

The grid below offers a brief evaluation of surface type against factors that should be considered when selecting an IAS

	Bark Chip	Matta Products (UK) Interlocking tiles <i>(for concrete surfaces and grass surfaces)</i>	Synthetic Grass	Wet Pour	Sand	Grass	Grass Mats
Is the surface easy to maintain and durable?	Natural product Starts to break down outdoors after a relatively short time. Pits will need to be refilled and raked regularly	Low maintenance (Occasional power washing may be required to remove possible moss gathered in shaded areas)	Low maintenance	Low maintenance (Occasional power washing to remove possible moss gathered in shaded areas) Long term, heavy wear areas may become scuffed and begin to crumble & break up	High maintenance Ideally needs to be covered when not in use. Should be raked everyday and cleaned with a sanitising solution regularly. Will also need to be topped up regularly	High maintenance Easily worn and in dry conditions has little impact absorbency. Will need mowing regularly during summer months	Low maintenance Can sink in wet weather if no supportive underlay is installed with the mats. Can also pull apart over time as tiles do not interlock
What critical fall height does the surface provide?	Can be used for fall heights up to 2.7m (dependent on depth of installation)	Up to 2.9m	Up to 3m	Can be used for fall heights up to 3m (dependent on depth of installation)	Can be used for fall heights up to 2.7m (dependent on depth of installation)	Maximum 1m	Up to 3m
Does the surface provide easy access for wheelchair users and the disabled?	Very poor access due to raised perimeter and type of material	Very good solid surface with edges sloped & merged into the surrounding soil. No raised edges	Very good	Very good as long as ramps/low curbs are installed	Very poor access due to raised perimeter and type of material	Poor access when wet and boggy	Very good Tiles allow easy access for wheelchair users and pushchairs
What is the hygiene level of the surface?	Poor Bark chip is a popular nesting ground for Fleas & Flies. Animals mess is easily hidden in the bark as are syringes	Good	Good Attractive to animals which could lead to the surface being fouled upon	Good	Poor Easy to hide broken glass and needles in sand. Animals mess easily hidden	Ok Glass or needles may be partially hidden as can animal mess	Good
Can the surface be easily vandalised?	Possible fire hazard. Material can easily be thrown or kicked from its pit	Low chance of damage	Low chance of damage	Low chance of damage	Low chance of damage Can cause damage to eyes if thrown about	Low chance of damage	Low chance of damage
What is the flammability level of the surface? Will it catch fire easily?	High Prolonged exposure to heat or fire, especially in dry weather, can cause bark to catch fire quickly. It is highly likely that the whole bark covered area will need to be replaced in the event of a fire	Low Flame retardant surface Will damage under continuous heat but won't encourage the spread of fire. Only damaged tiles need to be replaced, not the whole surface. Replaced tiles blend in fully with surface providing a seamless finish	Low Flame retardant surface Will damage under continuous heat but wont encourage the spread of fire.	Low Flame retardant surface. Will damage under continuous heat but wont encourage the spread of fire. Only damaged areas will need to be replaced, not the whole surface. Repairs may look patchy	Low Flame resistant surface	High In dry weather grass can spread fire quickly	Variable There are many versions on the market, some have higher flame retardant properties than others. Advisable to check with your supplier
Could the surface cause injury?	Can cause injury to eyes if thrown. Bark can also cause splinters	Little chance of superficial injury	Friction burns may occur if a person hits the surface hard or at speed	Little chance of superficial injury	Can cause injury to eyes if thrown	Little chance of superficial injury	Little chance of superficial injury Sometimes fitted with metal pegs or cable ties that can cause injury