

ISRI Messaging Platform

Topic: Synthetic Turf

I. Key Message Points:

- Scrap tire rubber is a highly sought material. In 2013, scrap processors produced 1.4 billion pounds of crumb rubber that was used in the creation of new products ranging from sidewalks to horse tracks.
- Tire recycling is an economically sound, environmentally friendly activity that can contribute to the reduction of a product's overall carbon footprint.
- The use of recycled rubber in molded products provides a substantial carbon footprint advantage over the use of virgin plastic resins, having between four and 20 times lower carbon footprint.

II. Sub-topic Talking Points:

A. Safety Concerns

Key Safety Message: There have been a number of stories in the press regarding synthetic turf fields that utilize crumb rubber infill material and the concern that some of these fields may expose players and the environment to harmful constituents in some of the field materials. The studies and reports available to date indicate that crumb rubber poses a minimal risk and is therefore safe to use in synthetic turf applications.

- There is no indication of negative health effects tied to crumb rubber's use in artificial turf.
- There has been considerable testing performed in the United States and overseas that indicated synthetic turf fields are safe for the people using them and the environment.
- According to the New York State Department of Health, based on the available information, chemical exposures from crumb rubber in synthetic turf do not pose a public health hazard.
- Crumb rubber is like many other items in everyday life. When looking at the elements individually, they may be considered harmful. But when combined and processed correctly, together they are not harmful.

B. Lack of Alternative Uses

- There are limited ways in which scrap tires can be used. Without the ability to use crumb rubber in synthetic turf, there are no good alternatives left, only:
 - Burning – which would release dangerous pollutants into the air.

- Landfilling – not only is this not allowed in many states, but it takes up valuable space in the landfills
- Leave in place – This alternative would create piles of unused tires, filling up fields, rivers, roadsides, and elsewhere. This is a proven detriment to the environment, property values, and overall health.

III. ISRI Resources:

- [Video: Recycling Commodities Series - Tires](#)
- [Fact Sheet – Tires](#)

IV. External Resources:

- [STC Responds to NBC National News Story on Health Effects of Crumb Rubber in Synthetic Turf](#)
- The following list of reports are presented as additional information.
 - New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, [A Review Of The Potential Health And Safety Risks From Synthetic Turf Fields Containing Crumb Rubber Infill](#), 2008
 - New York State Department of Health, [Fact Sheet Crumb-Rubber Infilled Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields](#), August 2008
 - Norwegian Building Research Institute, [Potential Health And Environmental Effects Linked To Artificial Turf Systems Final Report](#), 2004
 - ADEME/ALIAPUR/Field Turf Tarkett, [Environmental And Health Assessment Of The Use Of Elastomer Granulates \(Virgin And From Used Tyres\) As Filling In Third-Generation Artificial Turf](#), 2007
 - New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, [Preliminary Assessment Of The Toxicity From Exposure To Crumb Rubber: Its Use In Playgrounds And Artificial Turf Playing Fields](#), 2007
 - Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association, [Toxicological Evaluation For The Hazard Assessment Of Tire Crumb For Use In Public Playgrounds](#), 2003
 - Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California Integrated Waste Management Board, [Evaluation Of Health Effects Of Recycled Waste Tires In Playground And Track Products](#), 2007