



THE SUB-BASE DILEMMA

Don't get caught in the sub-base dilemma. **Most surfacing systems have a uniform thickness cross-section throughout the play area.** Some projects may be a bit thicker on one are of the playground to accommodate a higher unit such as a swing or a tall slide. **What you don't want is to create huge drain areas under the surfacing.** We've seen a few of them which were over 14" thick at the drains! The problem with this type of design, is two-fold; It is VERY expensive to fill up this space with polyurethane, tire rubber and a lot of labor. Additionally, it gets way to spongy in the center area which is no fun to walk or play on and can shorten system life. Play surfacing does not require this type of drainage in most cases.

Most play areas can be designed without drains like this. Many soils are self draining and do not need additional drains. Soils with high clay content can usually have drains placed at surface level, so they function as an overflow condition if the soil is saturated and not perking. To save cost and expense, design these systems with the drains flush or nearly flush to the top of a flatly graded area. In the rare cases where additional drainage is still required, the correct way to do this is to establish drainage profile within the sub-base, and then bring up the levels with **pervious concrete** to establish a grade which allows the rubber to be installed at its required thickness. This way, the safety surfacing performs its designed function without doubling the systems cost and leaving you with a big spongy area in the middle of the pad.

