

North York mayor wants study to improve playground safety; [ZONE Edition]

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TORONTO STAR

March 12, 1992 pg. NY. 3

North York plans to introduce safety standards for playground equipment, Mayor Mel Lastman says.

"I would like North York to become the first municipality in Canada to introduce safety standards for the design, installation and maintenance of playground equipment," he told North York Council last week.

Lastman said the action comes in the wake of two recent fatal accidents involving recreational equipment.

In one, a 5-year-old boy was strangled when he became entangled in a rope dangling from a playground slide in Peel Region.

In the other, a Harbord Collegiate student was killed when the post of a school handball net fell on him, crushing his skull.

"We tend to think of playground equipment such as monkey bars, swings, teeter-totters and slides as playthings," Lastman said.

"In reality, each year this equipment is responsible for thousands of injuries and some deaths."

There were more than 8,000 injuries on Canadian playgrounds in 1991 - 25 per cent of them related to equipment, he said.

North York council has asked staff to develop a set of standards to "reduce the probability of injury and death of children."