

The following offers a brief evaluation of surface type against factors that should be considered when selecting a Safety Surface

	Matta Products interlocking tiles (Safety Matta & Play Matta)	Bark Chip	Synthetic Grass	Wetpour	Sand	Grass	Grass Mats
What critical fall height does the surface provide?	Up to 4.5m Dependent on product	Up to 3m Dependent on depth of installation	Up to 3m Dependent on product and installation	Up to 3m Dependent on depth of installation	Up to 3m Dependent on depth of installation	Up to 1.5m Subject to minimum criteria and a full risk assessment*	Up to 3m Dependent on depth of installation
Is the surface easy to maintain and durable?	Low Maintenance Occasional power washing may be required to remove possible moss growth in shaded areas	High Maintenance Natural product so can break down outdoors after a relatively short time. Pits will need to be refilled and raked regularly	Low Maintenance	Variable Over time heavy wear areas may become scuffed and begin to crumble and break up	High Maintenance Ideally needs to be covered when not in use. Should be raked, sanitised and topped up regularly	High Maintenance Easily worn and has little impact absorbency when dry. Requires regular mowing in summer months	Variable Can sink in wet weather if no supporting underlay is used. Pulls apart over time as mats not interlocked
Does the surface provide easy access for wheelchair users and the disabled?	Very Good Solid surface with sloped and buried edges. No raised edges	Very Poor Type of material and raised perimeter reduces access	Very Good	Good Ramps and Low curbs required	Very Poor Type of material and raised perimeter reduces access	Good Can become poor when wet and boggy	Very Good Tiles allow easy access for wheelchair users and pushchairs
What is the hygiene level of the surface?	Very Good	Poor Animal mess and syringes can be easily hidden	Good Attractive to animals which could lead to fouling	Very Good	Poor Can hide broken glass, syringes and animal mess easily	Poor Can partially hide broken glass and syringes. Attractive to animals which could lead to fouling	Very Good
Can the surface be easily vandalised?	Low chance of damage	High chance of damage Possible fire hazard and material can be easily thrown and kicked	Low chance of damage	Low chance of damage	Medium chance of damage Can be easily thrown and kicked	Low chance of damage	Medium chance of damage Some products can be easily pulled apart
What is the flammability level of the surface? Will it catch fire easily?	Low Flame retardant surface will damage under continuous heat but won't encourage the spread of fire. Only damaged tiles will need replacing creating a seamless finish	High Prolonged exposure to heat or fire, particularly in dry weather, can cause product to ignite. Likely need to replace entire surface	Low Flame retardant surface will damage under continuous heat but won't encourage the spread of fire	Low Flame retardant surface will damage under continuous heat but won't encourage the spread of fire. Only damaged area will need replacing but finish may be patchy.	Low Flame retardant surface	High In dry weather grass can spread fire quickly	Variable Many versions on the market. Check with supplier to confirm fire retardant properties.
What is the chance of injury?	Low Little chance of superficial injury	Medium Can cause injury to eyes if thrown. Bark can also cause splinters	Medium Friction burns may occur if a person hits the surface hard or at speed	Low Little chance of superficial injury	Medium Can cause injury to eyes if thrown	Low Little chance of superficial injury	Variable Little chance of superficial injury. Sometimes installed with metal pegs and cable ties that could cause injury