



RPII/API advice to members EN 16899 – 19th January 2017

NOTICE of safety concerns and provision of guidance to BSEN16899 Parkour equipment.

The UK national trades body Association of Play Industries (API) together with the national play inspectorate body Register of Play Inspectors International are sufficiently concerned on a range of safety issues that they issue the following safety guidance.

The British Standards Institution (BSI) published in January 2017 a new standard, BS EN 16899 Sports and recreational equipment - Parkour equipment – Safety requirements and test methods. This replaces BS10075:2013 Specification for Parkour equipment which will be withdrawn.

The API and RPII members of the relevant BSI standards committee, provided with others guidance on these standards. Whilst BSI voted against the acceptance of this standard it has been required to publish it by their primary European standards body, CEN. The UK BSI committee secured the inclusion of a national foreword; however, API and RPII consider that this requires elaboration and greater detail to make users adequately aware of the health and safety risks associated with Parkour equipment. The following information is therefore provided:

Safer surface properties

The purpose of IAS (Impact Attenuating Surface) is to reduce the severity of a head impact injury which is considered by this and other standards to be the most severe type of injury.

The principle of using IAS is derived from EN 1176 (Children's Outdoor Play). IAS is required by EN 1176 to have impact absorbing properties appropriate for the equipment's fall height.

The UK experience is that there is a reasonable expectation by users that the performance of the IAS will be the same wherever it is provided and IAS should have impact absorbing properties equivalent to the fall height of the item of equipment.

This Parkour standard EN 16899 6.2, paragraph's 2 &3 requires that the IAS only needs to have impact absorbing properties that are two thirds of the actual fall height of the equipment.

Contrary to this requirement the RPII/API strongly recommends that the principles of IAS set out in EN 1176 (that the impact absorbing properties are equal to the fall height) are maintained where Parkour Equipment is concerned.



Allowed fall height to a hard surface

The previous British standard for Parkour (BS 10075) required IAS for fall heights above 1200mm. In this European Parkour standard (EN 16899) the minimum fall height from which an IAS is required, has increased from 1200mm to 1600mm.

The RPII/API accepts that Parkour is a new and developing sport where experience and knowledge is still being gathered. There is no clear rationale for the acceptance of either 1200mm or 1600mm as a fall height onto a hard surface, however the consequences of falling from 1600mm will undoubtedly be greater than a fall from 1200mm.

Slips, trips and falls are the main sources of injury and the RPII/API is aware of severe head injuries on Parkour equipment from falls of 1600mm. Therefore, the RPII/API strongly recommends that the maximum fall height before IAS is required, should be maintained at 1200mm.

Accessibility

The law requires that providers undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for any provision; it is expected that consideration of access by young or less competent users would form part of such a risk assessment. Whilst children of 7 or 8 years may have the basic physical skills necessary to use this type of equipment they are unlikely to have sufficient cognitive skills to be aware of the risk involved.

Users and parents of users entering into an area installed in Public Open Space have a reasonable expectation that those areas will be safe to use.

As a sport, Parkour equipment forms no part of children's play; access by young or less competent users' needs consideration during the design of the equipment, as well as its location and layout. Particular care must be taken to ensure that Parkour facilities are not mistaken for children's playground equipment.

Responsibility

Members are reminded of their responsibilities to provide 'best advice' to their clients and the RPII/API strongly recommends that members adopt the guidance given in this document.

Legal notes

Members are reminded that compliance with a standard does not provide immunity from prosecution, the standard is a minimum requirement

From a legal perspective, the HSE has already served an improvement notice on a provider under the HASAWA Act etc. – section 3 - subsection 1. The notice is openly available for viewing on the HSE web site. A number of other providers have been encouraged to upgrade their existing facilities to meet the requirements of BS10075 and have effectively already set the ‘height of the bar’ that needs to be met. Installing or approving installations outside the control measures implemented by the HSE could put members at risk of prosecution should an accident occur as there is already a precedent in place.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment in this instance would highlight that a fall from 1.6m has occurred, will have serious consequences to the user and should be controlled as far as is reasonably practical – either by elimination or through design.

The following laws apply:

Health & Safety at Work Act etc. Act 1974

3. General duties of employers and self-employed to persons other than their employees.
 1. It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.
 2. It shall be the duty of every self-employed person who conducts an undertaking of a prescribed description to conduct the undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that he and other persons (not being his employees) who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.

Management of Health & Safety at Work Act 1999

Risk assessment

3.1 Every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:

- (a) the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
- (b) The risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking,