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More playgrounds are installing synthetic turf surfaces. Some facilities have experienced numerous problems with their poured-in-place rubber and wood mulch playground surfacing. Rubber surfaces sometimes harden and crack, wood mulch can compress, erode or attract bugs; both types of surfaces can become unsustainable or unsafe. In order to create a safer, more aesthetically pleasing playground more facilities are increasingly installing synthetic turf. Installations of these products can exceed national safety standards, provide full ADA/ABA compliance and be consistent with all US Consumer Product and Safety Commission requirements. Read more [HERE](#).

New educational resources to protect workers from chemical hazards are available. Each year, tens of thousands of American workers are made sick or die from occupational exposures to hazardous chemicals. While many chemicals are suspected of being harmful, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's ([OSHA](#)) exposure standards are out-of-date and inadequately protective for the small number of chemicals that are regulated in the workplace. To help keep workers safe, OSHA has launched a new Web resource. This easy-to-use resource is a step-by-step toolkit to identify safer chemicals that can be used in place of more hazardous ones. The [Transitioning to Safer Chemicals toolkit](#) provides employers and workers with information, methods, tools, and guidance on using informed substitution in the workplace.

While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for overly optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. The snow is already here and many areas around the country are looking at the time of year when snow is possible. Information from the National Safety Council offers the tips to help you get a handle on [safe shoveling](#).

A new aid in drowning detection is now available. iSwimband is a wearable app-accessory which will alert your Bluetooth-enabled phone, tablet, or music player if a swimmer has been submerged beyond a preset time limit. While nothing replaces diligent human supervision, iSwimband provides an extra layer of protection in and around the water. Aquatic Safety Concepts, the company behind iSwimband™ and the Wahoo™ Swim Monitoring System, was founded by three fathers after one of their children's classmates drowned at a town park. The tragedy occurred despite several lifeguards, day camp counselors, and even parents watching the water that day. Deeply impacted by the needlessness of that event, and its effect on the entire community, the three founders realized that this was the purpose of their lives: to reduce – if not eradicate – the incidence of preventable drowning. Aquatic Safety Concepts is a member of the National Drowning Prevention Alliance and a YMCA of the USA Preferred Vendor. Read more [HERE](#).

There is no single practice that will protect all youth from child abuse. Safe-Wise Consulting recently updated its Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Checklist. The [CAP Checklist](#) is a brief questionnaire that will help assess your organization's prevention efforts. By taking a few moments to complete the Checklist your organization can begin to evaluate your efforts and identify areas for strengthening procedures. But remember that even if your organization scores well in this quick evaluation there may be more that needs to be done. Preventing abuse is everyone's responsibility. Safe-wise Consulting is a leader in developing sound practices for organizations and protecting youth. More information on Child Abuse Prevention and Youth Protection is available from [Safe-Wise Consulting](#) and in our [Online Resource Library](#). The prevention of child abuse is a key risk management issue for all youth serving organizations and protecting youth is at the core of what we do.

Training on new Hazard Communication information is due soon. Employers must train workers on the new label elements and safety data sheet format for hazardous chemicals by December 1, 2013. Compliance assistance resources are available for employers to assist them in meeting the requirements of OSHA's revised Hazard Communication Standard. A new [fact sheet](#) discusses the training topics that employers must cover for the December 1st deadline. In addition, a new OSHA [brief](#) explains the new labeling elements, identifies what goes on a label, and describes what pictograms are and how to use them. OSHA's updated standard, which is aligned with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals, provides a common and coherent approach to classifying chemicals and communicating hazard information on labels and safety data sheets. Additional information and resources are available on OSHA's [Hazard Communications page](#).

This Month's Topics:

Playground Surfaces

Reducing the use of Hazardous Chemicals

Snow Shoveling Safety Tips

Drowning Detection Revolution

Child Abuse Prevention Program Evaluation

Hazard Communication Training