

Ground Crew Safety

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Failure to care for skinned-area lips eventually causes the turf to suffer.

Overall, an integrated plan that focuses on maintenance and safety-related issues will assist in assuring safe fields and employees.

It may be impossible to create and maintain the "perfect" ball field. However, in taking the extra time to inspect fields consistently and carefully, to eliminate detectable hazards and to document the steps that have been taken, sports turf managers will be able to decrease the probability of injuries. □

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Skin Care

By Steve Wightman

Soil Composition

The ultimate goal of a baseball infield is to provide a true and consistent surface for the roll and bounce of the ball and a firm yet resilient surface for the players. This should be maintained throughout the entire game, even when the players are running, stopping, twisting, turning and sliding.

In order to maintain an acceptable surface under these conditions, it's important that the soil mix be composed of material strong enough yet flexible enough for both the players and the ball.

For the safety of the players and for a true ball roll and bounce, the mix should not contain any particle size over 1/8 of an inch in diameter. In order to provide the firmness and resiliency necessary for the action of the game, the mix should contain proper

amounts of sand, silt and clay. Successful infield skin areas usually contain a clay content of between 15 percent and 30 percent.

The amount of moisture maintained within the soil profile is another key ingredient to a safe and functional infield skin. Too much water obviously takes away from the soil strength necessary for quality play while not enough water yields a surface that is too hard and dusty for quality play.

Mound/Batters Boxes Composition

With these two areas being the most heavily concentrated areas of use on a baseball field, it is necessary that they be composed of a soil that provides for more strength than any other area. Soil strength is achieved by higher amounts of clay content within the soil profile. Successful soils for pitchers mounds and home plate areas normally contain a clay content of more than 30 percent.



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