



## Iowa Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health

### **After the Flood: Cleaning Playground Equipment**

**Overview:** Floodwater can contaminate playground equipment and surfaces with debris, sewage and toxic chemicals. Playgrounds should be cleaned to make sure children are not injured and do not get sick.

#### **How should I clean up playground equipment?**

Do not allow children onto the playground until it has been cleaned. Use rope or temporary fence to block access to the playground. Post "Do Not Use Playground" signs.

- Rinse mud, sewage and other debris from playground equipment using soap and water. Pressure washers may be effective.
- Disinfect the equipment by thoroughly wetting equipment with a solution of bleach and water and allow to air dry. **Use ¼ cup of bleach per 1 gallon of water.**
- Rinse equipment with clean water after 24 hours.
- Lubricate hardware and movable parts on the equipment.

#### **What should I do with the playground surfacing?**

Playground surfaces need to be cleaned so that children are not exposed to debris, bacteria, and toxic chemicals. Most playground surfaces are covered with loose-fill material.

**Loose-fill material** should be totally removed and replaced. Discarded surfacing material may be put into a landfill. Please check with local landfill operators prior to discarding the surfacing.

Loose-fill playground surfacing includes:

- Sand and pea gravel
- wood chips, mulch, and engineered wood fiber
- shredded rubber tires and rubber mats
- other loose fill material

**Solid playground surfaces**, such as poured-in-place or rubber tiles, need to be power-washed to remove contaminants. Disinfect solid playground surfaces with bleach and water solution. Loose tiles or loose surfaces should be replaced. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Source: National Program for Playground Safety