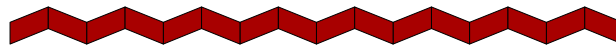




Lead in Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields



Office of Safety and Security Fact Sheet

Synthetic Turf Athletic Field Development Program in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)

The Fairfax County School Board, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Park Authority, as well as various community sports leagues, has installed synthetic turf fields at the following school locations: Bryant Alternative High, Hutchison Elementary, Sandburg Middle, Madison High, and West Springfield High. We anticipate installing turf fields at additional school sites in the coming months and years. All these fields are made from polyethylene fibers.

FCPS is aware of recent findings that some artificial turf fields in New Jersey were found to contain “high levels of lead” that could pose a health hazard for the field users. The fields in New Jersey that were cited are different from those in Fairfax County. The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) performed environmental testing on twelve (12) synthetic turf fields. Two (2) of those synthetic turf fields were made from nylon fibers. Those two (2) nylon fiber fields had elevated lead based upon samples collected from the field. Ten (10) of the synthetic turf fields were made from polyethylene fibers. Those ten (10) polyethylene fiber fields were found to have “very low or undetectable levels of lead in the fibers” (from the New Jersey Investigation of Artificial Turf and Human Health Concerns April 2008 fact sheet).

All of the fields installed at all FCPS locations are made of polyethylene fibers similar to those shown to be negative for environmental lead in the New Jersey study.

A review of the polyethylene fiber manufacturers’ certificates show that the polyethylene fibers are manufactured with a colorfast process that may have trace amounts of lead. Additional manufactures’ testing of the polyethylene fibers under harsh environmental conditions [(acid) showers, searing heat, and sunlight] confirm that trace to undetectable levels of lead are present in the leaching process. The testing results confirm that polyethylene fibers used on FCPS synthetic turf fields meet the stringent International standards for Environmental Compatibility (DIN 18035-7:2002-06).

Based on all the information we have reviewed, FCPS believes that the synthetic turf fields installed on FCPS athletic facilities are safe. FCPS will continue to monitor emerging information pertaining to health or environmental concerns regarding synthetic turf fields.

For more information or questions, please contact the Office of Safety and Security at 703-658-3760.