

**REPORT OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION AND THE
SOCCER GOAL SAFETY STAKEHOLDER
WORKGROUP**

**An Examination of the Safety
Issues Associated with
Movable Soccer Goals**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



SENATE DOCUMENT NO. 9

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2013**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

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November 26, 2013

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, Governor of Virginia
Members of the Virginia General Assembly

Dear Governor McDonnell and General Assembly Members:

We are pleased to provide you this report, *An Examination of the Safety Issues Associated with Movable Soccer Goals*, which has been prepared by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) working with the Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Workgroup it formed. The report is presented in accordance with Enactment Clause 3 of Chapter 375 of the 2013 Virginia Acts of Assembly (Senate Bill 933; Senator Vogel) which called on DCR to convene a stakeholder workgroup to examine the safety issues associated with moveable soccer goals. The Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Workgroup included representatives of the Department of Education, Department of Health, Virginia Recreation and Park Society, youth and adult soccer associations, referees associations, professional soccer associations, the YMCA, and the Virginia Retail Merchants Association.

This report presents practices utilized in other states that promote safety for players, especially youth and reviews the current safety practices associated with moveable goals followed by soccer programs sponsored by schools, public parks and recreation programs, and private associations in the Commonwealth. The report also makes recommendations with regard to the Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act enacted by the 2013 General Assembly.

The consensus of the group resulted in the recommendation that in lieu of reenacting the 2013 legislation in 2014, the Virginia General Assembly should officially recognize the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission publication, "*Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety*," through a Joint Resolution. Additionally, the Board of Health should be charged with developing technical assistance materials and promoting the safe use of soccer goals in the Commonwealth with the purpose of preventing, to the extent possible, injury and death as a result of soccer goal tip-over.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David A. Johnson".

David A. Johnson

Attachment

*State Parks • Nonpoint Pollution Prevention • Outdoor Recreation Planning
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation*

SOCCER GOAL SAFETY STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP

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PREFACE

This report has been prepared in accordance with and fulfills the requirements of Chapter 375 of the 2013 Virginia Acts of Assembly (Senate Bill 933; Senator Vogel). Enactment Clause 3 of this legislation stipulated “[t]hat the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Division of State Parks shall convene a stakeholder work group, which shall include representatives of the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, youth and adult soccer associations, referees associations, semi-professional soccer associations, YMCAs, the Virginia Retail Merchants Association, and any others as deemed appropriate by the Director of State Parks or the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, to examine the safety issues associated with moveable soccer goals. The work group shall also review practices in other states including laws, regulations, policies, and protocols that promote safety for players, especially youth; and review the current safety practices associated with moveable goals followed by soccer programs sponsored by schools, public parks and recreation programs, and private associations in the Commonwealth. The work group shall complete its work and report its findings and any recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2013.”

The following pages present the findings and recommendations of the stakeholder workgroup that was assembled in accordance with provisions of this Act.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Enactment Clause 3 of Chapter 375 of the 2013 Virginia Acts of Assembly, the Department of Conservation and Recreation convened a stakeholder workgroup, which included representatives of the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, youth and adult soccer associations, referees associations, professional soccer associations, the YMCA, and the Virginia Retail Merchants Association to examine the safety issues associated with movable soccer goals. The workgroup reviewed practices in other states including laws, regulations, policies, and protocols that promote safety for players, especially youth; and reviewed the current safety practices associated with movable goals followed by soccer programs sponsored by schools, public parks and recreation programs, and private associations in the Commonwealth.

The Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act (Appendix A) created by the 2013 legislation requires every organization that owns and controls a movable soccer goal to establish a soccer goal safety and education policy that outlines how the organization will address any safety concern related to movable soccer goals, including the dangers of unanchored or improperly anchored soccer goals tipping over and the care that must be taken to ensure proper installation, setup, maintenance, and transportation of movable soccer goals; prohibits the sale of movable soccer goals that are not tip-resistant beginning July 1, 2014; and requires the Department of Conservation and Recreation to convene a workgroup to examine safety issues related to movable soccer goals. This bill contained a reenactment clause.

The report makes recommendations with regard to the Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act enacted by the 2013 General Assembly. The consensus of the workgroup resulted in the recommendation that in lieu of reenacting the 2013 legislation in 2014, the Virginia General Assembly should officially recognize the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission publication, "Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety," through a Joint Resolution. Additionally, the Board of Health should be charged with developing technical assistance materials and promoting the safe use of soccer goals in the Commonwealth with the purpose of preventing, to the extent possible, injury and death as a result of soccer goal tip-over.

REPORT OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

During the 2013 General Assembly Session, the Department of Conservation and Recreation was charged with convening a stakeholder workgroup to examine the safety issues associated with movable soccer goals. The Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Workgroup was assembled and reviewed practices in other states including laws, regulations, policies, and protocols that promote safety for players, especially youth; and reviewed the current safety practices associated with movable goals followed by soccer programs sponsored by schools, public parks and recreation programs, and private associations in the Commonwealth.

The Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act of 2013, if reenacted, would require every organization that owns and controls a movable soccer goal to establish a soccer goal safety and education policy that outlines how the organization will address any safety concern related to movable soccer goals, including the dangers of unanchored or improperly anchored soccer goals tipping over, and the care that must be taken to ensure proper installation, setup, maintenance, and transportation of movable soccer goals. The Act would prohibit the sale of movable soccer goals that are not tip-resistant beginning July 1, 2014, and instruct the Board of Health to provide technical assistance for improving soccer goal safety.

Research and findings

Soccer in the United States is governed by the United States Soccer Federation, commonly known as U.S. Soccer <http://www.ussoccer.com/>. The organization governs all levels of soccer in the country, including the national teams, professional leagues, and the amateur game. The United States Census Bureau reports over 13 million Americans play soccer in the United States, which places soccer as the third most played team sport in the U.S., behind only basketball and baseball/softball. It has been estimated that there are approximately 500,000 soccer goals in the United States. Many are movable and subject to tip over if they are not weighted or anchored to the ground.

Statistics on Injuries and Deaths

On its website, Anchored for Safety <http://www.anchoredforsafety.org/> reports that “since 1979, approximately 37 people across the U.S. have died as the result of unsafe soccer goals. Many more have been injured.” Anchored for Safety includes incidents from 1979-2003 reported by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, <http://members.tripod.com/goalsafety/incidents.htm>. Incidents from 2004-2012 that are listed on their site are based on news reports and personal stories. Some incidents, from 2004 to 2012, reported on the Anchored for Safety list were not able to be verified by the Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Work Group.

Governing Bodies of Soccer

There are three primary governing bodies for soccer in Virginia and in the United States with the majority of the games played falling under the rules of one of these organizations. They are the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). For each of these, the text from the rule/law book regarding portable goals is as follows:

- USSF <http://www.ussoccer.com/>
 - “Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement” - Laws of the Game 2012-2013; June 2012; Law 1- The Field of Play; Page 7
- NFHS <http://www.nfhs.org/>
 - “If portable goals are used, they shall be adequately anchored, secured or counterweighted to the ground” - NFHS 2011-2012 Soccer Rules; 2011; Rule 1- The Field of Play; Section 4 Goals; Article 2; Page 12
- NCAA <http://www.ncaa.org/>
 - “The goals shall be anchored, secured or counterweighted”- NCAA Soccer 2012 and 2013 Rules and Interpretations; Rule 1- The Field of Play; 1.9 Goals; Page 10

Consumer Product Safety Commission

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent agency of the U.S. government that regulates the sales and manufacturing of most consumer products. In 1995, the CPSC released “Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety” (CPSC Document #326). This document, <http://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/122392/soccer.pdf>, was the very first of its kind to

address the proper installation, anchoring, safe usage and safe storage of portable soccer goals. It also identified, for the first time, the inherent dangers in “homemade” soccer goals, or goals not manufactured professionally. These guidelines are designed for use by park and recreation staff, club/team staff, parents, school officials, maintenance crews, sports equipment suppliers, and the general public involved in soccer goal safety. Although more than seventeen years old, “Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goals” still applies to today’s soccer goal usage demographics and is referenced in every state soccer goal safety law that exists today.

American Society for Testing and Materials

The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) is an international organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus technical standards for a wide range of industries (**ASTM-PS-75-99: Provisional Safety Standard and Performance Specification for Soccer Goals**). ASTM makes its standards available for sale to any interested parties through its website www.astm.org.

In the late 1990s, the Consumer Product Safety Commission directed the soccer manufacturing industry and the soccer community to work with ASTM in developing standards for the safe usage and manufacturing of soccer goals. There are three ASTM standards in existence today that apply to soccer goals.

ASTM F1938 – 98 (2009) Guide for Safer Use of Movable Soccer Goals

This document provides guidance to people administering soccer, like club presidents, park and recreation directors, athletic directors and groundskeepers, on the proper installation, use and storage of soccer goals. <http://www.astm.org/Standards/F1938.htm>. This guide presents directions for the installation, use, and storage of full-size or nearly full-size movable soccer goals. It is expected that these guidelines can help prevent deaths and serious injuries resulting from soccer goal tip-over. These guidelines are intended for use by parks and recreation personnel, school officials, sports equipment purchasers, parents, coaches, and any other members of the general public concerned with soccer goal safety. These guidelines are intended to address the risk of movable soccer goal tip-over. The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard.

ASTM F2056 - 09 Standard Safety and Performance Specification for Soccer Goals

This standard provides manufacturers with safety and performance requirements for the making of soccer goals, which addresses accidental goal tip-over. Tests included in this standard are meant to ensure proper design and manufacturing of soccer goals 6.5 feet by 18 feet or larger, <http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2056.htm>. This standard specifies safety and performance requirements aimed at providing for safer use of soccer goals and reducing injuries and fatalities. This standard applies to soccer goals for training and competition in outdoor sports facilities and indoor arenas. This standard addresses the risk of accidental tip-over or pullover of soccer goals.

ASTM F2673 - 08 Standard Safety Specification for Special Tip-Resistant Movable Soccer Goals

This document complements ASTM F1938 and ASTM F2056 and covers specifications for tip-resistant counter balancing should proper goal anchoring not be in place. The standards compliance testing is meant to simulate the swinging of two average twelve year old boys from the goal's crossbar and applies to goals 6.5 feet x 18 feet or larger, <http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2673.htm>.

State Legislation Related to Soccer Goal Tip-over

A few states have enacted laws aimed at creating safety standards for anchoring and the use of soccer goals. While the laws share a desired outcome, each law has different language and requirements.

In 2011, Arkansas enacted a law that any soccer goal in a public recreation area shall be anchored according to the 1994 United States Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety, or the guidelines adopted by the Arkansas Department of Health. The Arkansas Department of Health was also charged with developing and adopting guidelines for soccer goal safety. <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Acts/Act772.pdf>.

In 2011, Illinois enacted legislation that stated that “no commercial dealer, manufacturer, importer, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer may manufacture, re-manufacture, retrofit, distribute, sell at wholesale or retail, contract to sell or resell, lease, or sublet, or otherwise place in the stream of commerce, a movable soccer goal that is not tip-resistant”. The Illinois Department of

Health was charged with providing technical assistance materials based on guidelines such as the 1995 United States Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety in order to improve soccer goal safety.

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=097-0234>.

In 2009, Wisconsin enacted a law that the Wisconsin Department of Commerce shall establish safety standards for anchoring and securing, and using counterweights on, movable soccer goals. The standards shall be consistent with guidelines for movable soccer goal safety published by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission in January 1995.

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2009/related/acts/390.pdf>.

Manufacturer Recommendations and Safety Information

The soccer goal industry continues to recognize and address the dangers of the old style tip and roll portable soccer goals. The new designs are tip resistant and employ a rear bar, counter weight to prevent tipping and meet all specifications of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and United States Soccer Federation (USSF). Additionally, the soccer goal industry has developed soccer goal anchoring systems for all types of surface and goals. Lastly, the industry has developed a detailed soccer goal safety information program that is available online through several distributors. The websites include: ASTM information; detailed soccer goal anchoring information; news on laws and regulations from all 50 states; free replacement soccer goal safety stickers; and downloadable soccer goal safety checklists and booklets. A good example, thought not exclusively recommended by the workgroup, is KWIKGOAL www.Kwikgoalsafety.com.

SOCCKER GOAL SAFETY STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP

Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Workgroup assisted with the researching and writing of this study and met on June 4, 2013 and August 15, 2013, to refine and review the recommendations in this study.

Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Work Group Meeting 1

The first meeting of the workgroup was held on June 4, 2013 at the Heritage Center, Pocahontas State Park where DCR staff reviewed the group's task and a timeline for completing the report for the Governor and General Assembly. During this first meeting the workgroup:

- Reviewed and discussed three samples of state legislation that have been passed in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Arkansas.
- Discussed the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission "Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety" and three standards developed by ASTM – The American Society for Testing and Materials related to soccer goals.
- Discussed the policies and procedures of soccer clubs and organizations related to the anchoring of soccer goals.
- Discussed the pros and cons of adopting the proposed legislation as written. The other options discussed were doing nothing or establishing a program to provide technical assistance on the topic.

The following represent points made in the discussion:

1. All sports have risk and it is inefficient to have legislation just focused on soccer related injuries.
2. It is important to educate both public and private providers.
3. It is important to educate facility managers, organizations, and participants.
4. The Department of Health can develop or adopt existing technical assistance materials to educate the public on soccer goal safety.
5. The Department of Health can actively promote soccer goal safety across the Commonwealth.

The consensus of the group was that much progress has been made in overall soccer safety and the anchoring of soccer goals. However, it was concluded that the risk for soccer goal tip-over still exists and that a better job of educating soccer field owners, managers, and users is necessary.

Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Work Group Meeting 2

A second meeting of the workgroup was held on August 15, 2013 at the Heritage Center, Pocahontas State Park. The workgroup agreed that each organization represented would develop a statement supporting the recommendations and offering support for to the Department of Health in

promoting soccer goal safety. It was the consensus of the group that a proposed resolution be developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support for Educational Outreach

It was the consensus of the group that in lieu of adopting the proposed legislation, the Virginia General Assembly should officially recognize the 1995 United States Consumer Product Safety Commission “Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety” and charge the Department of Health with providing online technical assistance materials and information to support stakeholders, as listed in this report, on the safe use of soccer goals in the Commonwealth with the purpose of eliminating, to the extent possible, injury and death as a result of soccer goal tip-over. A proposed Resolution is presented in Appendix B.

Support from Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Workgroup

It was the consensus of the entire Soccer Goal Safety Stakeholder Workgroup that each organization represented in the workgroup would actively support the Virginia Department of Health in its effort to promote soccer goal safety to the public. As an example, the Richmond Kickers and the Virginia Recreation and Park Society provided statements supporting the Virginia Department of Health.

*The **Richmond Kickers** will continue to educate our coaches, players, and families about the importance of goal safety. We will support the efforts of the Virginia Department of Health to communicate with the general public and our membership the best practices to improve safety on athletic fields throughout the Commonwealth.*

*The goal of the **Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS)** is to provide and encourage continuous training opportunities for members; improve recreation, parks, and leisure services to the public; update members on current trends and opportunities in the profession; disseminate information on the public through use of publications and media; maintain current academic curriculum; involve interested citizens in advisory, participatory, and volunteer efforts supportive of parks, recreation, and leisure services programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and maintain a professional register of qualified recreation and park personnel. To this end, VRPS is committed to provide education to its members on the dangers of portable soccer goals if not properly anchored and work with the Virginia Department of Health to distribute information via the VRPS website, newsletters, and the VRPS magazine.*

APPENDIX A: STUDY LEGISLATION “MOVABLE SOCCER GOAL SAFETY ACT”

CHAPTER 375

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 32.1 a chapter numbered 17, consisting of sections numbered [32.1-370](#) through [32.1-373](#), relating to the Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act.

[S 933]

Approved March 14, 2013

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 32.1 a chapter numbered 17, consisting of sections numbered [32.1-370](#) through [32.1-373](#), as follows:

CHAPTER 17.

MOVABLE SOCCER GOAL SAFETY ACT.

§ [32.1-370](#). Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Movable soccer goal" means a freestanding structure consisting of at least two upright posts, a crossbar, and support bars that is designed to be (i) used by adults or children for the purposes of a soccer goal; (ii) used without any other form of support or restraint, other than pegs, stakes, augers, counter-weights, or other types of temporary anchoring devices; and (iii) able to be moved to different locations.

"Organization" means any park district, school district, sporting club, soccer organization, unit of local government, religious organization, business, or other similar organization that uses, owns, or maintains a movable soccer goal.

§ [32.1-371](#). Soccer goal safety and education policy required.

Every organization that owns and controls a movable soccer goal shall establish a soccer goal safety and education policy that outlines how the organization will address any safety concern related to movable soccer goals, including the dangers of unanchored or improperly anchored soccer goals tipping over and the care that must be taken to ensure proper installation, setup, maintenance, and transportation of movable soccer goals.

§ [32.1-372](#). Tip-resistant movable soccer goals required.

A. Beginning July 1, 2014, no commercial dealer, manufacturer, importer, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer may manufacture, re-manufacture, retrofit, distribute, or sell at wholesale or retail in the Commonwealth a movable soccer goal that is not tip-resistant.

B. For purposes of this chapter, a movable soccer goal with inside measurements of 6.5 to eight feet high and 18 to 24 feet wide does not qualify as tip-resistant unless it conforms to the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) standard [F2673-08](#) for tip-resistant movable soccer goals.

§ [32.1-373](#). Technical assistance; improving soccer goal safety.

The Board shall provide technical assistance materials based on guidelines such as the Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in order to improve soccer goal safety.

2. That the provisions of this act shall not become effective unless reenacted by the 2014 Session of the General Assembly.

3. That the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Division of State Parks shall convene a stakeholder work group, which shall include representatives of the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, youth and adult soccer associations, referees associations, semi-professional soccer associations, YMCAs, the Virginia Retail Merchants Association, and any others as deemed appropriate by the Director of State Parks or the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, to examine the safety issues associated with moveable soccer goals. The work group shall also review practices in other states including laws, regulations, policies, and protocols that promote safety for players, especially youth; and review the current safety practices associated with moveable goals followed by soccer programs sponsored by schools, public parks and recreation programs, and private associations in the Commonwealth. The work group shall complete its work and report its findings and any recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2013.

APPENDIX B: PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

WHEREAS, the 2013 session of the Virginia General Assembly passed SB933 which included a directive to the Department of Conservation and Recreation to convene a stakeholder workgroup to examine the safety issues associated with movable soccer goals; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Conservation and Recreation convened such a workgroup that included representatives of the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, youth and adult soccer associations, referees associations, professional soccer associations, YMCAs and the Virginia Retail Merchants Association; and

WHEREAS, the workgroup reviewed the practices of other states as well as the current safety practices followed by soccer programs in the Commonwealth sponsored by schools, public parks and recreation programs, as well as by private soccer associations; and

WHEREAS, the workgroup determined that the Consumer Product Safety Commission's publication "Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety" (CPSC Document #326) is the most cited guidance document on the topic and is generally accepted nationally as the primary source for proper installation, anchoring, safe usage, and safe storage of movable soccer goals; and

WHEREAS, the workgroup further determined that although injuries, sometimes serious, have occurred during the past twenty years, considerable improvement in the safety of movable soccer goals has occurred in the marketplace; and

WHEREAS, the workgroup has concluded that additional education for those who are responsible for soccer programs will enhance player safety; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, House of Delegates concurring, That the Commonwealth recognizes the Consumer Product Safety Commission's publication "Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety" (CPSC Document #326) and any subsequent revision that may be published as the standard that should be used by all public and private soccer programs in the Commonwealth to promote and protect the safety of players; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, that each group or organization that sponsors soccer programs should communicate this resolution to its membership in order to promote the safety of all soccer players; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to each group that participated in the Department of Conservation and Recreation's aforementioned work group so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

