed and purpose-built children's play area, and inspected at least monthly by an authorised and suitably trained employee, and maintained in a safe and good condition (any equipment found to be in need of any repair, defective or unsafe in any way must be prevented from being used until the maintenance, repair or improvement work has been carried out), and a written record is retained by you for each inspection and following any appropriate maintenance, repair or improvement work.

SPECIAL NOTE (not forming part of the policy wording)

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) can provide advice and information on playground management and the safety of outdoor play areas. Their Code of Good Practice for Play Areas covers Siting, Design, Equipment, Surfacing, Installation, Ancillary items, Signs and Management. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: www.rospace.com

So whilst the above is not stipulated in the current policy wording by the time the policies are due for renewal next March I believe the wording will have been updated with the above mentioned wording or something similar.

The issue of whether domestic quality equipment like home garden equipment would be acceptable for a public/commercial use has not been addressed? In my opinion by its very definition i.e. domestic use I would argue that it would not be suitable for 'public/commercial use', however it would of course be dependent on the exposure e.g. public/commercial use assumes the equipment is available for daily use by arguably unlimited numbers. I would strongly recommend that you refer to the Play Equipment in Church Gardens Version 1.0 June 2015 manufacturers of the equipment for their advices.

I trust this answers your query but if I can be of further assistance please call or email me.

Kind regards
Simon West ACII Managing Partner

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