



Yukon Playgrounds and Safety Inspections

April 2017

~ Working Together to Build Active and Healthy Communities ~



Prepared for: Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY)

Prepared by: Jenyfer Neumann, MA, MCIP/RPP

Table of Contents

List of Figures	1
List of Tables.....	1
Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Purpose and Methods	4
Responses.....	5
Yukon Playground Inventory.....	5
CPSI Certification and Playground Inspections	8
Recommendations and Conclusions	10
Appendix A. On-line Survey Questions.....	11
Appendix B. Contact List for Key Playground Managers and Independent Inspectors.....	14

List of Figures

Figure 1. Response data source	5
Figure 2. Type of organization that maintains playgrounds and/or is responsible for safety audits.	7
Figure 3. YTG departments that manage playgrounds.....	8
Figure 4. Organizations with individuals interested in participating in an in-person CPSI course.....	9

List of Tables

Table 1. List of Yukon Playgrounds by Community	6
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Executive Summary

A great need exists for the inspection of Yukon playgrounds by certified playground inspectors. Currently, more than two-thirds of Yukon playgrounds do not have certified playground inspectors inspecting them for safety. Providing training for local playground inspectors, mentorship for newly certified inspectors, and certified inspectors to inspect rural community playgrounds are first steps towards increasing the safety of Yukon's playgrounds for children.

Canadian children are at risk of ill health due to physical inactivity. Playing at playgrounds is an important form of physical activity for children. Regular inspection by qualified inspectors is important in ensuring that playgrounds meet baseline safety standards for use by children. The Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) provides training and certification for playground inspectors.

This report provides an inventory of Yukon playgrounds. It identifies the number of individuals from community organizations and government (municipal and territorial) that are candidates to receive training and be certified for playground safety inspections, the number of communities who would like mentorship for newly certified inspectors, and identifies communities where there is a need for an inspector to provide playground safety inspections.

This report identifies 136 playgrounds managed and/or inspected by 23 different Yukon organizations that are either a Yukon municipality, community organization in an unincorporated community, First Nation, or Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) department.

The manager of the largest number of Yukon playgrounds is the Yukon Territorial Government, which is responsible for 43% of all playgrounds. It is followed by the City of Whitehorse, which owns and manages 27% of Yukon playgrounds. Other municipalities, First Nations and community organizations in unincorporated communities are responsible for the remaining 30% of Yukon playgrounds. Three departments within the YTG manage playgrounds: the Department of Highways and Public Works manages all playgrounds on school properties, the Department of Environment manages playgrounds at Yukon parks and recreation sites, and the Department of Health and Social Services inspects playgrounds at licensed childcare programs and family day homes.

Within the Yukon, only the YTG Department of Health and Social Services reported to have currently certified CPSI playground inspectors. The YTG Department of Highways and Public Works uses outside third party inspectors to inspect school playgrounds. Playground inspections with certified inspectors by these two departments account for only 31% of Yukon playgrounds.

Rural Yukon community organizations, Yukon municipalities, First Nations, and the Yukon Territorial Government want to have members of their staff certified for playground inspections. Thirty-three individuals (49% from rural Yukon and 21% from the City of Whitehorse) have been identified for being certified via the in-person course, with an additional two individuals from rural Yukon wanting to certify online. Nine community organizations would like mentorship for their newly certified inspectors. There is a need in an additional nine rural Yukon community organizations for the provision of certified inspectors to inspect their playgrounds.

As a first step in ensuring that Yukon playgrounds are safe for children, recommendations include providing the CPSI inspector course in Whitehorse; supporting – through course fees and travel/accommodation – municipal government and community organizations in sending their representatives to the course; providing experienced certified inspectors as mentors for newly certified inspectors; and providing inspections for rural community playgrounds where no inspector is available within the community.

Introduction

Ninety-three percent of children and youth are not meeting the minimum Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines needed to receive the health benefits of physical activity, which is a daily 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity.¹

Regular physical activity in children and youth is associated with a variety of benefits including: improved cardiovascular health, improved bone health, reduced body fat and maintaining a healthy weight, improved cardiorespiratory fitness, stronger muscles, improved self-confidence, improved social skills, and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression.² In addition, physical activity in children/youth reduces the chance of developing risk factors for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, Type II diabetes, and some cancers.³

Playgrounds can be an important part of physical activity for children. In the winter, more than 25% of Yukon children only do physical activity during the school day.⁴ Much of this occurs on the school ground and at playgrounds.

Within Canada, injury is the leading cause of death for all Canadians between the ages of one and 44.⁵ While motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of injury-related deaths -- responsible for 58% of deaths of five to nine year olds and 55% of deaths to 10 to 14 year olds -- falls are the leading cause of hospitalization.⁶ Within playgrounds, falls are the main cause of injuries.⁷ Playground deaths, while rare, are usually the result of strangulation.⁸

A broad framework for preventing playground injuries includes supervision, age-appropriate design, fall surfacing, and equipment maintenance.⁹ When compared to harder surfaces, appropriate surfaces in playgrounds can reduce the severity of injury.¹⁰ Playground inspections play an important role in both assessing playground surfaces and identifying equipment maintenance needs.

¹ Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada (Rep.). (2012). Active Canada 20/20.

² <http://www.ssehsactive.org.uk/young-people-resources-and-publications-item/443/index.html>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Yukon Healthy Living Segmentation Study: October - December 2009 (Rep.). (2009). Whitehorse, Yukon: Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY).

⁵ <http://www.cps.ca/documents/position/child-and-youth-injury-prevention>

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ <http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/playground-safety-lt>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ <http://playgroundsafety.org/safe/framework>

¹⁰ <http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/playground-safety-lt>

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has developed the only nationally recognized standard for playground safety.¹¹ It provides detailed specifications for a variety of parameters including inspection, maintenance and surfacing materials.¹² Playgrounds that meet current CSA standards can reduce risk of injury by up to 49%.¹³

Yukon community organizations and governments own and are responsible for maintaining a wide variety of playground equipment. Certified Playground Inspectors should inspect this equipment regularly.

The Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) provides training and certification for playground safety inspectors. The CPSI Playground Safety Inspector Course helps individuals understand the Canadian Standards Association CAN/CSA Z614 “Children’s Playspaces and Equipment” standard, and learn how to conduct a hands-on inspection / audit of their playspace. This training is costly; however, a coordinated approach to offering this training in the Yukon can reduce costs for participants and enable communities to apply the CSA Playground Safety Standards in local community playgrounds.

Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this report is four-fold:

- 1) to develop an inventory of Yukon playgrounds,
- 2) to ascertain the level of interest from municipalities, First Nations, community organizations in unincorporated municipalities and Yukon Territorial Government departments in having their staff receive CPSI training,
- 3) to identify the level of interest in having experienced certified inspectors mentor newly certified inspectors as they perform inspections in their community’s playgrounds, and
- 4) to identify communities that would benefit from having a certified inspector come and perform safety inspections on their playgrounds.

To this end, a survey was developed (Appendix A) and distributed to a wide range of Yukon community contacts. Appendix B provides contact information for key playground managers and inspectors. The survey asked questions about the number of playgrounds owned and/or managed, the current state of CPSI certification, interest in CPSI training, interest in mentorship, and interest in other support for playground safety audits.

Communities that did not complete the survey or respond by email were contacted by telephone. The Yukon Territorial Government Department of Community Services (Sport and Recreation Branch) has developed inventories of recreation amenities, including playgrounds, for Yukon municipalities and unincorporated communities.¹⁴ These online inventories were referred to when no other information directly from communities via the survey, phone or email was forthcoming.

¹¹ <http://www.cps.ca/documents/position/playground-injuries#ref1>

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Available at http://www.community.gov.yk.ca/cd/rec_facilities.html

Responses

A total of 31 responses were collected about 26 different organizations (municipalities, community organizations in unincorporated communities, First Nations, or YTG department), 23 of which are responsible for at least one playground. Most responses were received via the online survey (42%, n=13) and by phone (39%, n=12; Figure 1). Information received through web research – using Department of Community Services online recreation inventories – and email were 13% (n=4) and 6% (n=2) respectively. Responses received in means other than the online survey were often incomplete; most information from other sources was for the number of playgrounds in the community with less information available about current CPSI certification within a given community.

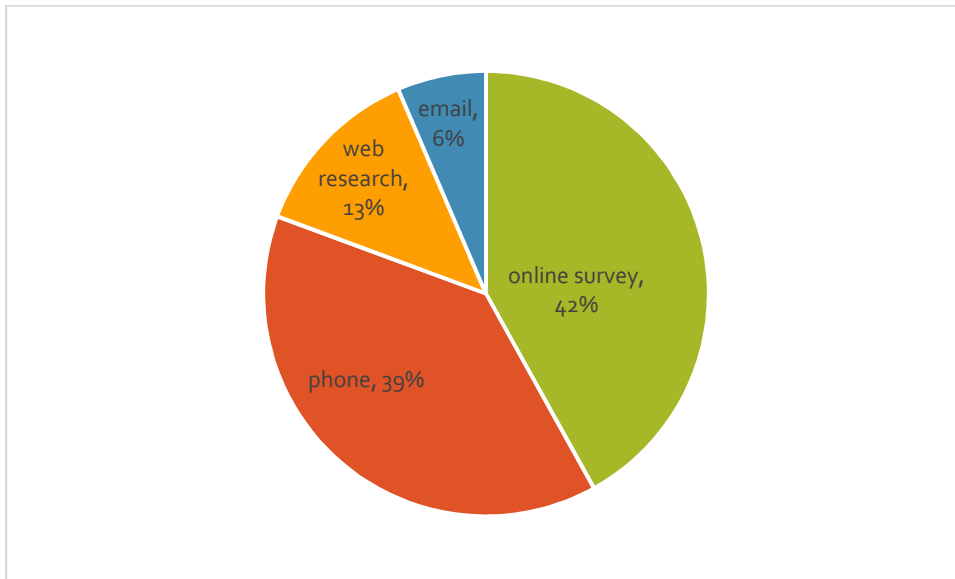


Figure 1. Response data source

Yukon Playground Inventory

This report tallied 136 outdoor Yukon playgrounds (Table 1). Almost every Yukon community has a playground, with the exception of Keno and Mount Lorne¹⁵. This report does not include playgrounds at private establishments (businesses or non-profit organizations) such as the Robert Service Campground or Copperbelt Railway and Mining Museum. Indoor playgrounds are also excluded from this survey, such as the pay-for-use indoor playgrounds at the Canada Games Centre and the Heart of Riverdale Community Centre, and playgrounds at restaurants.

¹⁵ Mount Lorne has a “playscape” which is not an official playground.

Table 1. List of Yukon Playgrounds by Community

Organization	Type	Community	#
Beaver Creek Community Club	Unincorporated Community	Beaver Creek*	1
Kluane First Nation	First Nation	Burwash Landing	1
Carcross/Tagish First Nation	First Nation	Carcross*	3
Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation	First Nation	Carmacks*	2
Village of Carmacks	Municipality	Carmacks*	3
City of Dawson	Municipality	Dawson*	2
Kluane Lake Athletic Association	Unincorporated Community	Destruction Bay*	2
Town of Faro	Municipality	Faro*	3
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations	First Nation	Haines Junction*	1
Village of Haines Junction	Municipality	Haines Junction*	1
Keno Community Club	Unincorporated Community	Keno	0
Marsh Lake Community Society	Unincorporated Community	Marsh Lake	1
Village of Mayo	Municipality	Mayo*	2
First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun	First Nation	Mayo*	2
Lorne Mountain Community Association	Unincorporated Community	Mount Lorne	0
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation	First Nation	Old Crow*	3
Selkirk First Nation	First Nation	Pelly Crossing*	0
Ross River Dene Council	First Nation	Ross River*	1
Carcross/Tagish First Nation	First Nation	Tagish	1
Tagish Community Association	Unincorporated Community	Tagish	1
Village of Teslin	Municipality	Teslin*	2
Liard First Nation	First Nation	Upper Liard	1
Town of Watson Lake	Municipality	Watson Lake*	7
City of Whitehorse	Municipality	Whitehorse*	37
Highways & Public Works (School playgrounds)	YTG	Territory-wide	25
Environment (Parks and recreation sites)	YTG	Territory-wide	17
Health and Social Services (Licensed childcare)	YTG	Territory-wide	17
		TOTAL	136

* These communities also have playgrounds at their local elementary school. Numbers of school playgrounds are reflected in the playgrounds managed by YTG Highways and Public Works.

The largest manager of playgrounds is the Yukon Territorial Government (YTG), which is responsible for 43% (n=59) of all playgrounds (Figure 2). More than half of the Yukon's playgrounds (n=77, 57%) are neither managed nor inspected by the Yukon government. The City of Whitehorse owns and manages 27% (n=37) of Yukon playgrounds.¹⁶ Other municipalities, First Nations and community organizations in unincorporated communities are responsible for the remaining 30% (n=40) of Yukon playgrounds, the largest of which is Watson Lake which has seven playgrounds (5% of Yukon total).

¹⁶ A list of City of Whitehorse playgrounds can be found at <http://www.whitehorse.ca/departments/parks-and-community-development/outdoor-facilities-/playgrounds>

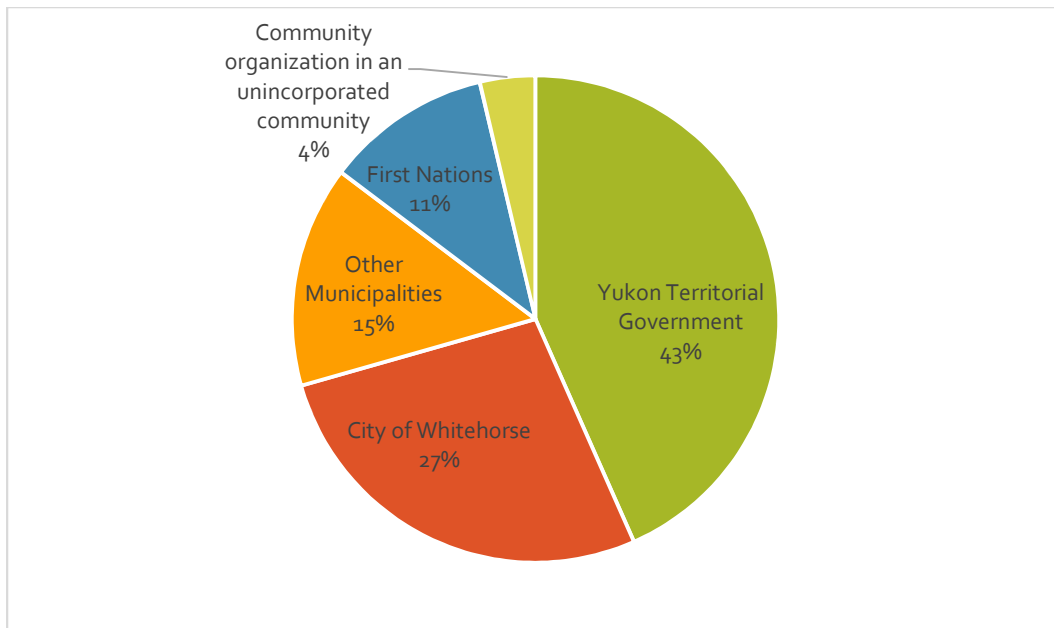


Figure 2. Type of organization that maintains playgrounds and/or is responsible for safety audits.

Three different departments within the YTG manage and/or inspect playgrounds: Highways and Public Works (42%), Environment (29%) and Health and Social Services (29%) (Figure 3). The Department of Highways and Public Works (which houses the Property Management division) manages all of the playgrounds on school property in the territory (n=25, 18% of all Yukon playgrounds). Every elementary school has at least one playground. There are 13 rural communities with elementary schools, and 11 elementary schools in Whitehorse. The Department of Environment manages playgrounds in Yukon territorial parks and recreation sites (n=17, 13% of all Yukon playgrounds). With the exception of the Wolf Creek Campground, all playgrounds managed by the Department of Environment are outside of Whitehorse.¹⁷ Finally, the Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for inspecting playgrounds for licenced childcare and family day home programs in the Territory (n=17, 13% of Yukon playgrounds). Of the daycares in childcare and family day home programs, ten are in Whitehorse and seven are in the communities.

¹⁷ A list of Yukon campgrounds with playgrounds can be found at: http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/camping-parks/documents/campground_map.pdf

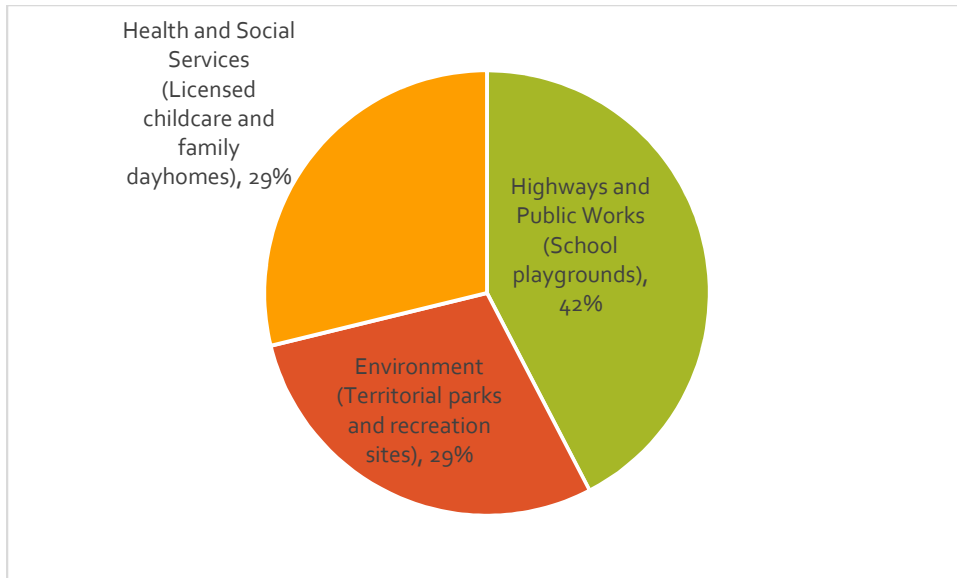


Figure 3. YTG departments that manage playgrounds

CPSI Certification and Playground Inspections

With the exception of the Department of Health and Social Services, which has four currently certified CPSI inspectors, no communities or organizations have current certification. Staff at City of Whitehorse, YTG Department of Highways and Public Works, and two Marsh Lake community members are reported as having expired CPSI certification.

Individuals were identified for 33 spots in an in-person CPSI course (Figure 4). Of these, 70% (n=23) were for non-YTG staff, with 48% (n=16) coming from rural Yukon and 21% (n=7) coming from the City of Whitehorse. In addition, two individuals from rural Yukon wanted to take the online recertification course instead of attending an in-person course. Between wanting community members to take either the in-person or online course, these represent nine rural Yukon community organizations.

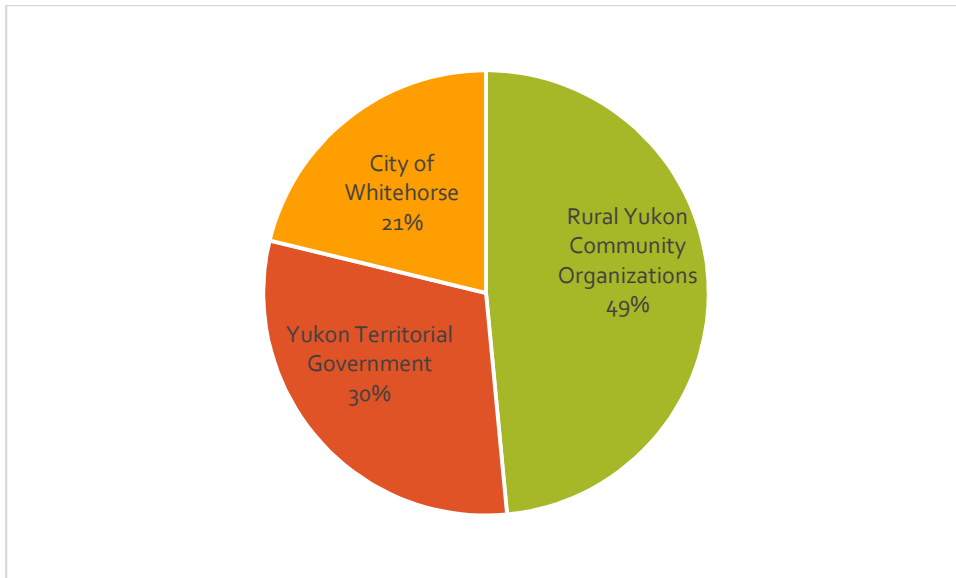


Figure 4. Organizations with individuals interested in participating in an in-person CPSI course

Of the non-YTG staff, all except four requested support both for course fees and, for those coming from rural Yukon, for travel and accommodation costs. With respect for timing of the course, all respondents except one preferred the course to occur on Monday-Thursday during the workweek instead of Friday-Monday over the weekend.

Nine rural Yukon community organizations indicated that they would like a certified mentor to support their inspection of their playgrounds.

Two rural Yukon community organizations, rather than having a member of their community take the course, preferred to have a certified inspector inspect their playgrounds for them.

An additional seven rural community organizations – with 12 playgrounds between them – did not provide a response as to whether they would like to have either a member of their community receive CPSI training, or have a certified inspector inspect their playgrounds for them.

Although not directly asked in the survey, a handful of respondents did make reference to inspection of their playgrounds by a third party. The Department of Highways and Public Works (responsible for schoolyard playgrounds) has all their inspections performed by a third party. However, they would like to have a core of four to five certified inspectors on staff. In addition, the YTG Department of Environment is currently initiating a complete hazard risk analysis of their playgrounds in parks and recreation sites that will be undertaken by an outside inspector.

Considering that the YTG departments of Highways and Public Works and Health and Social Services are the only organizations which indicated using certified playground inspectors, 69% of Yukon playgrounds – the balance of playgrounds managed by the other organizations – are not currently being inspected by certified inspectors.

Recommendations and Conclusions

With neither any rural Yukon communities nor any non-YTG organizations having valid CPSI certification, the lack of CPSI training certification is prevalent throughout the Yukon. Yukon community organizations need access to trained CPSI inspectors as the first step in ensuring that their community playgrounds meet current safety standards. One need not look further than the 2012 tragedy in Watson Lake, where a five-year-old girl was killed by a falling soccer net, to see the importance of ensuring that equipment that children have access to is safe. As such, the following recommendations have been developed to make inspections by certified CPSI inspectors available for all Yukon playgrounds as a starting point on the path towards seeing that Yukon playgrounds meet current safety standards:

- Provide the CPSI certification course in Whitehorse.
- Provide support as requested (course fees, travel and accommodations costs) for a minimum of 16 individuals from rural Yukon community organizations to take the in-person CPSI course.
- Provide support (course fees) for a minimum of seven individuals from the City of Whitehorse to take the in-person CPSI course.
- Provide available spots in the CPSI course for a minimum of ten YTG staff.
- Provide support (course fees) for a minimum of two individuals from rural Yukon community organizations to take the on-line CPSI theory course.
- Further promote the CPSI course and provide support as needed for course certification as per interest to individuals from organizations that manage/maintain Yukon playgrounds.
- Support a minimum of nine rural Yukon communities by providing a certified mentor to support them in performing inspections of their own playgrounds.
- Provide certified inspectors to a minimum of nine rural Yukon community organizations (two that have requested this and seven that had no response but have playgrounds) to ensure that their playgrounds have been inspected.
- Promote playground inspections to other private or non-profit playground managers.

Following the above recommendations are just the start to making sure that Yukon playgrounds are safe for children. After safety inspections are completed by certified inspectors of all playgrounds, next steps include following through on inspection report recommendations with respect to playground equipment maintenance, upgrades, or other comments to ensure that playgrounds meet current baseline standards for safety.

Appendix A. On-line Survey Questions

Questionnaire to Assess Interest

Does your community or organization own or operate playgrounds? Do you need support in performing safety audits on your playgrounds?

The Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) is interested in supporting Yukon communities/organizations in providing safety audits of playgrounds they own and/or manage.

To this end, RPAY is applying for funding to host a Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) course and is:

- a) assessing interest from organizations in taking the CPSI course,
- b) identifying organizations that would like a certified CPSI inspector to inspect and provide a safety audit of playgrounds they own or operate,
- c) identifying organizations that would like a certified CPSI inspector to mentor newly certified community playground inspectors as they audit their playgrounds, and
- d) developing an inventory of Yukon playgrounds.

The CPSI Playground Safety Inspector Course will help individuals understand the Canadian Standards Association CAN/CSA Z614 “Children’s Playspaces and Equipment” standard, and learn how to conduct a hands-on inspection / audit of their playspace. More information on Canadian Certified Playground Inspector training and certification is provided below.

If you have any questions, please contact Anne Morgan, Executive Director at the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) by email at anne@rpay.ca or by phone at 867-668-2389.

1. Contact Information
 - a. Name
 - b. Organization
 - c. Community
 - d. Email address
 - e. Phone Number
2. How many playgrounds does your organization own and/or maintain?
 - a. Number of playgrounds owned
 - b. Number of playgrounds maintained
3. Are you currently certified as a Canadian Playground Safety Inspector?
 - a. Yes.
If yes, expiry date of certificate.
 - b. No

Becoming a Canadian Certified Playground Inspector

To become a Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) Canadian Certified Playground Inspector you will need to:

- First, attend a CPSI Theory Course and score at least 70% on the Theory Exam.
- Then, attend a CPSI Practical Course and score at least 70% on the Practical exam within 24 months of the date the Theory exam was passed.

Certification is valid for three years. For more information, visit the CPSI website at <https://www.cpsionline.ca/>.

Recertification as a Canadian Certified Playground Inspector

If your Canadian Certified Playground Inspector status has expired within the last 6 months, you can renew by choosing to:

- Write the Online Recertification Exam.
- Take the Online Recertification Preparation Course and write the Online Recertification Exam.
- Attend the classroom Practical Course and write the classroom Recertification Exam, or write the Online Recertification Exam.
- Completely recertify by taking the Theory and Practical Courses and scoring 70% or higher on each exam.

For all other re-certification options, please visit the CPSI website at <https://www.cpsionline.ca/>

Please note that the last time a CPSI course was offered in the Yukon was in November 2013.

4. Based on the above descriptions, what CPSI training interests you? Please select one.
- a. I would like to take the full 4-day theory and practical course
 - b. I would like to take the 2-day Practical Course for re-certification purposes
 - c. I prefer to take the online re-certification exam
 - d. I prefer to take the online re-certification prep course and exam
 - e. I am not interested in CPSI training or re-certification at this time

Community Support for Playground Inspections

In addition to the CPSI certification and re-certification process, RPAY would like to support playground inspections in rural communities. Please indicate below if you are interested in:

- Being mentored by an experienced inspector to carry out playground inspections in your community. You must be previously certified or participate in the CPSI Practical Course to be eligible, or
 - Having an experienced inspector visit your community to conduct inspections and provide a report.
5. Based on the two options described above, what type of community support for playground inspections interests you?
- a. We do not need community support for inspections
 - b. I would like a mentor to help me inspect my community playground(s)

- c. My organization would like an experienced inspector to conduct one or more community playground inspections

- 6. Based on the availability of CPSI instructors and the seasonal weather conditions, RPAY would likely host the training in the fall (September / October) of 2017. Note that the course would be hosted in or near Whitehorse. If you are interested, when would you prefer to participate in training? (Please select one).
 - a. Theory Course on Friday & Saturday with the Practical Course and/or Recertification on Sunday & Monday
 - b. Theory Course on Monday & Tuesday with the Practical Course and/or Recertification on Wednesday & Thursday
 - c. Other comments?

- 7. If other staff at your organization or other organization(s) might be interested in the CPSI course, please identify how many, and provide names and contact information, if available.

- 8. Any further questions or comments?

Appendix B. Contact List for Key Playground Managers and Independent Inspectors

Name	Title/Role	Organization	Phone	Email	Web
Tyler Bryden	Inspector			tyler.bryden@outlook.com	
Shelley Wagner	CPSI Inspector	Active Recreation	613-591-7772	shelley@activercreation.ca	
Robin Wheeler	Inspector				
Lucy Skuba	Inspector	Play Systems North	866-985-6637 or 867-334-6852 (cell)	psn@northwestel.net	http://www.playsystemsnorth.com
Alan Kavanaugh	Valuation and Senior Loss Control Specialist; CPSI Inspector	Suncorp Valuations	250-612-1935	alan.kavanaugh@suncorpvaluations.com	
Glenn Tackaberry		Canadian Playground Safety Institute	403-236-2338 or 1-877-536-2338 (Toll-Free)	glenn.tackaberry@cpsi-online.ca	https://www.cpsionline.ca
Ian Angus	Supervisor Safety Office	YTG Department of Highways and Public Works	867-667-5893	ian.angus@gov.yk.ca	
Barry Troke	Operations Manager - South	YTG Department of Environment	867-667-5282	Barry.Troke@gov.yk.ca	
Lesley Gardiner-Falle	Supervisor, Child Care Services Unit	YTG Department of Health and Social Services	867-667-3447	Lesley.Gardiner-Falle@gov.yk.ca	
Marc Boulerice	Parks Supervisor	City of Whitehorse Parks and Community Development	867-668-8655	marc.boulerice@whitehorse.ca	

Note: A directory of current CPSI Certified Inspectors is available at <https://www.cpsionline.ca>