



HANDLING LOOSE PARTS SAFELY

Before you start: This guide will provide you with information and confidence to handle loose parts safely, but common sense and good judgement is always needed. Information on handling, regular inspection and correct maintenance is included.



1. Moving loose parts – lifting and handling guidance

If you are moving large, heavy or awkward items, it's important to keep yourself and others safe. Simple reminders can be shared with children and adults to avoid back problems or incidents such as loose parts dropped on toes. This advice is especially useful when taking items in and out of storage, as well as during any large building projects.

Basic principles:

Stop and think

Plan the transfer or lift - where is the item to be placed?

If appropriate, use handling aids or equipment.

Ask for help if needed.

Remove any obstacles in advance.

For a long lift, rest when needed.

Feet position

Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart, giving a balanced and stable base.

Place your leading leg as far forward as is comfortable.

Adopt good posture

When lifting from a low level, bend from the knees.

Keep your back straight.

Keep shoulders level and facing the same direction as your hips.

Get a firm grip

Don't overstretch your arms.

The best position and grip will depend on the circumstances.

Refer to the risk assessment.

Keep close to the load

Keep the item close to your body for as long as possible.

Keep the heaviest side of the load next to your body.

Use smooth actions

Lift or transfer smoothly, keeping control of the load.

Move your feet

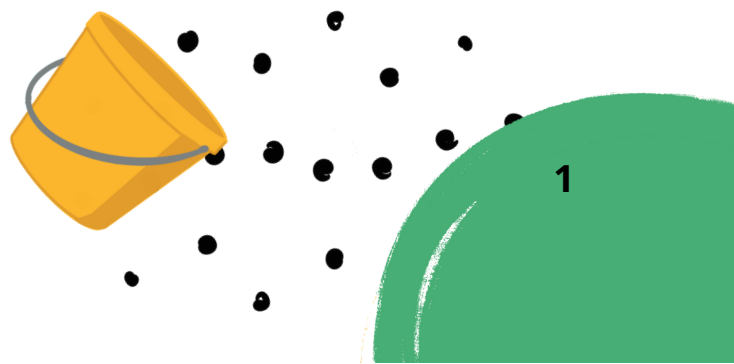
Do not twist the body when turning to the side, instead reposition your feet.

Put down, then adjust

If precise positioning is required, put down the item, then move it into the desired position.

Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.

There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.



2. Maintenance

Daily maintenance will include checking your outdoor space and loose parts. Your policies should include a plan for regular checks, recording and actions.

Taking action:

- When possible, take immediate action to clear up litter, broken glass, dog fouling etc.
- Cordon off or mark clearly any hazards that can't be dealt with on the spot.
- If you can't deal with the hazard immediately or it is an ongoing problem, record concerns and inform the person responsible for health and safety.
- If you can't deal with the hazard, move children and loose parts to an alternative, safe area.

Involving children and young people in maintenance:

Children should be fully involved in all aspects of loose parts play. Checking and maintaining loose parts can be a fun learning experience and help the project run smoothly. Children can be involved in developing routines, identifying items that need action taken, undertaking maintenance task and be involved in record keeping.

Regular contribution to maintenance tasks can:

- encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility of the loose parts play project
- provide a different way to be involved in the project
- provide opportunities to practice real-life skills.

Remember!

Some aspects of loose parts play require specific maintenance measures. For example, sand pits require sand to be swept up and raked over regularly. Items used in mud play will need to be hosed down from time to time.

Put a system in place. Be clear about what needs to be done, who is responsible and how often. Review systems regularly to ensure they are working smoothly.



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