



New York City Comptroller  
**Scott M. Stringer**

**NEWS**

PRESS RELEASE

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**COMPTROLLER STRINGER: NEW CLAIMSTAT ALERT SHOWS RISE IN CLAIMS  
FROM PLAYGROUND INJURIES HAS COST TAXPAYERS OVER \$20 MILLION**

*Playground-related Claims Rose 53 Percent over the Past Ten Years*

(NEW YORK, NY) – As the spring approaches and families prepare to descend on our City’s parks after a long winter, New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer released a new [ClaimStat Alert](#) focusing on the rise in playground-related personal injury claims against the City of New York along with parents, advocates and elected officials. Stringer also released a [letter](#) to the Department of Parks and Recreation asking them to redouble their efforts to bring all of its surfaces and equipment into a state of good repair.

“As a father of two young children, I know firsthand how important safety is on our playgrounds, both to keep our kids out of harm’s way and to reduce risk to City taxpayers,” Comptroller Stringer said. “With claims at their highest point in a decade, it’s clear that the Department of Parks and Recreation must find ways to improve safety in our City’s playgrounds. We owe it to our kids to adopt best practices for safety and install state-of-the-art equipment in our playgrounds that reduces the potential for injuries.”

Comptroller Stringer’s analysis found that from FY05-FY14, there were 577 playground-related personal injury claims filed against the City—an average of over one a week. Annual claims have risen 53 percent over the last ten years, from a low 45 claims in FY05 to a high of 69 claims in FY14. In addition to the human cost associated with these claims, taxpayers pay millions of dollars a year in settlements and judgments for playground-related personal injury claims—a total of \$20,644,448 over the ten year period studied.

Further findings include:

- Brooklyn had by far the most claims filed during this time period—209—dwarfing Manhattan (123), the Bronx (111), Queens (111), and Staten Island (23). To see an interactive map of all claims, please click [here](#).

- Some playgrounds had many more claims than others, with the most filed at Mullally Park Playground in the Bronx and Dr. Ronald E. McNair Playground in Manhattan (7 at each). Stroud and Slope Park Playground in Brooklyn, Juniper Valley Park in Queens and Union Square Park in Manhattan each had 6 claims.
- Causes for injuries cited in the claims included:
  - Improper surfacing—including missing or defecting matting, cracked or broken surfaces, holes in the ground, and rubber mats that burn too hot in summer months—which accounted for 176 claims during this time period, over 30 percent of the total;
  - Insufficient maintenance and defective equipment, such as swings and slides;
  - Improper playground design; and
  - Protruding nails and/or debris

“Since Seward Park first opened its gates to children over 100 years ago, our playgrounds have been cherished spaces in communities throughout the five boroughs. I look forward to working with the Department of Parks and Recreation to further explore how ClaimStat can help to improve its practices and help save taxpayer dollars moving forward,” Stringer said [ClaimStat](#) is a data-driven tool created by Comptroller Stringer that is designed to drive down the cost of judgments and settlements by empowering City agencies to reduce claims through changes in training or resource delivery. Previous ClaimStat [reports](#) have examined [police action claims](#), [tree-related claims](#), [sanitation vehicle property damage claims](#), [sewer overflow claims](#), [correctional facility claims](#) and [pedestrian personal injury claims](#).

To see the full ClaimStat Alert on the playground-related personal injury claims, please click [here](#). To explore the interactive map of playground-related personal injury claims, please click [here](#).

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