

Safety Fact Sheet

Sand Pits



What is a sand pit?

Sand pits provide lots of fun and outdoor play for children engaged in building and modeling objects out of sand. Sand pits are either purchased as large toys or built in backyards or places like parks and child care centres.

How may a child be injured?

Choking

- By placing sand or objects buried in sand in their mouth.

Cuts and bruises

- While digging or playing in sand where sharp objects may have been placed.

Bites and stings

- Insects can live in damp sand and may bite and sting children.

Burns

- Children may become sunburned if playing outdoors in a sandpit.

Infection

- Sandpits can become a source of infection when animals, especially cats, and children use them as toilets.
- An infection called Toxoplasmosis can be spread from cats to humans through dirty sand pits. This infection usually occurs as a mild illness in children and adults but can harm an unborn child.

How common are these injuries?

While it is known that injuries and infections have occurred as a result of sand pits, there is no published statistics available.

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for Sandpits?

There are no laws or Australian Standards relating to sand pits. Please keep in mind the safety reminders below when choosing/using a sandpit.

Remember:

- Ensure the sand pit is well drained, to keep it as dry as possible.
- Ensure there is plenty of shade available over the sandpit and that children wear appropriate clothing, a hat and sunscreen.
- Sandpits should be covered when not being used to prevent animals from using it as a toilet. Shade cloth or fine chicken wire can be used to cover the sand pit. Plastic covers are not recommended as they can keep the sand damp.

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- Rake over the sand regularly to lift and remove dirt and rubbish. This also helps to air the sand and is a good way of disinfecting the sand.
- If the rain does not regularly wash the sand, hose the sand with plain tap water.
- If the sand needs disinfecting, for example after an animal or child goes to the toilet in the sand, use a watering can filled with a mild detergent or household disinfectant diluted in water, over the sand to kill the germs. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always supervise your child when he/she is playing outdoors.

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