

News Release

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Recommendations Address City Study of CCA-Treated Wood Play Structures

Parks and Recreation - A City of Toronto study of playgrounds with structures constructed of wood treated with Chromate Copper Arsenate (CCA) found that the majority of structures are safe and do not require remediation.

The City tested arsenic levels at 217 parks and city-owned child care centres with CCA-treated wood play structures. No structures located at child care centres require remediation. Soil at 31 parks exceeded federal guidelines for arsenic, and require sealing and replacement of material below the play structures. As a precautionary measure, the remediation plan also recommends sealing play structures in 26 other parks where sampling indicated elevated levels of arsenic on the surface of play structures.

The findings are contained in a Toronto Parks and Recreation report submitted for discussion at the City's Budget Advisory Committee on Monday, January 27. The report recommends funding of \$200,000 to remediate the 57 sites, and an annual budget of \$25,000 to conduct on-going testing at locations where remediation has occurred.

"Although the overall risk of illness from exposure to CCA treated wood is low, the City recognizes the need to remediate play areas where arsenic levels are elevated," said Claire Tucker-Reid, General Manager, Parks and Recreation. "The proposed action plan demonstrates the City's pro-active approach and is based on a comprehensive testing protocol. It is important to stress that Toronto playgrounds are safe and that children should continue to use the playgrounds and engage in healthy physical activity."

The testing protocol was developed in consultation with Toronto Public Health. Four samples were collected from all 217 sites. This includes one composite sample of soil collected from 10 locations under each play structure, two soil samples around the structure, and one control sample at 10 metres from the structure.

The list of parks requiring remedial action is posted on the City of Toronto website at www.toronto.ca/parks. Toronto residents wishing to learn more about CCA treated wood and arsenic can visit www.toronto.ca/health.

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