



March 17, 2020

## **Park & Playground Best Practices During COVID-19 Outbreak**

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's Emergency Declaration of March 16, 2020 placed a limit of 50 people for all social functions and "gatherings" due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The purpose of the Governor's action is to limit one to one contact in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus. This Declaration follows the guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Consistent with the Governor's Declaration, the Safety Director's office recommends that all recreational facilities including parks and playgrounds should be closed immediately and stay closed until the Governor lifts the Emergency Declaration. We believe there are significant challenges for a municipal or county playground owner to implement the controls necessary to restrict the "gathering" to less than 50 people at any play area, especially the large, numerous, and remote parks and playgrounds that many of our clients have.

If an owner of a public park or playground chooses not to close their recreational facilities and play areas, they need to be able to assure the public that their playgrounds will be closely monitored by their personnel, including sanitizing all safety surfaces **several times daily**, and limiting the gathering of people to less than 50 people at any one time. Due to the hurdles of fully documenting all the above actions, including enforcement, the Safety Director feels the most prudent course of risk control is to close parks and playgrounds.

Signs should be posted at the major points of entry to the park and playground, and a notice placed predominately on the park owner's and Recreation Department's websites.

The Safety Director will closely monitor the situation and provide additional guidance as is warranted.