

DATE: Aug. 28, 2008

FROM: Oregon Public Health Division

TO: Owners and operators of artificial turf fields

SUBJECT: Lead in Artificial Turf

This purpose of this memo is to update organizations of the Public Health Division's interim recommendations regarding artificial turf fields. The Office of Environmental Public Health's (OEPH) Toxicology Consulting Services (TOCS) unit has reviewed the recently released findings of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding the presence of lead in artificial turf.

Tests conducted by the CPSC found that synthetic grass containing lead will not result in unsafe exposure levels to school-age children because the lead does not readily dislodge and become accessible to people. The CPSC tested 14 turf products ranging from 0.09 percent to 0.96 percent lead and 0 to 9 years old.

TOCS concluded that because of the limited data available that there were still some important uncertainties regarding health risks from very old or worn fields containing high concentrations of lead. Old or worn fields have not yet been adequately tested. Preliminary data suggest that the amount of lead that dislodges from synthetic grass is higher for older, more worn fields. The following recommendation should be considered interim, until further data is available:

1. It is recommended that a lab accredited by the Oregon Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ORELAP) or the National Lead Laboratory Accreditation Program (NLLAP) be used for any testing of materials and that bulk samples be tested using the acid digestion method. A list of ORELAP accredited labs with specialties in solids and chemicals and inorganic chemistry can be found at: www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/orelap/docs/acclab.pdf. The list of NLLAP labs can be found at: www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nllaplist.pdf. Contact these labs directly to see if they perform bulk sample testing.
2. Artificial turf containing up to 0.5% lead (based on bulk tested acid digested samples) that is in good condition can be considered safe at this time.
3. Turf products with higher amounts of lead or greater than 10 years old or showing signs of extensive wear may warrant additional measures to ensure safety.
4. Such measures could include:
 - a. testing annually for lead accessibility via the CPSC wipe sample method to ensure safe exposure levels;
 - b. replacing the field with a lead-free product;
 - c. managing the field to reduce exposure risks by various means including dust suppression, requiring people to wash after use and prohibiting eating and drinking while on turf.

If you have additional questions you can contact the Office of Environmental Public Health at (971) 673-0440.