

Catholic Mutual . . . "CARES"

GUIDELINES FOR MOVABLE SOCCER GOAL SAFETY

1. Soccer Goal Injuries and Deaths

According to the 2010 National Soccer Participation Survey (Soccer Industry Council of America), over 13.5 million persons in the United States play soccer at least once a year. Sixty percent (over 8 million) of these persons are under the age of 18.

There are approximately 225,000 to 500,000 soccer goals in the United States. Many of these soccer goals are unsafe because they are unstable and are either unanchored or not properly anchored or counter-balanced. These movable soccer goals pose an unnecessary risk of tipover to children who climb on goals (or nets) or hang from the crossbar.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a warning based on injuries and deaths associated with movable soccer goals. Many of the serious incidents occurred when the soccer goals tipped over onto the victim. Almost all of the goals involved in these tipovers appeared to be "home-made" by high school shop classes, custodial members, or local welders, not professionally manufactured. These "home-made" goals are often very heavy and unstable.

The majority of movable soccer goals are constructed of metal, typically weighing 150-500 pounds. The serious injuries and deaths are a result of blunt force trauma to the head, neck, chest, and limbs of the victims. In most cases, this occurred when the goal tipped or was accidentally tipped onto the victim. In one case, an 8-year-old child was fatally injured when the movable soccer goal he was climbing tipped over and struck him on the head. In another case, a 20-year-old male died from a massive head trauma when he pulled a goal down on himself while attempting to do chin-ups. In a third case, while attempting to tighten a net to its goal post, the victim's father lifted the back base of the goal causing it to tip over, fatally striking his 3-year-old child on the head.

High winds can also cause movable soccer goals to fall over. For example, a 9-year-old was fatally injured when a goal was tipped over by a gust of wind. In another incident, a 19-year-old goalie suffered stress fractures to both legs when the soccer goal was blown on top of her.

4. Anchoring/Securing/Counter-weighting Guidelines

A properly anchored/counterweighted movable soccer goal is much less likely to tip over. Remember to secure the goal to the ground (preferably at the rear of the goal), making sure the anchors are flush with the ground and clearly visible. It is **IMPERATIVE** that ALL movable soccer goals are always anchored properly. There are several different ways to secure your soccer goal. The number and type of anchors to be used will depend on a number of factors, such as soil type, soil moisture content, and total goal weight.

Anchor Types

Auger Style

This style anchor is “helical” shaped and is screwed into the ground. A flange is positioned over the ground shoes (bar) and rear ground shoe (bar) to secure them to the ground. A minimum of two auger-style anchors (one on each side of the goal) are recommended. More may be required, depending on the manufacturer’s specifications, the weight of the goal, and soil conditions.

Semi-permanent

This anchor type is usually comprised of two or more functional components. The main support requires a permanently secured base that is buried underground. One type of semi-permanent anchor connects the underground base to the soccer goal by means of two tethers. Another design utilizes a buried anchor tube with a threaded opening at ground level. The goal is positioned over the buried tube and the bolt is passed through the goal ground shoes (bar) and rear ground shoe (bar) and screwed into the threaded hole of the buried tube.

Peg or Stake Style (Varying Lengths)

Typically two to four pegs or stakes are used per goal (more for heavier goals). The normal length of a peg or stake is approximately 10 inches (250 mm). Care should be taken when installing pegs or stakes. Pegs or stakes should be driven into the ground with a sledge-hammer as far as possible and at an angle if possible, through available holes in the ground shoes (bar) and rear ground shoe (bar) to secure them to the ground. If the peg or stake is not flush with the ground, it should be clearly visible to persons playing near the soccer goal. Stakes with larger diameters or textured surfaces have greater holding capacity.

J-Hook Shaped Stake Style

This style is used when holes are not pre-drilled into the ground shoes (bars) or rear ground shoe (bar) of the goal. Similar to the peg or stake style, this anchor is hammered, at an angle if possible, directly into the earth. The curved (top)

- Anchor or chain one goal to another, to itself in a folded down position, or to nearby fence posts, dugouts, or any other similar sturdy fixture when not in use. If this is not practical, store movable soccer goals in a place where children cannot have access to them.
- Remove nets when goals are not in use.
- Check for structural integrity and proper connecting hardware before each use. Replace damaged or missing parts or fasteners immediately.
- NEVER allow anyone to climb on the net or goal framework.
- Ensure safety/warning labels are clearly visible (placed under the crossbar and on the sides of the down-posts at eye level).
- Fully disassemble goals for seasonal storage.
- Always exercise extreme caution when moving goals and allow adequate manpower to move goals of varied sizes and weights. Movable soccer goals should only be moved by authorized and trained personnel.
- Always instruct players on the safe handling and potential dangers associated with movable soccer goals.
- Movable soccer goals should only be used on LEVEL (flat) fields.

Additional Soccer Goal Safety Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations

P.O. Box 690
 Indianapolis, IN 46206
 Telephone (317) 972-6900
www.nfhs.org

National Collegiate Athletic Association

700 W. Washington St.
 Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222
 Telephone (317) 917-6222
www.ncaa.org

The Coalition to Promote Soccer Goal Safety

c/o Soccer Industry Council of America
 200 Castlewood Drive
 North Palm Beach, FL 33408
 or call any of these Coalition members:
 800-527-7510
 800-334-4625
 800-243-0533
 800-531-4252