

FENCING FOR PARKS BEST PRACTICES

This bulletin can be used to assist agencies determine fencing requirements for their public parks including baseball and softball fields, playgrounds, and dog parks.

Baseball & Softball Field Fencing Best Practices

ASTM F2000-19 *Standard Safety Performance Specification for Fences for Baseball and Softball Fields* “ provides recommended minimum requirements for various types of fences used in softball and baseball ballfields and other sports facilities, and practices for installation,” and includes outfield fences, side and foul line fences, backstops, on-grade players benches, and below grade players dugouts.

The dimensions and materials for most fencing include:

- Height: Minimum of 96-in. above grade measured on the side of the fence that faces away from the ballfield. Top rail padding systems may also be used.
- Ground Clearance: The maximum vertical clearance between the grade and the bottom of the fence shall be no more than a 1-inch space to avoid entrapment of feet.
- Panels: Solid barriers and safety padding that does not have openings, such as plastic, plywood, or canvas.
- Horizontal and Vertical Members: Where the fence is composed of horizontal and vertical members, the structural members shall be located on the side opposite of the play environment to prevent encountering the member. The spacing between the vertical or horizontal members shall not exceed 1 ¾ in. If of a lattice design, the members shall be diagonal.
- Diagonal Members: Where the fence is composed of diagonal or other angular positioned members, such as in a lattice fence, any opening created by the diagonal members shall be a maximum of 1 ¾ in. measured in its largest direction to prevent toe holds.
- Fabric or Mesh: Mesh opening for chain-link and other fence fabrics shall be a minimum of 2 in. mesh, 9 gauge.

The dimensions and materials for other fencing include the following:

- Spectator and Player Bench Protective Fencing Height: Minimum of 8 ft. above grade or of a greater dimension that ensures protection of spectators from a fouled line drive or related trajectory.
- Below-Grade Dugouts Fencing Height: Should cover the entire opening from ground level to the top of the dugout roof or overhang.
- Backstop Fencing Dimensions:
 - Backstops provide containment of pitched, thrown, and batted balls. It should delineate the spectator area from the playfield.
 - Typically consists of three panels:
 - One centered behind home plate
 - Two located at the ends of the center panel at an angle of 45° to the center panel.
 - Height: minimum of 16 ft

Playground Fencing Best Practices

ASTM F2049-11 *Standard Safety Performance Specification for Fences/Barriers for Public, Commercial, and Multi-Family Residential Use Outdoor Play Areas* “provides recommended minimum requirements for denoting various types of fences/barriers for the protection of children’s outdoor play spaces” and includes public, commercial, and multi-family residential use locations. Fencing is required in “all vulnerable play areas,” which “are defined as play zones in the proximity of vehicular traffic, railroad tracks, bodies of water, streets, parking lots, roads, electrical and other utility features, and other similar life-threatening or debilitating features.”

The requirements for fences include:

- Height: Minimum of 4 ft above grade
- Ground Clearance: The maximum vertical clearance between the grade and the bottom of the fence shall be no more than 4-inch space measured from both sides of the fence.
- Panels: Solid barriers and safety padding that does not have openings, such as plastic, plywood, or canvas.
- Types:
 - Horizontal and Vertical Design
 - Chain Link Mesh

Dog Parks Best Practices

A well-placed and well-maintained off-leash dog park is an amenity both dog owners and dog lovers can enjoy. The American Kennel Club, veterinary associations, and the American Pet Dog Trainers recommend the following best practices:

- The American Kennel Club and veterinary associations recommend a 6-foot-high galvanized or vinyl-coated chain link perimeter fence.
- The American Pet Dog Trainers recommend avoiding 90° corners to help timid dogs feel 'cornered' by overly enthusiastic or aggressive dogs.
- Fences should be provided with a double-gated entry to allow owners to unleash the dog(s) before entering the open park area. Two or three entrances are preferable. Entrances should be visually shielded from dogs that are already in the park. Dogs tend to gather at entrances and exits, arousal increases, and incidents can quickly occur.