

State of California • Department of Justice
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Brown Reaches Settlement to Reduce Children's Lead Exposure in Artificial Turf

OAKLAND - Continuing his fight to reduce children's exposure to lead, Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. today announced a settlement that requires two of the largest makers and installers of artificial turf to eliminate nearly all lead from their products.

"Because schools, public parks and daycare centers use artificial turf, it's critical that we minimize the amount of lead it contains," Brown said. "Today's agreement will get the lead out of artificial turf in playgrounds and ball fields around the state."

The settlement requires Georgia-based Beaulieu, LLC, the country's largest supplier of artificial turf to retailers, and Field Turf, USA, the nation's largest maker and installer of artificial turf fields, to reformulate the products to reduce lead levels to negligible amounts.

The agreement follows a landmark settlement last year with AstroTurf, LLC. Collectively, the three companies control most of the artificial turf market, and their settlements with Brown's office establish the nation's first enforceable standards applicable to lead in artificial turf.

Brown brought the case in 2008 against these companies for excessive lead levels after testing by the Center for Environmental Health found high concentrations of lead in their products. Brown's office confirmed these findings in independent tests.

Today's settlement requires Beaulieu and FieldTurf to change their products so that they contain less than 5 parts per million lead. Lab results found some artificial turf products with more than 5,000 parts per million, which is more than 10 times state and federal guidelines for content in children's products. Lead is added to the products to keep colors vibrant.

There is no safe exposure to lead. In lengthy or high exposures, it is toxic to many organs and tissues including the heart, bones, intestines and kidneys. Since excessive exposure can interfere with development of the nervous system, it is particularly dangerous in children and can cause permanent learning and behavior disorders.

Lead in artificial turf usually enters the human body hand-to-mouth. Children playing on it get lead onto their hands and stick them into their mouths. Hand washing is a good way of reducing exposure.

In addition to reformulating their products, Beaulieu agreed to pay for wipe-testing of products in California daycare facilities, schools and playgrounds that were purchased after October 2004. FieldTurf took action in 2003 to reduce lead in its turf products. This settlement requires it to replace turf fields installed in California before November 2003 at a discount if they test high for lead, and also to reduce the lead content of its new products.

The Los Angeles City Attorney and Solano County District Attorney joined Brown in the case against the three companies. AstroTurf paid \$170,000 in penalties, grants and fees, and agreed to improve its products. Beaulieu will pay \$285,000 and FieldTurf will pay \$212,500.

In the past year, Brown has initiated several enforcement actions against manufacturers and retailers for lead in products designed for children.

In June, Brown demanded that Rainbow and 5-7-9 stores remove from their shelves jewelry with parts containing as much as 97% lead. Earlier this year, Target removed teddy bears from its stores after Brown notified the company that lead was found in the bears. In November 2009, Brown warned several retailers, including Walmart, Sears and Walgreens, to remove from their store shelves several products designed for children found to contain excessive levels of lead.

Copies of the artificial turf settlements are attached.

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