

The slide is one of the most popular play equipment items in a playspace. Slides are enjoyable for users of all ages. Slides allow children to have an opportunity to play, promote balance, coordination and physical activity. Slides provide climbing exercise and also help to strengthen the torso, arms and shoulders.

## Types of Slides

Slides come in a variety of types such as straight, wavy, or spiral descent either by means of an open slide chute or a tube. Slides can be either freestanding, part of a composite structure, or built on a natural or constructed slope (embankment or mound slide). The 2014 playground standard introduces two different slides. A Type 1 slide has a short run out section with a long impact area. A Type 2 slide has a long run out section with a short impact area.

## Materials

Avoid using exposed metals on the platforms, chutes, and steps. When exposed to direct sunlight the metal may reach temperatures high enough to cause serious contact burn injuries. Provide shade for metal slides or use other materials that may reduce the surface temperature such as plastic or fibreglass.

## Access

Access to a free-standing slide is usually by a ladder with rungs, or a stairway with steps. Slides may also be part of a composite play structure, so children will gain access from other parts of the structure. A platform should be provided to assist the transition from standing to sitting at the entrance to the slide. Mound or embankment slides may use the ground for access however the installation of a platform or solid surfacing at the entrance to the slide is recommended to assist with wear and erosion control.



## Features in the Standard

- Slides should not have any spaces or gaps that could trap cords, clothing, hair, fingers etc. between the platform and the start of the slide chute or in any joins in the slide chute.
- The provision of a crossbar at the entrance to the chute for slides measuring more than 1000mm above playing surface. Crossbars are required to be positioned 600-900mm above the starting section of the slide.
- The provision of grab handles at the entrance of the slide is recommended for attachment slides.
- A free space of 1000mm to either side of the centre of the slide.
- A run out impact area of 1000mm at the end of a Type 2 slide.
- A run out impact area of 2000mm at the end of a Type 1 slide.

## Impact Areas

Impact areas are required for all slides measuring more than 600mm above playing surface other than for tunnel slides. A run-out section of impact area is required from the end of all slides (filled with certified playground surfacing).

## Roller Slides

Roller slides offer a terrific sensory experience. Roller slides should comply with AS 4685.3:2014. The space between rollers, and stationary parts of the structure should not present a finger pinch/crush hazard. It is recommended that rollers be restricted to roll in only one direction. Frequent inspections are recommended to insure that there are no missing rollers or broken bearings, that the rollers roll evenly and there are no entrapment hazards for cords, toggles, clothing or hair.

## Embarkment/Mound Slides

These can be built into natural or constructed slopes, following the line of the embankment. The slide must maintain a free height of fall of less than 600mm so that fall hazards are minimised and negate any requirement for certified surfacing to the sides. Embankment slides offer more, natural fun than traditional slides on tall platforms and can be a popular natural play element to a playspace.



## Slide Safety

Younger children require adult supervision and older children should be guided through some basic safety rules. Teaching children how to use the slides in a safe manner empowers them to have responsibility for themselves and their playmates.

## Guidelines for Children when Using Slides

- Children should take one step at a time and hold onto the handrail when climbing the ladder to the top of the slide. They should not climb up the slide itself to get to the top.
- Children should always slide down feet first and sitting up, never head first on their back or stomach.
- Only one child should be on the slide platform at a time, and children shouldn't slide down in groups.
- Children should always check that the bottom of the slide is clear before sliding down. When they reach the bottom, they should get off and move away from the end of the slide so it's clear for others to slide down.

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Need more help? Kidsafe SA provides a playground inspection service. Contact us for a quote to organise an inspector to visit your playspace and provide specific advice.