



# Neighborhood Insider

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## Answers from Amanda



**Q: What are the major precautions we need to take when it comes to playground maintenance and safety?**

**A:** Playground equipment within your communities should be inspected quarterly, at least, to ensure safe play and to minimize risk. All inspections should be completed by a certified playground safety inspector vs. an uncertified handyman or landscape maintenance employee. Such quarterly service may include the following:

- Inspecting the composite structure (all components should be properly adjusted and tightened)
- Adjusting all hardware that needs it
- Replacing missing or worn out bolts, pins and hooks
- Disinfecting the playground structure, surrounding benches, tables and trash receptacles
- Pressure washing of all equipment and surrounding areas, including ramadas, benches and sidewalks
- Sifting and cleaning out the sand area of foreign objects such as feces, rocks, glass and debris
- Raking and relocating the sand
- Sweeping surrounding sidewalks
- Providing a report of work performed
- Providing written inspection and a recommendation report

Our Community Managers physically inspect equipment on a routine basis for cleanliness and issues that arise from vandalism and regular use. But,

having a certified playground inspector perform maintenance checks at least quarterly will help minimize potential risk to the Association. Your Community Manager can contact a professional on your behalf and make necessary arrangements for regular inspection and maintenance visits.

It's important to remember to budget funds each year to cover professional inspection and maintenance service for all playground equipment within tot lot areas. Don't forget to include money for quarterly, bi-monthly or even monthly power washings to keep equipment clean and safe, and pest control to keep ants, spiders and other potentially harmful insects at bay.

These days, more and more insurance carriers are doing site visits to visually inspect tot lot areas and playground equipment. Therefore, it is also very important to check with the Association's carrier to ensure that insurance obligations regarding periodic inspections and maintenance are being met. Also, some counties and municipalities require specific maintenance procedures on equipment such as splash pads. Check with those officials to ensure compliance with county and municipal code.

Lastly, it is very important to let our homeowners know via newsletters or community postings that children should wear shoes and clothing appropriate for playing on and around the tot lot equipment. We all know that even shaded playground structures get hot quickly (particularly plastic and metal parts) even in early autumn, so appropriate footwear and clothing will help protect our kids from potential injuries.

**Amanda Shaw, President of AAM, LLC**

## DID YOU KNOW: AACM Certification

Did you know that AAM is striving to have all of its Community Managers certified by the Arizona Association of Community Managers?

By seeing this certification at the end of a Community Manager's name on his or her business cards or signature line in correspondence, Boards of Directors can rest assured that the Manager has participated in and successfully completed an education program that has prepared him or her to serve boards professionally, ethically and with an in-depth understanding of Arizona Community Association law. In addition, a CAAM®-certified Manager is educated in financial statement review and oversight as well as basics in Association management, such as facilitating successful annual meetings and Board meetings, contract oversight and budget preparation.

Be sure to look for your Community Manager's CAAM® designation today. Without it, Boards may not be getting all they need and deserve for the management of their Community Associations.



In order to achieve the prestigious Certified Arizona Association Manager (CAAM®) certification, Managers must successfully complete a four-course program which consists of classes in Basics in Association Management, Finance, Ethics and Arizona Community Association Law. In addition, each Manager must possess a specified number of years of professional experience and reference letters from industry peers. An integral part of the program consists of the Community Manager signing and affirming compliance with the CAAM® Code of Ethics.



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## SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: West Valley Office



**Kathy Johnson,**  
Regional Manager

AAM has expanded with a satellite office in Surprise to more conveniently serve homeowners, builders and developers in the fast-growing West Valley.

The office, located at 14780 W. Mountain View Blvd., Ste. 111, is headed by Regional Director of West Valley Operations Kathy Johnson. Johnson started her career at AAM in 1999 as a part-time “floater”, filling in for various positions as vacancies were created. Eventually, she took on more responsibility and larger roles, and became a full-time employee as she moved up in the ranks. During her time with the company, she has worked as a receptionist, billing coordinator, property manager’s assistant, community manager and area manager.

Today, she oversees a staff of 15 in the West Valley office, who are on hand to answer homeowner questions, collect homeowner association payments and oversee operations in the residential communities AAM manages in the West Valley, including Trilogy at Vistancia, Sun City Festival, Festival Foothills, Palm Valley II and III, Sierra Montana, Sundance, Canyon Trails and White Tank Foothills. The office also offers two large conference rooms available for board meetings.

“The West Valley is a booming residential market and a growing segment of our business is conducted there,” said Johnson. “We recognize a need to be where our clients are, and we’re excited to strengthen our physical presence in the West Valley.”

All accounting and processing functions continue to run through the company’s headquarters in Phoenix. To reserve a conference room for your next board meeting, please call **(602) 957-9191** and ask for **Ronnelle Korwes**.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE: Halloween Safety Tips

It’s the time of year when little ghosts and goblins will be roaming the neighborhood in search of tricks and treats. Follow these tips to keep everyone in your community safe.

### TRICK OR TREATERS

- Check flashlight batteries before you leave the house.
- Walk facing the traffic, so that drivers can easily see you.
- Cross at corners, with adults.
- Trick-or-Treat in familiar neighborhoods.
- Visit houses that have lights on, especially houses with Halloween decorations.
- Always use the front door; never go to the back of a house.
- Always carry a spare Halloween bag just in case yours breaks.

### ADULTS

- If you buy a costume, look for one made of flame-retardant material.
- Make sure you work into your child’s OR adult Halloween costume, reflector strips, a flashing safety light or the very popular glow light stick to make everyone more visible and much safer at night.
- Let children borrow the fully charged family cell phone, with home number ready.
- Ideally, young children of any age should be accompanied by an adult.
- Although product tampering is rare, tell the children to bring all candy home to be inspected before consuming anything.



### HOMEOWNERS

- Make sure your yard is clear of such things as ladders, garden hoses, dog leashes and low flower pots. These objects can trip the young trick-or-treater.
- Be sure the path and stairs to your front door are well illuminated and clear of obstacles.
- Pets get frightened on Halloween. Put them in a kennel to protect them from cars or inadvertently biting a trick-or-treater.
- Glow light sticks or battery powered jack-o-lantern light are preferable to real flame candles.
- If you do use candles, place the carved jack-o-lantern well away from where trick-or-treaters will be walking or standing.
- Be prepared. Have a fully charged fire extinguisher handy, just in case.
- Trick-or-treat candies of any type are not for pets.

*Courtesy of [www.yankeehalloween.com](http://www.yankeehalloween.com)*

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