

Indoor Playspace – Ball Pits

Ball pits in public indoor playspaces have the potential to spread disease or cause an injury to a patron, especially when good maintenance practices are not followed. The following is a list of recommended maintenance practices to keep ball pits a safe and healthy playspace for children:

1. Restrict ball pit depth to a maximum of 450 millimeters in a toddler's area and 600 millimeters in an older child's area to minimize the danger of concealing children.
2. Ensure the balls are a minimum of 70 millimeters in diameter to prevent choking.
3. Ensure ball pits are made out of materials that are easily cleanable.
4. In the event of a fecal, urine, or vomit accident, evacuate and close the ball pit immediately and proceed with cleaning and disinfection.
5. Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of the ball pit, either with the use of a ball cleaning machine in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, or by following these steps:
 - a. Remove all balls from the pit and place in net bags.
 - b. Wash in warm soapy water, then rinse.
 - c. Soak in a solution of disinfectant, following chemical manufacturer's instructions for sufficient time and concentration.
 - d. Drain and allow the balls to fully air dry.
 - e. Clean and disinfect the base and sides of the ball pit, and let dry.
 - f. Inspect the balls for sanitation and damage before replacing in the ball pit.
6. Carry out routine cleaning and disinfection as often as necessary to maintain good sanitation. Always close the ball pit first before carrying out routine maintenance.

This handout was adapted from: The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Cleaning of balls, ball pools and indoor play areas. Retrieved February 21, 2017 from <http://www.rospa.com/play-safety/advice/ball-pool-cleaning/>

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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