



**Sunshine Gym**  
Outdoor Fitness Equipment

# Inspection Guide

for outdoor gym equipment



# Outdoor Gym Equipment: Inspections explained



## **Sunshine Gym outdoor fitness equipment requires relatively little maintenance compared to some playground equipment for example.**

Our Operations & Maintenance Manual provides all the information required to care for the equipment purchased from Sunshine Gym. In this guide we give an overview of the inspection process and its role in the health and safety obligations assigned to outdoor gym owners.

We will refer to both BS EN 16630 Outdoor Fitness Equipment and also BS EN 1176-7 Playground Equipment and Surfacing.

Our equipment for users above 1.4m in height is certified to BS EN 16630. Our equipment for users 1.4m and under isn't covered by a standard, so we follow the inspection schedules from these two most applicable standards as guides.

Both standards require each of the three main inspection types to be carried out:

- Routine visual Inspection
- Operation inspection
- Annual inspection

# Why do I need to Inspect my equipment?



Outdoor gym equipment is quite often bought by an organisation or facility for other people to use. This could be a school buying equipment for their pupils to use, or a parish council buying for members of the community to enjoy.

The safety of the users is paramount, ensuring they are best protected when operating, and when they are in close proximity of, the equipment.

It is legally the responsibility of the equipment owners to ensure the overall safety of the equipment and gym area. Both BS EN 16630 and BS EN 1176 indicate that a very similar inspection routine is followed.

## Who should carry out the inspections?

**The exact answer to this question will vary from case to case, and also for each of the three inspection types. The description used in BS EN 1176 is that the person is competent and may require training to complete the inspection. To interpret what is meant by competent, it is crucial to understand the requirements of each type of inspection.**

### 1. Routine Visual Inspection

This inspection is the one that should be carried out most regularly, depending on the frequency of use. This could be daily checks, a weekly check or, in heavily used gyms, before every use.

The key word is 'visual'. That is because the check requires the inspector to visually check both the equipment and setting for any signs of potential issues. This could be, but is not limited to, a missing fixing or cap, damage caused by vandals, or any litter or broken glass in the area. Put simply, the inspector needs to look out for any issues or problems with any of the equipment or surrounding area. Training courses are available for anyone charged with carrying out these inspections, but a competent person will have knowledge of what the equipment is and does, as well as how the area should present in normal conditions. This knowledge will ensure the inspector notices and records any hazards that may be present.

### 2. Operational Inspection

This ensures that the equipment and surrounding area operate correctly and are stable. Both standards suggest that this type of inspection should be carried out every one to three months, with gyms seeing heavy use carrying out this inspection at least monthly.

We recommend that the equipment is tested in normal usage and that all restrictor blocks (or safety stops as we commonly refer to them) are present and performing correctly. The equipment should perform to the same standard as the day it was purchased.

This inspection also considers the stability of the equipment. Ground conditions can change the performance of the equipment, such as ground shrinkage in areas of heavy clay for example. Particularly hot weather can result in the foundations becoming loose in the ground if not identified and measures put in place during the installation.

The Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) accredits and certifies qualified operational inspectors to carry out the correct level of inspection. Quite often, a particular council employee will require training to carry out the inspections at a number of parks under the authority's remit for example.



### 3. Annual Inspection

As the name suggests, the annual inspection is typically carried out once a year. The fundamental of this inspection is to completely check of all aspects of the outdoor gym to comply with BS EN 16630 and any other relevant standards. This includes the equipment, surrounding area and the installation of the outdoor gym. Just because equipment is certified to a standard, doesn't necessarily mean that it will meet the requirements year after year because wear and tear, weather damage, vandalism, etc. can change the performance and the outcome of the relevant tests.

For example, the wear on a safety stop could mean that a moving part on the equipment travels slightly further than when originally installed, encroaching into the 1.5m safety zone which should be around each piece of kit.

A tree may have grown, and is now positioned closer to the equipment, again in the safety zone. If the requirement for a 1.5m clear space is no longer met, then this is a noncompliance to the standard. The level and competency required to carry out an annual inspection is quite in depth. Again, the RPII accredits and certificates qualified annual inspectors to carry out the correct level of inspection, although there are far fewer annual inspectors compared to operational inspectors due to the vast knowledge and training required.

That is why quite often owners of outdoor gym equipment will contract an external inspection company to carry out the annual inspection.

#### Should I have my equipment serviced?

Most car owners will take their vehicle to a garage for a service and MOT. The same applies with outdoor gym equipment where the service element is carried out usually by a qualified Sunshine Gym engineer. They will check over all of the equipment, make sure it is working correctly, apply the special wax coating to the equipment, touch up any paint, etc. This will then be followed by the annual inspection by an RPII Annual Inspector. In most cases, the service can highlight any issues that may occur prior to the annual inspections giving a much greater chance of having no or few reported risks/hazards. On this basis, we recommend our service package, available by speaking with our technical sales team.

#### How are hazards measured and reported?

**All hazards are measured on a scale comparing the likelihood of an accident (scored 1 – 5) to the severity of that accident (also scored 1 – 5). The combined score for both measured factors then determine the level of risk from 'very low risk' to 'high risk'.**

To give an example, a plastic drinks bottle is present on the ground within a safety zone. The likelihood of an accident such as a fall or trip caused by the plastic bottle is very low as is the potential severity of the injury. Both would be scored as 1. So 1 multiplied by 1 equals 1. A score of 1 to 5 is classed as very low risk.

It is worth noting though that very low risk is still risk, and the plastic bottle should be identified in the visual routine inspection and removed.

## What happens if an inspection reports a hazard?

**No matter which of the above inspections has taken place, any hazards reported should be actioned and remedied. That action or remedy could be as extreme as taking the equipment out of use depending on the level of risk reported.**

For example, a routine visual inspection reports that there is a missing cap on the handle of a piece of equipment. No sharp edges or entrapments are present so the cap should be purchased via our website with parts dispatched on a next working day service and then replaced. In this case, the equipment doesn't present any additional risk other than potential water ingress so the equipment can still be used while waiting for the spare to arrive.

However should an annual inspection report that a safety stop has worn to the point in which a potential finger entrapment exists, the risk level is increased and we would recommend taking the equipment out of use until a new safety stop is fitted. Again, our engineers can be with you at short notice to complete any repairs required.

Inspections should be carried out by owners (or people contracted by the owners) of outdoor gym equipment for the simple reason of ensuring the safety of users by removing or minimising the risks.

**For more information or to arrange a service inspection package, call our sales team today.**

